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A GROUP APPROACH TO JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S
ADAPTATION OF EURIPIDES'
THE TROJAN WOMEN

by
William Lewis III

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DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Group theatre and total theatre represent a major part of the theatrical avant garde in the 1970's. Still very little has been done to define and validate these concepts. Further, the issue of how to create an effective ensemble has been a problem since Stanislavsky. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of group theatre as it applies both to direction and to effective ensemble playing in the interpretation of Euripides' The Trojan Women, through the adaptation written by Jean-Paul Sartre.
CHAPTER 1

A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF EURIPIDES' THE TROJAN WOMEN AND SARTRE'S ADAPTATION

The critical differences between Euripides' "The Trojan Women" and Sartre's adaptation are the results of the changes which the passage of time has created and the adjustments which Sartre had to make "to bridge the gap which separates the audience from the climate of opinion that obtained when the plays were written" (Sartre 1967.ix). The most significant critical difference, however, is the result of the shift of emphasis necessitated by the passage of time. The gods who appear in the play, as well as the religious attitudes which the characters express, were at least familiar to Euripides' audience, if not embraced, while a contemporary audience, does not "subscribe(s) to the religious beliefs which the play carries" (Sartre 1967.ix). This assumption, together with the "innumerable allusions which the Athenian public immediately understood" (Sartre 1967:xi), created problems of language. These problems were compounded by the religious imagery, allusions, legends which would be unrecognizable to a contemporary audience, and poetic conventions. For example, "the dawn breaks on white wings," which Sartre considers "romantic pastiche" (Sartre 1967.ix). Further, Euripides enjoyed a rapport with his audience which carried implicit assumptions and permissible omissions which Sartre could not assume.
While the universality of the play's thesis is the same as the original, "War is a defeat for humanity" (Sartre 1967:xiii), there are several shifts of emphasis in Sartre's adaptation which result in a modification of character-relations and dramatic tensions:

I have tried to increase the dramatic tensions implicit in the original text by emphasizing some of the conflicts, such as between Andromache and Hecuba, the ambivalent attitude of Hecuba herself who, at times, is content to abandon Troy to its misfortunes, while at others she rails against the injustice which has caused it. And the sudden switch of that little bourgeoise, Andromache, who first produces all the attitudes of a wife, and then switches to those of a mother. And finally, I emphasized the erotic perversity of Cassandra, who throws herself into Agamemnon's bed, knowing she will perish there (Sartre 1967:xii).

Although Sartre admits that these conflicts are implicit in the original, he also felt that Euripides' *The Trojan Women* was not "a tragedy like *Antigone* . . . it is more of an oratorio" (Sartre 1967:xii). The probability that Euripides' audience had the benefit of the entire trilogy: *The Alexander*, *The Palamedes*, and *The Trojan Women*, does create a serious structural problem in that the original did not have to stand entirely on its own, while Sartre's does.

Sartre's emphasis on several conflicts implicit in the original, therefore, is reasonable; as will be discussed below, the shift of dramatic emphasis causes a shift in the meaning of the action and hence the play. As Kitto points out, "The Greeks are the collective tragic hero or tragic agent, the Trojans the collective victims" (Kitto 1954:221). Sartre, on the other hand, concludes: "Hecuba's final despair is the human reply to Poseidon's terrible ultimatum, in which the gods break at last with men and leave them to commune with
their own death. This is the final note of tragedy" (Sartre 1967:xv).

It is the result of this shift of emphasis which has caused the most
significant critical difference between Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and
Sartre's adaptation.

Euripides' *The Trojan Women* first appeared in the spring of
415 B.C. The political and military situation in Athens at that
time suggests that the play, a part of a tetralogy of which only
*The Trojan Women* is extant, was written in critical response to it
(Ferguson 1972:335-336). Specifically, it seems to have been in
response to the Athenian invasion, defeat and subsequent slaughter of
the men, and enslavement of the women and children on the central
island of Melos in the year 416 B.C. (Ferguson 1972:335). However,
because there are no extant records directly linking Euripides' tetralogy
and the Athenian invasion of Melos, and further, because
*The Trojan Women* is the only extant play of the trilogy.

The plot develops in such a way that loss is followed by loss
until the remaining women of Troy have nothing left except their
future. These individual losses are set against the background of
the loss of Troy. The characters oscillate between actively seeking
justice and passively being victims of the Greeks' pride (Kitto
1954:221). The prologue, in which Pallas describes her revenge
against the Greeks, the accusations and threats of revenge hurled by
Hecuba and Cassandra against the Greeks support Kitto's contention
that:

The Greeks are doomed from the start, and proceed to
pile up the count before our eyes, the more awfully because
it is done so impersonally. This series of outrages, episodic and merely pathetic if we look only at the Trojans, is cumulative and tragic if we look at the Greeks. . . . The Greeks are the collective tragic hero or tragic agent, the Trojans the collective victims (1954:221).

In addition, the ending of the play with the women being led off offers no resolution to their search for an answer to the question of injustice of suffering. It is an "oratorio" (Sartre 1967:xx) which sings of the futility of war for both victor and vanquished: "To initiate a war of senseless conquest the girl Iphigeneia is murdered at Aulis; to secure its sterile fruits the boy Astyanax is flung from the shattered towers of Troy" (Ferguson 1972:350).

The plot structure is essentially the same as the Euripides version. The prologue with Poseidon and Pallas Athene is followed by the monody and commos of Hecuba and the chorus. The first episode involves Talthybius, Hecuba and Cassandra, and is followed by a choral ode. The next episode is with Andromache, Astyanax, Hecuba, and Talthybius, and again, is followed by a choral ode. As with Euripides, the Helen-Hecuba-Menelaus debate episode follows, then another choral ode which precedes the episode which involves the body of Astyanax. The final commos between Hecuba and the chorus, which in the Euripides version ends as the women are being led away, is followed, in Sartre, by the Poseidon speech which is, as Sartre says: "To emphasize the tragic denouement" (1967:xi). It is the addition of the final Poseidon speech which completes the action and thus causes the shifts in emphasis throughout. A comparison of Hecuba's final lines in both versions will illustrate the point. First Euripides:
"O shaking, tremulous limbs, this is the way. Forward: into the slave's life" (1955:661). And the Sartre: "No Trojan feet will ever walk willingly from Troy" (1967:79). Because the former is the last speech, followed only by a choral echo, and the play ends at that point structurally; the action is not complete, that is no answer is found. Further, the women leave having accepted their fate. However, the Sartre ending is an effective denouement or resolution to the action, Hecuba's defiance is not usurped for the audience by being left ambiguous. Rather, the Poseidon speech which announces her death reinforces her defiance, that is, she does not leave Troy. Perhaps, as Sartre indicates, the Greek audiences knew implicitly what would be Hecuba's fate; however, the action is not completed by Euripides.

Perhaps the shifts in character emphasis preceded the addition of the tragic denouement, perhaps, they are the result. What is of demonstrable importance is that the shifts in character emphasis do contribute to the final resolution. Cassandra is much more explicit regarding the fates of Ulysses, Agamemnon, herself, and Hecuba. This is admitted by Sartre (1967:xi). However, the most significant differences between the two versions of Cassandra is her language. Though slightly implied in such passages as "when I lie corpse-cold and naked next to my husband's sepulcher, piled in the ditch for animals to rip and feed on, beaten by streaming storms of winter, I who wore Apollo's sacraments" (Euripides 1955:629), the eroticism is heightened by Sartre: "For our broken bodies will be naked
together And vultures alone will be satisfied; Their beaks will be intimate with my breasts; Their claws shall caress your manhood" (1967:33). Thus is her desire for revenge expressed with more poignancy, as well as more explicitly. Therefore, does she appear to be a much more active agent than passive victim, hence contributing, with her erotically-expressed passion for revenge, to the defined action of the play?

It is the character of Andromache which seems to undergo the most extensive changes as a result of the shifts created by the addition of the tragic denouement. Sartre has chosen to make explicit the antagonism which he believes to be implicit between Andromache and Hecuba expressed in such lines as: "You are to blame. It was you who gave birth to Paris: that damned adventurer" (1967:39); and, "I have never liked you. You have never liked me" (40). But the antagonism would seem to be part of her larger rage at her own dilemma:

I was a good wife and devoted Mother;
Some of us are. But as many of us know:
It doesn't matter how a woman behaves.
The world thinks the worst of us,
And slanders us if we give it half a chance.
I didn't give it that chance. I stayed
At home, Where the gossips couldn't get at me.
It was no sacrifice: I was happy
Devoting myself wholly to Hector.
But you see, old woman, my virtuous life has been undoing.
And my reputation for being chaste recoils on me; for it is that
Which now makes Neoptolemus, the son of the man who murdered my husband, demand me for his bed (Sartre 1967:42-43).
Cassandra's expressed desire for revenge becomes Andromache's impotent frustration and sense of helplessness. The opposite horn of her dilemma is the realization, also expressed fleetingly by Euripides (1955:637), that her body will probably betray her and thus deny her any personal justice:

I am frightened. I am frightened And it is myself I fear.
For I do not want the memory of Hector to be erased.
But I am a woman. And a woman is only a woman.
They say it takes just one night of pleasure to master her.
A woman is only an animal.
That is why I am frightened.
Hector was the only man I ever knew:
I loved his courage, his wisdom, and his gentleness.
The touch of his hands on my body.
And now the thought that this same body
May groan for joy when some other man lies upon it,
Makes me want to tear it limb from limb (Sartre 1967:43).

Structurally, the dilemma posed by her sexuality is ironically heightened in the next episode when Helen uses her sexuality to escape punishment at the hands of Menelaus. By expanding Andromache's dilemma as a woman and later as a mother: "I can't protect it: I could only give life to it" (Sartre 1967:48), contrary to his stated antagonism toward her: "the sudden switch of that little bourgeois, Andromache, who first produces all of the attitudes of a wife, and then switches to those of a mother" (Sartre 1967:xii), Sartre has created a very tragic character. It is her frustration, rage and ultimate helplessness which are emphasized, and which make her attempt to "make a tolerable world out of one that is really a waste of honor" (Murray 1905:47), so again active.
The chorus, in the Sartre adaptation, changes its character slightly also. As discussed earlier the chorus was concerned primarily with the past, with Troy; and as such created a dramatic tension juxtaposed with Hecuba's fears of the future. However, though it is concerned with the past in its first two odes it would seem that Sartre does not have the poetic skill of Euripides to create an image strong enough to function as a consistent dramatic image:

At midnight we were still singing,
then suddenly the whole city
rang with one refrain:
it was the cry of death.
War was back again:
Pallas had forgiven nothing.
The Greeks had leapt out of the idol
And were slaughtering our men and boys
(Sartre 1967:37).

This as compared to the Euripides version which serves not only the function of recreating the horror of that night, but also anticipating the entrance and fate of Astyanax (Euripides 1955:632). It is, however, Sartre's manipulation of the choral ode following the Helen-Menelaus episode (Sartre 1967:xiii) which effectively changes the emphasis of the chorus from lingering sorrowfully over their destroyed city to anger at the injustice which allows Helen to escape unpunished. The sorrow in response to Astyanax' death combines with their anger to underscore Hecuba's final defiance.

Talthybius in the Sartre version is a much more complex and ambiguous character than is his Euripidean counterpart. For example, Sartre's Talthybius verges on cruelty both during the Cassandra and Andromache episodes:
I can understand that a free people
don't easily knuckle under to a catastrophe
like this, but I don't want any embarrassing
suicides on my hands. Do you understand?
... that might be a way out for them
but it would be a bore to me (Sartre 1967:22).

It is, however, in trying to persuade Andromache to give up her child
that he becomes almost blatant.

There's nothing else you can do.
Neither your city, nor your husband,
Can protect you now: neither exist any more.
Don't you understand, we give the orders now?
Do I have to tear him from you?

If you hand him over quietly,
we might even let you bury him, and
our generals will treat you with more consideration
(Sartre 1967:47).

It is his kindness and sympathy which makes one aware that there are
forces beyond him which are influencing the decisions which create the
suffering of the women. While it is his cruelty which give the
captive women a concrete starting point for their rage. Talthybius'
ambiguity is what Sartre calls the "middleman" (Sartre 1967:xi).

However, it is Hecuba upon whom the drama turns. For she is
the one character which changes, as does the chorus to a much less
defineable degree, during the course of the action. In the opening
scene she expresses her sorrow and misery:

As for my husband, Priam, these same eyes
that weep, watched when they bled him
on the steps of the altar and saw his
throat open like a mouth and his blood
flower, then flow, over his golden skin
(Sartre 1967:10).

She soon must watch helplessly as Cassandra displays what Hecuba
believes to be her madness. Later, to Andromache, she advocates
acceptance of destiny in the belief that life has hope (Sartre 1967:41). Confronted with the possibility of justice she attacks Helen with renewed vigor only to have her hope dashed cruelly by Menelaus' weakness and Helen's cunning (Sartre 1967:68). Finally confronted first with the body of Astyanax, the last of his race capable of beginning a new line, then the final destruction of her city, Hecuba moves rapidly from sorrow: "Lay this shield upon the earth it protected. I loved him" (Sartre 1967:72), to anger: "Bloody Greeks drunk with power yet frightened of a child" (Sartre 1967:73), to a rage aimed at the universe itself: "You filthy Gods, You always hated me. . . . You have condemned me. Now I'll condemn you" (Sartre 1967:76). And her last act, standing firm forcing the soldiers to drag her off, as stated, is an act of defiance.

The theme or thought of the play is contained in the definition of the action as the search for an answer to the injustice.

Joseph McMahon states the theme:

The impossibility of justice and the recurrence of well-paying injustice is a scandal which haunts Sartre both because it has had such a long and healthy life and because no meaningful or durable means has been found to eradicate it. In his latest play, Les Troyennes (1965), the scandal is presented in its starkest terms. Though the play is lean, its time-span is long since Sartre uses the Euripides text to comment on a present-day situation. The implication is clear: time moves on and civilization makes no progress in actualizing one of its foundations—justice (1971:73).

With Hecuba's final act of defiance in the face of that injustice Sartre seems to place a unique value upon defiance as the only possible human response to cosmic injustice. Cosmic if the treatment of Poseidon and Pallas are an indication of his attitude
toward the gods:

In Les Troyennes . . . there is no deus ex machina other than fate, or proliferating error, or the frightening example of human avarice which, not content to seek its own wretched goals, ties its ambitious star to a god who, in turn, has tied his star to a shrewdness and chicanery in his dealings with the other gods. Ultimately . . . Sartre's spirit is . . . fundamentally convinced that no extra-human force exists (McMahon 1971:150).

Further, Sartre has stated elsewhere: "For a long time, I took my pen for a sword; I now know we're powerless. No matter" (Sartre 1964:253). The play ends as Sartre states in total nihilism (1967:xxi), the only possible act is a refusal.

The essential difference between the Euripides version of The Trojan Women and Sartre's adaptation does result from the passage of time, which made it necessary for Sartre to add a tragic denouement which in effect completes the action. On the other hand, Euripides appears to have been able to assume his audience knew the ending from extant mythology and the two other plays in his trilogy (Kitto 1954:221). For the characters in the Euripides version, there is nothing but sorrow, suffering and acceptance. The Sartrian characters experience sorrow, suffering, but instead of acceptance, they rage and finally stand firm in defiance.
CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GROUP THEATRE

For the purposes of this project, the operative definition of group theatre is:

It is first of all, a method of working, and secondly, it leads, at its best, to the production of plays that make their appeal to all the layers of the conscious and unconscious mind. . . . Group theatre recognizes the corporate nature of theatre . . . the necessity of unifying the company (Clarke 1971:16).

The two central ideas in Clarke's definition are collaboration: "the corporate nature of theatre" and, "the necessity of unifying the company," and total theatre: "the production of plays that make their appeal to all the layers of the conscious and unconscious mind."

To examine Clarke's ideas of group theatre, it is necessary to examine selected examples of collaboration in the history of theatre, and then to trace briefly the development of the concept of total theatre.

The practice of group theatre as it relates to collaboration exists in two types of societies: one which is homogeneous, thus allowing the theatre group to draw its strength from the whole society while contributing to the society's sense of identity, expressing its ideals; the other, a society which is deeply divided, thus creating, for various reasons, a feeling that the theatre group is cut off from its society, forcing on the group a sense of unity and closeness.
which leads to intense investigation and expression (Clarke 1971:17). Clarke places the Greek theatre and the medieval theatre in the first type and the Elizabethan theatre of Shakespeare and "the modern group theatres in the West" in the second type: "The mark of the first is . . . essentially metaphysical, even religious. It has very strong ritual elements; it draws its material from the mythic roots of society. Most of the society is involved with the theatre" (1971:17). The Greek theatre, particularly the tragedies, grew out of the ritual elements of the festival of Dionysius (Murray 1912:341). This was essentially a religious festival, and in Attica, of which Athens was the major city, four festivals were held in honor of Dionysius. It was the last festival, City Dionysia, which gave rise to tragedy (Brockett 1968:12). In addition to its religious origins and probable ritualistic structure, all extant Greek tragedy, according to Oscar Brockett, is based upon myth or history (1968:13). After 442 B.C., dramatic festivals were given annually and were actively supported by the community. The choregos, a wealthy citizen performing this function as part of his civic duty, was appointed by the state to sponsor each author, pay the chorus and their trainer, provide costumes, etc., while the state assumed responsibility for providing the theatre, awarding prizes, and paying actors and authors. During the time of Aeschylus, the author acted in his own plays, trained the chorus, invented the music and dances, and supervised every aspect of production (Brockett 1968:22). It was this situation of cooperation which contributed to the vitality of Greek drama:
Thus we have a "classical" situation for the evolution of good drama: a people that see the importance of plays... a government that sees that a good chorus is... important to the health of society... writers who recognize their part in society and who are part of a company that is honoured for its important contribution to the life of that society (Clarke 1971:19).

A similar situation existed during the medieval period, particularly in England. The development of medieval drama and theatre moved from the liturgical drama in the church to the miracle and morality plays and pageants in the streets (Brockett 1968:89-90). Where the cycles moved from church to guild, they lost little, if any, of their religious function and the trade guilds who sponsored them were religious societies essentially. The growth of the plays themselves, and, the structure of medieval society itself contributed further to the place of the drama within the society:

The steady growth of the liturgical plays from the tenth to the thirteenth century testifies to their popularity; and, that, in my view, is adequate reason for the monastic churches, first to seek assistance from the secular clergy and then, at a later date, to extend the invitation to the guilds who would be more than ready to accept. Collaboration was a natural gesture within the fabric of medieval society (Wickham 1959:127).

The ritual elements of the drama were also expressions of the society and hence shared: "While the performance lasted, audience and actors shared the same ritual world, a world more real than the world that existed outside its frame" (Barton 1962:21). This relationship, argues Barton, did not begin to split until the time of the Tudor period.

In the 1570's, the religious dramas were "systematically" suppressed, leaving the general public with only the professional
secular theatre as the only form of theatrical entertainment. Clarke speculates that the Elizabethan theatre, of which Shakespeare was a part, is an important example of the second type of group theatre; that the homogeneity of the medieval period was gone and that the theatre has "many powerful, political, civic, and religious enemies" (1971:22-24). However, the great popularity of the Elizabethan theatre with the general public, as well as the system of royal patronage and control, indicate societal support. On the other hand, the suppression of Richard II and the harassment of the company's patrons by the crown would also support Clarke's contention of political enemies. Nevertheless, the issue of unity and collaboration within the group can be substantiated: "The first thing that emerges with great clarity from any study of the Elizabethan theatre is the extraordinary unity, cohesion, continuity of the acting companies in general, and, in particular, that company to which Shakespeare belonged (David 1970:131). In part, this continuity was due to the fact that most of the companies, particularly Lord Chamberlain's Men of which Shakespeare was a part, maintained the same actors: John Heminges, Richard Burbage, and Shakespeare spent a total of eighty years (thirty-six, twenty-five, and nineteen respectively) with Lord Chamberlain (Chute 1949:138). Also, it was the general practice that: "The shareholders formed a self-governing, democratic body, selecting and producing the plays given by the company," and specifically, the Lord Chamberlain's Men was "a co-operative venture of the Burbage family and the leading actors of the company"
Brockett (1968:168). While this organizational structure did not directly influence the quality of Elizabethan drama generally, or Shakespeare in particular, it did provide the collaborative atmosphere in which he worked.

It is only in this century, however, that we can document the relationship of collaboration and the creative efforts, or said another way: collaboration as a self-conscious creative principle. The two examples are the Group Theatre and the Vakhtangov Theatre. It must be added, however, that the number of group theatres in the western world since 1930 is large: including Brecht's Berliner Ensemble, Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre, Peter Brook's International Center for Theatre Research, Richard Schechner's the Performance Group, Joseph Chaikin's the Open Theatre, Ralph Cook's Theatre Genesis, and Andre Gregory's the Manhattan Project (Brockett 1974:569, 602-603, 614, 627-628).

The Group Theatre was formed in the spring of 1931 in New York. It brought together twenty-seven actors in addition to Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford, and Lee Strasberg, who had together guided the organization's formation (James 1973:26). Clurman's plan articulated the philosophy which was to guide the Group through its ten years:

The theatre ... must have ... singleness of meaning and direction. It must create from the chaos which is the common experience of its members an expression that will have ... an identity and a significance with which people, sharing the common experience, may sense their kinship and to which they can attach themselves.

Its artists must be confident all the time that the thing that binds them together must be a reflection of a sentiment that animates many people in the world about them. The generations before us seemed to have been strenuously
individualistic without believing very steadily in any particular good for their individuals. . . . We believe that the individual can achieve his fullest stature only through identification of his own good with the good of his group, a group which he himself must help to create. (Gassner 1940:731).

The collective nature of the Group's life and art thus stated, the Group proceeded to engage in collective or collaborative enterprises off and on during its ten years of existence. When money was available, they would spend the summer months living together in the country: rehearsing, training, and talking (James 1973:14).

According to James (1973:59f), during the depression several members lived together to share expenses. An impression of the collaborative functioning of the Group Theatre was given by Robert Ardrey (1939:3):

But give a play to the Group. What happens? They give you what amounts to temporary membership in the Group Theatre. You have all the innocence of a bystander on the Maginot Line. If somebody in the company gets a divorce, you discover yourself on the witness stand. If a switchboard girl has a baby, you find yourself with labor pains.

The light man has a brainstorm. He floods the stage with evil red light. You run shrieking to the director. Go talk with the light man, says he. So you wring the light man's neck, personally. An actor discovers a bad line in his part. Do you find out about it in nicely tempered tones from the director? No. In the midst of rehearsal, the actor speaks the line, comes to a halt, looks about, "Where's the author? Ardrey, this line stinks."

You find yourself with the business manager, worrying about the budget. You find yourself with the publicity man, worrying about a press release. You share Gorelick's headaches, while he works over the model of the set, trying to find room in the base of a lighthouse for half a dozen vital Group actors to express their vitality. And while you're biting your fingernails--will the sound man make a noise like an airplane, or will it resemble a horse neighing--you're confronted by Morris Carnovsky. "For ten minutes," says Morris, "I sit over there at the left without anything to say. What am I supposed to be thinking about?" So you
go to bed that night—if you go to bed at all—worrying not about Carnovsky's lines, but about his thoughts.

Does this sound like chaos? It's not. Everyone knows precisely what he's doing. All it comes down to is this. A regular Broadway production finds the author on the outside, looking in. A Group Theatre production finds the author on the inside, looking cross-eyed.

The influence of the Group Theatre was extended into playwriting, particularly the plays of the genre of social realism (Bentley 1953:34); acting, with the formation of the Actors' Studio; directing, with the influence of Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan; and design, with the influence of Mordecai Gorelick, Boris Aronson, and Robert Jones (James 1973:69-81). Both the success and the failure of the group, as articulated by Clurman (1945:281-284): "The Group Theatre was a failure because . . . no group can exist alone. For a group to live a healthy life and mature . . . it must be sustained by other groups . . . in large and comparatively stable segments of society," would place the Group Theatre in Clarke's second category.

Eugene Vakhtangov never lived to see his creative principles developed into a theatrical structure, but the Vakhtangov Theatre is the concrete realization of the principles of creative collectivity which Vakhtangov believed: "After Vakhtangov's untimely death in 1922, his disciples . . . translated his ideals into a theatrical structure" (Cole and Chinoy 1963:60). At the Vakhtangov Theatre, the "theatrical collective" controls the decision-making process. The collective decides what plays are to be produced, makes the assignment to one of its directors considered most suited by virtue of his special talents. The director submits a formal report of his
production plans, which are then discussed by the author, the actors, and the director. Even after acceptance—or revised acceptance—the director's control is not absolute; there follows extensive discussion of the play and role interpretation: "Only then, scene by scene, section by section, does the play assume its theatrical form under the supervision of the director, who has cooperated and consulted with the whole company" (Cole and Chinoy 1963:61).

The artistic principles from which the Vakhtangov Theatre emerged are contained in part in his working style and his theatrical style: fantastic realism (Kuhlke 1967:179). Eugene Vakhtangov studied with first Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and then Constantin Stanislavsky before embarking on his own career as a director. He directed several very "innovative and exciting" (Roose-Evans 1970:31) plays before his death at the age of thirty-nine, including Strindberg's Eric XIV, Ibsen's Rosmersholm, Ansky's The Dybbuk, and Gozzi's Turandot. He shared with the Russian formalists the principles of creative distortion: "Not representation of life in concrete images but, on the contrary, creative distortion of nature by means of a set of devices which the artist has at his disposal--this was . . . the real aim of art" (Erlich 1958:57). However, as a director he recognized certain limitations to its application in the theatre:

(a) The director must not violate the essential nature of the work of the dramatist. (b) At the same time, he must "contemporize" his production, that is, he must make whatever play he is working with answerable to the demands of the immediate present... . (c) Finally, his production should be an organic natural expression of his particular theatre,
a manifestation of the artistic personality of the theatrical collective at the given stage of its creative development (Kuhlke 1967:180).

Actors were treated as equal partners in the creative act and, as such, were responsible to fill form with content and to "find the necessary justification for conduct on the stage . . . but in the theatrical plan of the spectacle" (Kuhlke 1967:181). Vakhtangov believed that the conception was transmitted through the actors spontaneously from their living through the message, the given scene, and the significance attached to it by the author and director, making it suitable to themselves as actors (Kuhlke 1967:182).

Vakhtangov had studied and performed with Stanislavsky at the Moscow Art Theatre and had greatly admired the work of Meyerhold (Roose-Evans 1970:31). His concept of fantastic realism was a synthesis of these two men's respective approaches to theatre. Of Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov said:

Stanislavsky demanded . . . that the audience forget that it is in the theatre, that it come to feel itself living in the atmosphere and milieu in which the characters of the play live. He rejoiced in the fact that the audience used to come to the Moscow Art Theatre to The Three Sisters, not as to a theatre, but as if invited to the Pro Sorov house . . . . Stanislavsky arrived at the formula: the audience has to forget that it is in the theatre . . . in his enthusiasm for real truth, [he] brought naturalistic truth to the stage (Cole and Chinoy 1963:186).

Of Meyerhold, Vakhtangov concluded:

Meyerhold understands theatricality as a performance at which the audience does not forget for a single moment that it is in a theatre. . . . He also destroyed theatrical banality, but he did it with the aid of theatrical means. . . . Meyerhold, carried away by theatrical truth, removed the
truthfulness of feelings, and truth there must be in both—the theatre of Meyerhold or Stanislavsky (Cole and Chinoy 1963:190).

Vakhtangov sought to synthesize the two approaches through fantastic realism (Roose-Evans 1970:31). The basic form is theatrical and the inner feeling/depth is considered to be the content: "Of outstanding importance for fantastic realism is the solving of the means and the form. The means must be theatrical. It is very difficult to find a form harmonizing with the content and presented with the aid of the right means" (Cole and Chinoy 1963:191). To achieve his concept of fantastic realism, Vakhtangov turned to his actors, and helping them first to assimilate the inner experiences and inner truth of the characters; then, to move to interpret that truth in theatrical form, he created a "message the theatre company, as collective interpretative artist, sought to communicate" (Kuhlke 1967:185).

There are examples of theatrical groups and social situations in which, in the former, the theatre group's unity and cohesion helped create an atmosphere in which creative work could be done, and, in the latter, a social climate in which "collaboration was a natural gesture" (Wickham 1959:12). One aspect of Group Theatre is defined, then, as "a method of working . . . it recognizes the corporate nature of theatre" (Clarke 1971:16).

The other aspect, or definition of Group Theatre is related to the concept of total theatre. Clarke explains total theatre as leading: "To the production of plays that make their appeal to all the layers of the conscious and unconscious mind. . . . Movement, dance,
music and pure sound are all available, and will be used where necessary to probe and to reveal the sub-text that will make more dense the total experience of the play" (Clarke 1971:16).

The concept of total theatre is not new, but has been evolving since the Renaissance (Kirby 1969:xiv). Its major tenets may be best understood by considering briefly its antecedents: Wagner and the Symbolist concept of correspondences developed by Baudelaire and articulated by Bertocci.

The origin of the term "total theatre" seems to derive from Richard Wagner's concept of total artwork, which did not mean a list of components such as music, movement, lighting, etc., but rather that there must be an effective interplay between the various elements, a "significant synthesis" (Kirby 1969:xvii). The general philosophical background against which Wagner worked was presented in terms of such questions as: "How can the sensuous and the ideal world be reconciled? How can a pleasurable feeling partake of the character of reason?" (Bosanquet 1957:183). The primary concern of Wagner became, in philosophical terms, how to reconcile that duality. That reconciliation was possible in the drama because:

Only in the most perfect artwork . . . the drama can . . . import itself with full success . . . through employment of every artistic expressional faculty of man, the poet's aim is in drama the most completely carried from the understanding to the feeling . . . . The poet's cunning, however, is the complete ascension of the aim into the artwork, the emotionalization of the intellect (Wagner 1964:21).

To achieve this "emotionalization of the intellect" the artwork had to unite poetry and music; this union was achieved through the
"inter-position of another faculty, that of tone" (Kirby 1969:18).
Thus, the concept of the total artwork has its genesis in this union between poetry and music.

There was a development parallel to Wagner which was at first independent of his influence--namely, the symbolist movement. The term symbolist was first applied to Mallarmé and his literary group in 1886, but the aesthetic from which the term generated includes such poets as Charles Baudelaire, Artur Rimbaud, and W. B. Yeats, and such theatre artists as Maurice Maeterlinck, Gordon Craig, Adolphe Appia, and again, Yeats (Bertocci 1964:77). The aesthetic principles were articulated by Baudelaire in an article written on Wagner:

What would be truly surprising is that sound should not suggest color, that colors should not be able to give the idea of a melody, and that sound and color should be unfitting to translate ideas; things always having been expressed through a reciprocal analogy, since the day when God uttered forth the world as a complex and indivisible totality (Bertocci 1964:77).

It is Bertocci in writing about the symbolist movement who best sums up the contribution of this movement to the concept of total theatre:

Symbolism, in its most general sense . . . in that emphasis by which it has exerted its greatest influence, may be seen as the aspiration common to several families of spirit toward a thoroughgoing poetic unity conceived in terms of the metaphor of "color" (which, as we have seen, has also its "music") in a philosophical context which permits interflow of meanings, both horizontally and vertically, between areas of experience formerly maintained distinct. For "organic unity" is as old as Aristotle, but though the image was taken from biology, it was translated in terms of structures easy for logic to distinguish. Hence, in the arts the emphasis on "plot" and on "line," and the distinctions between genres. But lay stress upon the individual and the particular, upon change and mobility, upon dynamism, upon interfusion, upon
an organism united as "life"--and this was the tendency of thought from the Renaissance on--and that unity can be conceived more "coloristically" and more "musically." From "line" to "color;" from "plot line" as the very sinew of rhythms as the real inner "life" of this unity; from the "fable" or "story" developing in linear fashion and conveying "meaning" easily susceptible of paraphrase, to an "import" suddenly, if fleetingly, "coming together" in consciousness, so that the "whole story" or "what the story has to say" consists of a perception distorted if lifted out of context--it is of this development in Western art that Symbolism itself is for the historian the "symbol" (Kirby 1969:xx-xxi).

There was, historically, a splintering of the symbolist movement into several factions during World War I; one was formalism, of which Vakhtangov was a member, another was surrealism, of which Antonin Artaud was a disciple. It is Artaud's concept of theatre that has most influenced many contemporary attempts at total theatre (Kirby 1969:xxi). Artaud evolved a theory of theatre that is non-representational and non-literary, which employs "all the means of expression utilizable on the stage" (Artaud 1958:39). For Artaud, dance, sound, lights, etc., were to combine with "a speech before words" to create a total "complex poetry of the stage itself" (Artaud 1958:113). The efficacy of Artaud's theatre resides in its being an "instrument in the therapeutic alteration of consciousness" (Kirby 1969:xxvi). By resolving the duality of reason and feeling, Artaud's theatre would seek to eliminate the conflicts of "matter and mind, idea and form, concrete and abstract" (Artaud 1958:52). The purpose of Artaud's theatre was to "teach us the metaphysical identity of concrete and abstract" (Artaud 1958:59). Artaud's influence, and his ambiguity are expressed by the deliberate experimentation of Peter Brook and Charles Markowitz and the admitted influence of the Artaud-inspired
experiment on Marat/Sade (Brook 1969:39). Charles Marowitz has assessed the experimentation in the following:

Where, in all reflection, I have asked myself, where, in all of this, was Artaud? It was never our intention to create an Artaudian theatre—to do what, in fact, Artaud himself never did. But there were too many provocative insights and tantalizing challenges in The Theatre and Its Double not to take him up. What was Artaudian in our work was the search for means, other than naturalistic-linguistic means, of communicating experiences and insights. Also, our attitude to the classics—not as peerless master-works, but simply as material that could be reworked and rethought in very much the same way Shakespeare reworked and rethought Kyd, Holinshed, Boccacio, and Marlowe. And what was characteristically Artaudian was the shared distaste and impatience the group's directors felt towards prevailing theatre-trends; the well-upholstered, self-esteeming cul-de-sac in which the contemporary theatre found itself.

The quest for Artaud, if it's lucky, will not simply discover sounds, cries, groans, and gestures, but new areas that never even occurred to Artaud. His value is that of the devastating skeptic whose very posture and tone of voice questions the validity of highly-coveted achievements. How important is the accurate reproduction of the trivia in our lives, asks Artaud? How significant is the arbitrary social thesis that elaborates a-partial insight so that we are persuaded this is the whole story? How valuable, asks Artaud, is a theatre that elegantly, excitingly, and wittingly reiterates the cliches of our lives—compared to a theatre that suddenly opens up, like a mountain crevice, and sends down a lava that scoursthe lies, half-truths, and embedded deceptions of our civilization? "Metaphysical" has become a pretentious word with high-falutin' connotations, but if one defines it as a form of imagery through which we can rediscover the essential links between sky, rock, land, sea, gods, and men—that is a lesson worth learning, and one the theatre is not yet able to teach. The cruelty that Artaud referred to (this is a truism worth repeating) did not refer exclusively to torture, blood, violence, and plague—but to the cruelest of all practices: the exposure of mind, heart, and nerve-ends to the grueling truths. behind a social reality that deals in psychological crises when it wants to be honest, and political evils when it wants to be responsible, but rarely if ever confronts the existential horror behind all social and
psychological facades. This is where Artaud becomes practical and level-headed, because he declares: if we want to have a theatre that isn't trivial or escapist, we have to find a new way of operating such a theatre: a new way of generating the actor into action, the playwright into meaning, and the public into consciousness. An exhortation couched in rhetoric isn't the same as a body of work and achievement, but at certain junctures in history—and I believe we're at one at this moment—it is the healthiest noise we can hear (1969:172).

Total theatre seeks to communicate on several levels of consciousness simultaneously. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to utilize movement, dance, music, pure sound in an attempt to explore and express the total experience of the play.

The approach to the production of Jean-Paul Sartre's adaptation of The Trojan Women by Euripides is defined, basically, by Brian Clarke in Group Theatre. It is necessary to discuss the Clarke approach against which the rehearsal process shall be tested. Because the approach which Clarke outlines is general and does not give a step by step, day by day outline of procedures, it will be necessary to document each step in the Director's Log, which constitutes Chapter 3 below; where deviations to the Clarke approach, as discussed below, do occur, they will be duly noted in the Log.

Clarke begins his discussion by proposing that the major distinction between an orthodox approach and a group approach to a given text is that the group approach is concerned with exploring and expressing the subtext of the text: "that vast and powerful meaning that swirls beneath the apparently logical order of the words in the text... ranges of meaning and experience that underlie or transcend the logical 'head' meaning words usually carry" (Clarke 1971:3).
To achieve this end, it is necessary to have a group trained to bring its collective resources to bear on the mining operation necessary" (Clarke 1971:3). The result is total theatre which "appeals to ... whole man, to the most primitive as well as to the most sophisticated parts of him, and the techniques of group theatre are concerned with evolving and using stimuli that will allow us to reach these often evasive elements" (Clarke 1971:4). This process is divided into four general stages: (1) becoming a group, (2) absorption, (3) interaction and conflict, and (4) the new pattern (Clark 1971:6).

Clarke further outlines three basic processes of which the aforementioned stages are a part: (1) working-in, (2) working-around, and (3) working-out. It is the working-in method that will be used; however, it is necessary to distinguish. Working-around is the method whereby the material with which the group begins work is both unformed and gathered from outside the group. By unformed material is meant material which lacks an "existing shape to the story, no art shape" (Clarke 1971:66), thus forcing the group to develop its own shape or structure. Working-out is essentially the method of generating the material from within the group: "this method is the closest to personal playwriting of all the methods" (Clarke 1971:80). The group "starts from a situation or some characters and, having established this, works-out in a linear manner towards a climax and solution" (Clarke 1971:80). Working-in is the method in which the group starts from an already formed work, one that imposes a strong shape on the group's exploration (Clarke 1971:49). This method
assumes that the writer is brought into the group as a "member" and that: "Each will listen carefully to what the 'new member' is saying and will respond to his stimulus but as the group will also have its contribution to make we will get that amalgam which is the mask of the group play" (Clarke 1971:50).

The first stage in the process is becoming a group. It is based on the assumption that the success of the group in theatrical terms is based on five factors: (1) group-members' sensitive responses to each other, (2) the group's honesty and openness to each other, (3) the daring and inventiveness with which they have solved the problems they have set for themselves, (4) the relevance and interest of the problems themselves, and (5) the players' skill in presentation (Clarke 1971:38). It is factors one and two which are of concern in this first stage. Movement is the fundamental prerequisite for the group theatre project; as such, it is an ongoing development (Clarke 1971:39). However, Clarke breaks this stage of the process into the following parts: (1) sight, (2) hearing, and (3) touch. The exercises which he suggests to develop these senses and at the same time group cohesion and sensitivity are contained in the Appendix A of his book. The remaining parts of this first stage are: (1) the word, (2) the sentence, and (3) the situation. Regarding the word, it is suggested that words be introduced slowly into the process, thus allowing the group ample time to become accustomed to using the other senses as effective means of communication:
Start with just one word at a time and squeeze it dry. Experiment with it, play with it, do everything you can think of with it . . . say it rhythmically; let the group divide into pairs to work out their own rhythmic pattern of movement, sight, sound, touch and meaning, telling them that at some stage in the pattern each element must stand alone and that the pattern must climax with all five elements communicating . . . simultaneously" (Clark 1971:45).

The approach to the sentence is essentially the same, though it is suggested that poetry be used. The situation is essentially group improvisation and exploration (Clarke 1971:47). It is suggested that very simple situations be introduced to begin developing the group's exploratory interests and skills: "At this stage choose something like this. Two people meet in a street, they nod to each other and pass on. Or, the whole group is standing at a bus stop; the bus comes, but passes them by--full up" (Clarke 1971:47).

The second stage in the process is absorption, the purpose of which is that "of creating in the collective mind of the group . . . an intellectual and emotional structure that you can test on the group itself" (Clarke 1971:8). This is the period of intellectual as well as dramatic grasping the work in its own terms. It is a period of study, of reading the play and understanding it in its own terms: its meanings, and its world. Clarke has delineated this period as one of "direct investigation" (Clarke 1971:51), which includes not only the text, the background, and available criticism, but also rehearsing the play, not for presentation at this stage, but "communication--the communication of the playwright to the actor. As you rehearse the play, in the words of the playwright, you will
find . . . that all sorts of things are being communicated" (Clarke 1971:52). The period of direct investigation, essentially, corresponds to the rehearsal process of any play done in its own terms, including the subtext. "Having established the meaning of the play in its own terms the ambitious company can then go on to confront the play with their own contemporary sensibility and then make a production out of the assonances and dissonances that emerge from this confrontation" (Clarke 1971:53).

The third stage in the process is interaction or conflict:

It is the time when the group with its collective personality confronts the work in hand, engages with it, conflicts with it, seeks out every crevice and penetrates it. If the group has succeeded in apprehending a structure which is other than itself, then the conflict will be real and authentic drama will emerge (Clarke 1971:8).

This is a period of indirect investigation. In this period Clarke suggests two basic modes of investigation: movement and improvisation. Movement is based on the assumption that "the body develops its own investigation of the material and contributes its own unique ways of solving and presenting the solutions to the problems" (Clarke 1971:55). It is suggested that the exploration of major themes and conflicts be conducted in movement patterns and qualities: "You may look for the key words in a Greek chorus, and elaborate on them or work them into a rhythmic pattern as a counterpoint to the narrative— or even replace words with some other communication" (Clarke 1971:55). Movement is important because it often suggests the final pattern that the production will assume (Clarke 1971:57). Improvisation is "one of the most important of the tools available to the company with which to
examine the text" (Clarke 1971:57). This is true because it forces exploration to be theatrical rather than narrowly cerebral, and it makes the group embrace the problems rather than keeping them at a distance. In each improvisation, it is suggested that the central core or conflict of a scene be explored comically and seriously; also, that improvisation be used [again using the central conflict] to explore various situations in which the same conflict exists (Clarke 1971:59). The greatest danger in this approach is that the temptation is always there to elaborate rather than explore: "In improvisation, much of value can be discovered by playing with the meanings in your own words, by isolating elements and working out from them ... a good improvisation will take a specific problem from the text and find out about it" (Clarke 1971:57). The most significant, and often repeated, warning is "to stay with the text" during the stage of the process: "whatever you do you are always aware of the words of the writer even if, for good reason, you decide not to use them" (Clarke 1971:55).

The final stage in the process is the new pattern. It is impossible to describe this final stage, since it will vary from group to group, as well as from script to script. However, there are two considerations which must be made; one is the "art link:" the inevitable progression of the story, "by all means investigate the underlying themes of the work in hand but attach them firmly to the story and do not let them impede its telling" (Clarke 1971:64). The most essential characteristic a group must develop, according to
Clarke, is humility:

Finally, do not be afraid to reject any, or all, of your exploratory material that does not add to the play. Perhaps you have found in a great text the universal relevance of it in its own terms and its own words. In which case present it that way. If your exploration work has been thorough and you really have a group, the work will show itself in the way the company communicate with each other and with the audience. If on the other hand you have decided to include in the final pattern new elements culled from the exploratory work, make sure those fit into the play as part of a continuous drive forward and are not there just to show how clever you have been to spot a parallel (1971:65).

The concept of Group Theatre, as developed by Clarke, has two basic tenets: collaboration and total théâtre. Collaboration is a method of working which affirms the corporate nature of theatre. This method was used variously in the ancient Greek theatre, the medieval theatre, Shakespeare's theatrical company, and in the twentieth century by such as the Vakhtangov Theatre in Russia, and, the Group Theatre in the United States. Collaboration seeks to make cooperation a creative principle in theater. Total theatre is theatre which appeals to every level of the conscious and unconscious mind. As a concept its self-conscious development can be traced historically from Wagner's concept of a total artwork which stressed the effective interplay between the various art forms in a synthesized form. The symbolist concept of correspondence, though developed independently of Wagner, emphasizes the organic unity which exists between color and sound, movement and words. Two theatre artists who were influenced by the symbolist movement were Vakhtangov and Artaud. It is Artaud who has most heavily influenced recent attempts at group theater.
There are three approaches to group theatre as outlined by Clarke. They are the working-out method, the working-around, and, the working-in method. The first method seeks to generate material, form and production solely from within the group itself. The second uses material from outside the group which then the group develops and shapes. The third method begins with already formed material and through a four stage process evolves the groups production. The working-in method is the approach to be used in the production of *The Trojan Women*. The four stages were: (1) becoming a group, (2) absorption, (3) interaction and conflict, and (4) the new pattern. This approach does not seek to alter the original intent or meaning of the material, but to extend and deepen the meaning and effectively communicate with a contemporary audience.
CHAPTER 3

THE DIRECTOR'S LOG

The approach to Sartre's adaptation of *The Trojan Women* will follow the approach outlined in Brian Clarke's *Group Theatre*. The selection process, or casting, will be divided into two phases: the first will be an interview—open to anyone with dramatic experience and/or training—in which the process and expectation of the director are explained; the second phase is an eight-hour workshop in which various exercises are explored and after which both actors and director have an opportunity to decide whether the relationship will continue. In conventional terms, this is an extended try-out, with both parties having the opportunity to decide. The rehearsal process will extend eight weeks, unless the group itself decides to postpone the opening. The production will be given at Pima Community College as part of its regular season. The anticipated audience composition should include Pima College students, faculty, friends of the cast, and the general public.
I have decided to allow anyone who is interested, particularly after the project is explained, to participate. In order to standardize the explanation and the anticipated questions, a new group will be talked to every hour. The explanation will seek to cover the following:

1. The reason for the project: thesis.

2. Group direction: each participant is expected to make input into the interpretation, casting and direction of the play; further, re-interpretation is very possible and legitimate.

3. While commitment is vital, it should be as artists rather than at a gut-ripping personal level.

4. The story which best defines the forthcoming process: there was a man who had lost his wife; one day a friend came upon him digging in the sand. "What are you doing?" "I am looking for my wife; since I don't know where she is, I must look for her everywhere!"

5. To ask that each person buy in, not because they want a specific part, but simply because they want to be a part of what the show says.

6. Finally, that we would spend eight hours Saturday doing exercises, in a way having a mutual try-out, at the end of which we would try to decide on a rehearsal schedule.
In all, twenty-five people were interviewed. The final working cast fluctuated between fifteen and nineteen, until the end of the first week of rehearsal, at which time we had fifteen. The agenda was divided into two sections: general business, and, specific group building and acting exercises, the latter two are included below. The business section of the meeting consisted of an explanation regarding the day's activities as an extended mutual try-out and group building. Next we discussed schedules and concluded only that there would be no Sunday rehearsals and the only scheduled rehearsal would begin Monday at 7:30 p.m. Finally, we discussed the show, the nature of the experiment, and the need for each of us to buy in. As stated above, the specific exercises follow below:

Warm-Ups (before lunch)

I. Individual
   A. Relax/Tune-in/Feel/Tune-in/Slap/Tune-in/Tap/Tune-in
   B. Cocoon
   C. Breathing: hands, fists, grapes, bending, on back
   D. Movement/sound added
   E. Movement dialogue(s)
   F. Movement and sound dialogue
   G. Break (10 minutes)/no talking--get in touch with feelings--if you smoke, get in touch with it

II. Continuation
   A. Alignment
B. Space exploration
C. Blind explore
D. Become object
E. Blind Mill
   1. introduce; explore
   2. say hello--knees/back/face/feet
   3. choose partners
F. Get to know/touch
G. Hand dialogue/back dialogue
H. Tune-in/hand dialogue/back dialogue
I. Lift
J. Choose another partner
K. Back massage/slap
L. Trust run-finger tips
M. Trust walk/return become an object/share verbally experiences

Warm-Ups (after lunch)

III. Continuation
A. Tune-in/relax/alignment
B. Blind mill/with sound--explore sound--choose partners
C. Sound dialogue/hands and sound/back and sound
D. Decide on one sound--blind mill and sound--find partner
E. Nursery rhyme--across room
F. Blind mill with sound--emotion find similar emotion, explore, choose partner
G. Play with sound; throw it to your partner's hand, pass it, bounce off wall, floor, etc.

H. Find another pair, do same--four to eight to group

I. Break--conversation only with sound/touch

J. Mill--explore eyes--(1) reflection, (2) minimum expression, (3) dialogue, (4) choose partner

K. Explore with eyes/dialogue--hand and eyes

L. Mirror--no leader--four

M. Pass sight to touch/touch to sound/sound to sight

N. Pass emotion: (1) make fun, (2) disgust, (3) anger, (4) love (touch/sight)

O. Sculpture

Rehearsal

JANUARY 21, 1974

The first rehearsal. It was conceived as an introductory session: a preliminary reading of the script, organization or rehearsal schedule, car pool [made necessary by the gas shortage], and a discussion of expectations.

After a brief period of idle conversation, I asked people what parts they wanted to read. Thus, we began the first reading. In itself it was neither good nor bad; we discovered that the Menelaus-Helen scene was particularly funny. We also discovered that Donna was relatively a Greek scholar.

The attempt to arrive at a rehearsal schedule was somewhat long and involved; there was a lot of talking; a lot of deviations
from the topic. It took us nearly an hour to agree. And although I personally disagreed, and voiced it, I went along with the schedule the others decided to test for one week. We will meet Wednesday and Thursday from 7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

I then tried to discuss "group creation." There was only one discernible response: the fear of losing one's individual intuition to which I responded that without individual intuition there would be no creation. The actors were reminded that journals or notes on each rehearsal were expected. And we left.

JANUARY 22, 1974

No rehearsal. Because we need more actors, I am going to propose to the group the addition of four more kids, it must be their decision, else they will never sense themselves.

JANUARY 23, 1974

The second rehearsal. Five people showed up asking whether they could be part of the group; the group had another decision to make. One hour later, we had decided to accept them if they wanted in; the other problem was how to deal with people who had commitments such as, one actor has the possibility of a one day movie part; it was then asked when is the group closed? It was decided during that same hour or so that tonight was the end in terms of people coming in.

I foresee problems around the volatile issue of women's liberation: the relationship between the actor, his personal
life style, and the group and the play. One thing is certain: that
the partying and sleeping together and the other sticky interpersonal
problems and conflicts which plague a lot of young, inexperienced
groups will be combated. Inherently though, the problem of the gutsy
and the intellectual, or artistic honesty in both exploration and
performance is very real.

The exercises that we finally were able to do were: (1) cocoon,
(2) the cat, (3) slow motion walk, (4) rhythmic pattern/tense-up,
(5) life mask, and (6) Clarke's sight exercises. I have asked
everyone to spend fifteen minutes every night in warm-ups.

I proposed a tentative method of group exploration: read and
re-read the play, discuss it Saturday, read around the play and its
themes, and work as a group scene by scene.

Finally, the difficult problem is developing a vocabulary with
which to explore: techniques, perhaps Clarke's thing about taking
words apart, sound/movement, improvisation, movement, but more
organic to situation, breathing will help. Big issue: discipline.

JANUARY 24, 1974

A seemingly major breakthrough, we began at 7:30, with the
original group, minus the five people over whom we had hassled. The
warm-ups were disciplined and extensive (forty-five minutes). We
then did non-verbal communication exercises, blindfolded: hands,
sound, nursery rhyme; after ten minute break, we did a series of
breathing exercises from bio-energetics.
JANUARY 26, 1974

(1) Warm-ups, (2) mirrors, mirror with movement, mirror with movement/sound. Translate touch to sound, sound to sight, sight to touch and vice versa, explored it in pairs, then groups of four, then the whole group with each person acting as the conductor. Each actor brought in something with which to make sound. We then spent twenty minutes or so exploring the various ways instruments could make different sounds. Then we explored ways our bodies could make sound. We took the instruments again and tried to communicate, tried then to communicate with sound made by bodies. I had wanted to introduce Clarke's exercise on words: hate/love, but everyone claimed to be drained, so instead we did the following: blindfolded, imagine you have been blinded by atomic blast, you have twenty minutes to live. This was the first really significant emotional exercise, and the response, in terms of emotional commitment, was good. It was collectively very "heavy." After it ended and everyone stopped crying/began to regain control, a spontaneous and contagious laughter began; reminded me of the function of the sartyr play at the end of tragic trilogy. We then adjourned to Eini Johnson's for lunch.

The lunch-meeting began with each person writing out what she/he needed in terms of the play/rehearsal process and what they each offered. They were then asked to share this with someone and then in small groups; invariably the exercise broke down into general discussion. After lunch was served, we broke into two groups and discussed the play's theme. There was no other purpose than to.
generate thinking about the play's ideas. Each person was given an essay by Sartre and a general outline of a procedure for script analysis:

1. Title each scene in terms of main action.
2. Define each character's action in terms of action verb for each scene (the: what she wants).
3. Define how each character seeks to fulfill action (the: how she does it).

The next two big problems that face us are (1) the final two techniques: sound/movement and Clarke's word exercise and (2) how to explore the play as a group without specific characters. The group decided on rehearsal schedule for coming week in less than ten minutes and expressed a desire to eventually bring in one or two women to critique progress. Rehearsal: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, at which time we will see whether Saturday is necessary.

JANUARY 28, 1974

Rehearsal began at 7:30 p.m. with a forty-five minute warm-up; the warm-ups are designed to improve skills such as, movement, concentration, relaxation, and non-verbal communication. We then engaged in the breathing lung exercise, which I sense will eventually influence our performance pattern, whatever that finally is, but only after a brief "rap session" regarding being on time, telephone numbers, names, expectations regarding being on time, cleaning up rehearsal room, etc. Kinetic sculpture was next.
This generated the idea of using several actors to play Poseidon, much like introduction to *Calm Down Mother*: the image is one in which speaking is rotated among actors, Poseidon's many mouths, with the others assuming attitude both of and toward Deity. Finally, I was able to introduce the sound/movement exercise which, in terms of the forthcoming exploration of the text, should prove useful. The Spolin exercise of "Waiting for a Bus" was broken into three parts: (1) actors have occupation only, (2) occupation and inner action, and (3) occupation/inner action and on signal: sound/movement or extension of inner action. It didn't work because there was too much head work going on, not enough emotional commitment. We will try it again.

The rehearsal ended with a discussion of the first two scenes and the proposed way of approaching it collectively: (1) action, (2) rhythm, (3) movement, (4) imagery, and (5) subtext. The how will remain a question, for several days, to be defined and re-defined.

**JANUARY 30, 1974**

As a matter of course, in part to facilitate these entries, I prepared an agenda before each rehearsal. The agenda for this rehearsal was amazingly short: warm-ups, housekeeping, and the question: How do we begin? While I had several ideas, it seemed more important that the group wrestle with it themselves. We stopped the warm-ups at 8:15 p.m. and began almost immediately to deal with this question. The discussion was summed up by Sherry: "We're playing hide and seek and nobody's it." Essentially, everyone was
looking to me, trying to pin me down on direction, but I felt strongly that if they did not begin to assume responsibility for the process there would never be any engagement, no creative relationship, so I continued to avoid definite statements of direction. Finally someone suggested that one person read the first Hecuba speech and each person explore the emotional life of the speech in his/her own way. This came after much discussion of the need for individual actresses to have "time to develop character once the play was cast," which indicates to me that several people are still clinging to shore rather than buying into the concept. As Donna Taxco began to read, people began to develop writhing movements on the floor, others rocked on their knees, some milled around, several moaned; I coached this conglomerate of activity as best I could, finding a drum and beating a steady rhythm throughout the speech. The result was very interesting. It was discovered that Hecuba and the chorus are essentially one: a sisterhood of suffering and that she, Hecuba, was articulating the emotional reality of the entire group. Everyone made a nice commitment to their way of work: emotional, physical, or both. When the improvisation was over, several people articulated the discovery mentioned above. We took a cigarette break, and without much more than the additional, unanswered query as to whether or not Hecuba was a "character," I suggested non-verbal improvisation on Slave Auction. I have used this improvisation before, but this time I made the women the slaves and the men the buyers. The slaves are "chained" and cannot break out
unless someone forgets to signal that they are chained or deliberately releases them, completely non-verbal. Examination of the slaves was only restricted by propriety. The improvisation ran for close to an hour, at the end of which we talked briefly about the issue of complicity: "He started to fondle me and I liked it, but I also hated it." From there the women sat in a circle and Karinn Hamill read Hecuba very emotionally. It was very moving. We broke up almost immediately after the reading, a couple of the actresses had to pull themselves together. I asked the men to think about the relation of sex and power. Two things emerged from the rehearsal: the very effective image of slavery and the question of whether this is a play which emphasizes situation over character, in the realistic sense. Chaikin refers to Joseph Campbell: "He, Campbell, referred to mythology as personifications of states of mind and projections of fears and wishes . . . and religious stories as poems using symbols; the symbols being signs of those things which one could not otherwise find a way to talk about" (Chaikin 1972:33). Elsewhere: "In the work of Rysyard Cieslak . . . there is no evidence of character in the former definition of motives and information. His work is an articulation of a common human condition" (1972:16). It is much like the masks used in Greek theatre of Euripides.

JANUARY 31, 1974

What a let-down, though perhaps necessary after last night. The warm-ups were lacking concentration and commitment: talking and giggling were frequent. The discussion was an affirmation of the
emotional purge of last night's rehearsal. "It was heavy." "I felt close to other women, . . . felt men were intruding, etc." Several suggestions were made as to possible exercises: Becoming an Object; women treated like marionettes; create opposition between women and soldiers. We then read the Talthybius scene, after which each man was to tell the women of some predetermined disaster in their, women's, families. That was the extent of the rehearsal, except perhaps the realization of the extent to which the guilt of Talthybius is very real even to him, though not openly revealed.

FEBRUARY 1, 1974

I led the warm-ups and began pushing for more physical and vocal commitment. The level of concentration was much better and the energy was high. I introduced the Clarke word/sentence exercise. We broke up into four groups and began to explore the Cassandra speech: several images began to emerge: claws caressing manhood, dressed for carnival/singing hilariously, there right in the skull, they think I'm mad, the impetuous thighs of night. They, images, were much more kinetic than anything we had done before. More importantly, the juxtaposition of the images created the sense of madness which, though not real, is perceived as madness because of the way she expresses herself. One actor suggested that he saw in Cassandra not only clarity but also power derived from that clarity. The fact that she could see and what she saw gave her a kind of sensuality; the same issue of power and sexuality, or is it what Clarke calls a link?
The discussion of Cassandra was exciting; I was excited. It would seem that we now have three possible ways of exploring the text on our feet. What remains is to continue, patiently, to explore the play, record our findings and look forward to trying to give all of that form. There is a need for more movement and variety in intensity/pitch, hence texture. Should we decide to go the traditional route, some very tentative casting ideas: Helen: Sue Davis, Hecuba: Karinn Hamill(?), Cassandra: Carolyn Reed, Andromache: JoAnn Dreben(?), Chorus Leader: Denise Parson(?), nothing definite. We need to explore dramatic images of slavery, sisterhood of pain, power/sex.

FEBRUARY 4, 1974

I decided during the weekend to talk the group through the warm-up exercises because I was not convinced that everyone was taking it sufficiently serious for them to be effective. Doing it this way, the concentration was very good, and hence the warm-up was perceived as effective; whether it was or not, in fact, can only be decided with time and results. I then introduced another exercise from the Open Theatre; the sound/movement with partners; in which each actor consciously chooses a line of dialogue to which he/she can make an emotional commitment. The task is to then translate the impulse into an abstract sound and movement. We finally did the "lung," which was moderately successful; many of the people stopped again, either out of fear or a feeling of its inconsequentiality. We then read the Hecuba/Andromache, after an extended discussion which
can be summarized as a tirade against Andromache, whom most of the women saw as a "typical suburban housewife," "in and out," and "self-centered." It soon became necessary to get up on our feet, lest we wallow in self-indulgent talk. We explored the images of Carnival of Peace, "Yesterday," "I never liked you, you never liked me." The results were useful, though not as astonishing as the exploration of Cassandra. Nor did it generate any talk around the script. Finally, we did a silent improvisation of people waiting for a report of an airplane disaster. Two or three people did cry... which led me to question the whole procedure and justification for approaching people/play in this way. I conclude that my commitment, which everyone knew well in advance of rehearsals, that if a play does not make a difference in the lives of the cast, it can not have a profound effect on the audience, is still valid, but only to the extent that I have an idea that whatever the final form, the production must work as a confrontation/encounter of the group and the audience, with Sartre as the mediator. The idea of the play which we need to communicate is the role and fate of women in a society at war, and the searing injustice of that oppression.

FEBRUARY 6, 1974

After a very long, involved conversation with one of the female instructors at Pima College, I re-thought the relationship of Andromache to the play. It seems that she functions as a kind of central spring to the play, Cassandra and Helen standing as images
on either side of her. That is, she embodies much more ambiguity than the other two, and hence is more easily defineable as a woman, more possibility of identification with her. Further, she is struggling with both the revenge of Cassandra, Helen's need to survive, and contradictions of sexuality inherent in both Helen and Cassandra. Another issue which we have not dealt with is the meaning of Astyanax: Murray contends that it is his tragedy (1905:45). At any rate, the issue for me becomes how Andromache can give up her child and what that means to her. Another issue is her constant reference to Hector as the source/guarantor of her power and identity. Still another, which was suggested in the above mentioned conversation, is the possibility that the drive toward motherhood, creation, is the core both of female identity and the female dilemma. At any rate, we discussed these issues at length, with no small amount of disagreement and then we got on our feet.

First, we explored images: (1) "Your will to live is insane," (2) "Take it, I can't protect it, I can only give it life," and (3) "A woman is only an animal." The energy was extremely high and in groups one and two, so too was the emotional intensity. Group one took upon itself to divide the group, with two people exploring the word "insane" and the rest of the group doing the entire phrase. They explored the phrases and combination for about twenty minutes. The middle group [two] developed a movement which was a clutching of the lower abdomen on protect and a thrusting palms-up, giving helplessly, gesture. The words were supported by a pushing-down
guttural sound. The result was an image of the love-agony of birth and the helplessness of giving up. As the movement gained momentum, it also gained emotional intensity, so much so that the other groups stopped working and watched. It reached its peak and the two women in the group began to cry and to embrace in what seemed an embrace of recognition. We took a break.

The next technique for exploration was to improvise the text, taking the characters and their action and, in the same situation as the play, following the impulses wherever they led. Once again, the agony of giving up the child was felt, as well as the relationship between Hecuba and Andromache, which at one level appears hostile, but emotionally has several points of contact and/or similarity.

The emotional investment and response suggests that this image resonates the most profoundly of any; perhaps because of experience, several of those responding were mothers, etc., perhaps because of something different. I feel that the issue of the body: its contradictions, potential, and "betrayal" must be explored, but how?

On Saturday, we will begin to evaluate our experience of the play thus far and hopefully see a direction emerge. Perhaps it is too soon, we still have five weeks, to begin to press for a pattern, but several images are beginning to emerge. It may be that in our exploration of images we have not paid enough attention to making the resulting image correspond to the play's context.
FEBRUARY 7, 1974

This rehearsal was to explore the Menelaus-Helen scene. However, by the time we were ready to begin exercises, it was 7:45 p.m. and four people had gone for drinks; they returned about 8:00 p.m. In short, the discipline began to go. Looking back over the previous rehearsals, this seems to be the rhythm: like breathing, in and out, an emotionally taxing rehearsal followed by a light one. We read the play from the Menelaus entrance to the end. We then discussed it briefly and proceeded to get up and, in small groups, improvised the scene between Helen and Hecuba and Menelaus. One group chose to do an improvisation involving a pregnant wife, a sterile husband, and nosy mother-in-law, which was not what was intended: the groups were asked to take the characters in the scene and the basic situation and action, and follow it in their own words. I decided to let this particular improvisation continue, even get involved myself, because it gave Ken, an inexperienced actor, a chance to learn a few things about improvisation and hopefully a little about scene work. Because the level of concentration was so low after people finished their improvisation, I let everyone go.

FEBRUARY 9, 1974

This was intended to be a work session around the script. That is, a talk session. Raquel Rubio de Goldsmith, a woman historian, was invited to participate to offer both an historical perspective and to raise issues implied both in the script and in our contemporary situation. She did just that. I began the discussion
trying to focus attention on Sartre's essay, "Forgers of Myths" and his emphasis on situations rather than characters. Not much discussion followed, which led me to think that several people had not read the article, or much of anything. So I tried a different approach. I listed the characters who underwent changes, like Hecuba and the Chorus, and those who were the agents of change; Cassandra, Andromache, and Astyanax; Helen, Menelaus, and the Greek Generals through Talthybius. I must confess as I write that I have some question about where Andromache belongs, and that Talthybius may well be a pawn, which is, I guess, why it is the Greek Generals through Talthybius. It was suggested that the action of the play was to seek justice. The discussion quickly evolved to a discussion of the place of women in society. It was agreed that:

1. Sartre treats women unjustly, that the note of individual freedom on which the play ends is a concept which has evolved from men's position in society; that, alienated from nature by means of reason and rational structures, including society, technology, and I would add language.

2. Women and their present situation is more ambivalent and hence their oppression is compounded: they are more closely allied to nature by reason of their biological function of child birth/rearing.

3. The value system and/or social-psycho reality is based upon the masculine alienation from nature and not women's tie to nature, and it is that which makes the position of women in society so painfully obscure and oppressive.
It was further pointed out that men, for the most part, rule the world and hence cause wars, to which several men in the group objected. Richard Hutchinson particularly was opposed to the differentiation between the plight of men and that of women. The emotional climate of the discussion became highly charged, and at one point, almost nasty. But the group moved through that, finally hearing Richard's contention that generalization was very dangerous, to which I added, particularly to a dramatic enterprise. It was at that point that we took a break.

After the break, it seemed necessary to move toward some definition of our direction. To this end, I tried to reiterate several of the images that had emerged from our work of the past two weeks: madness, revenge, slavery, complicity, identity, power/powerlessness, manipulation, motherhood. I then suggested an image in my head which was a composite of the discussion of the earlier part of this day, reading of Sylvia Plath, and our brief work around slavery: the women enclosed in a stockade, moving around like zombies. "Being a wife was like being brainwashed and afterwards you went about numb as a slave in some private totalitarian state" (Plath 1963:74). The idea that the show ends with the women or Talthybius asking the audience to shackle them; Poseidon being played by several people and Athene as a woman on a man's shoulders. From there someone suggested that the group could form the images suggested in the script such as, the bashing of Astyanax's head against the wall, the ships of Hecuba's song, etc. This ran on for
a while, no one challenging the essential image, except a question of whether the fence around the women was real or in the head. It was suggested that the word which we were struggling for was oppression, and that the technical questions of set would be resolved when, and I would add if, we decide what we want to say. Also, the image of starting with Andromache's speech about "I am only a woman" was suggested. Much to some people's increasing frustration, I suggested that we spend Monday exploring oppression to test out the image and see whether it will work.

The question of casting parts was raised after the group broke up. I received a telephone call from Karinn. Part of what was expressed was the pressure of time, five weeks, as being an important factor, also that having casted the play would be a viable way to explore further; although the question of the individual "artist" and his or her interpretation versus group direction was raised. This seems to me to be a crucial issue in the entire process. That is, how are artistic decisions to be made. Further, it is beginning to appear that several people could not buy in for the show rather than the part. How do we proceed from here? Will the casting of parts cause the process to begin to solidify too quickly? Can individual actors remain flexible within the process of definition by the group of what it wants to say dramatically; will it foster jealousy and hence destroy the process, the group and the show? What happens if parts are discovered to be interchangeable or are split in different ways? Can a traditionally experienced actress
make that kind of commitment to the group to remain that flexible? Is the question of five weeks really too short a time to fully explore the process, after all, most people bought into the group assuming the show would go up sometime around the fifteenth of March and to extend their commitment beyond that time seems unrealistic. Who makes the decision about the parts? How will just that decision influence the direction and choices we make? But equally, given the growing frustration, can we keep the group intact without casting? My own inclination is to ride with the process, however long it takes, but that seems unreal, given the time, the degree of experience and artistic commitment to this approach. What it all means, I think, is that we will begin to develop a procedure to cast the show Wednesday or the second meeting of the week, but with, I hope, the understanding that the roles will have to remain flexible enough to be submerged, altered, or whatever to what the group wants to say, which isn't too different from any other production approach, except that the decisions arise out of a group sensibility and exploration rather than the director's; although the fact that the group seems to want to buy my image is very disturbing.

In addition, if we do cast, we must be willing to try anything that might be suggested, to reject anything would seem to invalidate the process. Further, you never know what you will find. Finally, do not think people understand the relationship of actor/person to character, not that I do completely in this kind of production, but my hunch is that this will be clarified as we continue, regardless
of which way we go. At any rate, two things seem to me clear: (1) we first must explore oppression more, and (2) the decision to cast can only be reached through the above questions and probably more. It will be a very difficult time in the next two or three meetings; hope there is something left after the fireworks.

FEBRUARY 11, 1974

I approached the rehearsal with several assumptions: (1) I personally did not feel we were ready to deal with the issue of casting, (2) that it was necessary to explore oppression dramatically, (3) that if people were into dealing with the issue, we would. The group was into dealing with the issue of casting. I cannot detail the various and, to me, confusing/contradictory statements and discussions which proceeded; however, we agreed on the following procedure: (1) each person said, without comment from anyone, which parts they were interested in; (2) each person cast the show, again with no comment; and (3) each person was asked to write a casting list, based on their interpretation of what the show says. We are to meet Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to begin the process or rather carry it further. I know some of the feelings that will continue to surface, but a few things I have concluded: failure of the process pre-supposes seeing it through to the end, and not aborting halfway through. Although we have reached a point where casting has become a necessary step in terms of where people are, I feel a need to affirm this step as part of the process itself and not a negation
of it. That is, this project is still one committed to the group approach to direction. What that means in practical terms is that the role of the director is assumed by the group. To me that means: (1) all suggestions/ideas must be explored, though even those ideas must be relevant and appropriate, (2) the commitment is to the group interpretation or over-all concept, and (3) my role, each actor's role, cannot be assumed, but we have to be committed to working it out. My suggested procedure for the casting process will be:

1. Uncritically offer interpretation and the subsequent cast.
2. Critically discuss interpretation, draw consensus conclusion.
3. Begin to cast show in fishbowl with alter-ego. Show should be cast (a) only after we have reached a general conclusion about what we want to say and (b) by consensus.

FEBRUARY 13, 1974

It was a short meeting, by comparison (6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.). This enabled Richard and Randy to attend. The leadership of the group was passed to Richard and Denise. Unfortunately, I now think, I began with my interpretation of the play. My intent was not to lay my interpretation on anyone, but rather to indicate possibilities which I felt certain many of the less experienced people could not envision. It was accepted as only one possibility among several others, and I conclude my exclusive reign over the direction of the group had ended. Give and take with equity was now really possible.
My presentation frankly took too much time; as a result, we could not hear everyone's view. The general consensus of those heard from was that the play and our statement should be about oppression [women and men], war and absurdity, as dramatic images. I personally did not see anyone getting us on our feet, let alone getting a show up. But it was an important first step, making it necessary for each of us to become involved in the movement of the play from script to production. The meeting itself was short and orderly: each person giving her or his views of the play and the cast, without critical response. The instrument on feedback instructions was used, though with feedback minimal, it was not used extensively.

FEBRUARY 14, 1974

We had to move from our usual rehearsal space to a conference room because of the Spoon River production, which again claimed Randy and Richard. To recap this meeting in any detail would be impossible. We began in a seemingly orderly way, with Sue Smith presenting a four-page prepared interpretation of the play. This was followed by at least three other people, including Carolyn and Denise, giving imaginative interpretations of all or parts of the play. I can only hope that their suggestions are reflected in their journals and will be hence available for the final manuscript. It was at this point that the direction shifted from an objective to a subjective level. The essential issue was the split which had occurred in the group over the issue of casting, the feeling that several people had violated the trust of the group. That is,
they had hidden agendas, not buying in completely to the process. For their part, it was the feeling that the process had to move ahead if we were to meet our March 15th production commitment. One contributing factor was the fact that we did begin to discuss people, specifically, and roles. Several times emotions flared. At one point Karinn and Donna had a very fiery exchange, with Donna leaving the room, both in tears. We extended the meeting until 10:30 p.m. in order to deal with the feelings that had been expressed. We decided to begin on Saturday with the exercises, because as I stated to the group: actors finally come together through work, not talk. In addition, it was agreed that we would stay until we finished our task of casting on Saturday.

My reflections on this meeting were several: (1) much of the split along emotional lines had been also split along carpool and friendship lines, (2) the process, the whole production, was in jeopardy, (3) that to eliminate competition along individual lines was impossible, given our competitive society, even though I do feel that this approach to theatre and society is valid, but to ask people to change in eight weeks is difficult, (4) as communication improves, the exchange of creative ideas in a dialectical way is also improving, leading to the speculation that perhaps a communications lab at the beginning of the process would have been useful, and (5) this is not a therapy group, but a theatre company with a show to get up, which means that my primary commitment is to the task and not to individual feelings and psychological head trips, something we must all learn.
It is idle at this point to speculate as to why the group has not risen to throw me, a male, out as director; though probably that is a political/psychological issue and not a theatrical or dramatic one. Frankly, Saturday could go either into complete and total destruction or we can get on with the show. That scares me.

FEBRUARY 16, 1974

We did begin with warm-ups and then moved to the issue at hand. I began by making the observation regarding the riding/friendship split. I then asked the group to permit me to divide them into small groups, to both practice feedback, with the role of observer rotating through the group, and to evaluate Thursday's meeting. Four groups were formed, ostensibly for forty-five minutes, but they lasted until 12:30 p.m., two and a half hours. The whole time seemed very profitable, both in terms of feelings, resolutions and ideas. While I don't remember saying it specifically, Donna Taxco, who was still depressed, picked up my vibes and told the group that she could not see dealing with her feelings as helpful to the task before us. Parenthetically, I do agree with what I see as her sense of the tragedy of this group not to be able to evolve a new collective mode of response to ourselves and the group; that the poisonous element of competition is present and will not be eliminated even though we have agreed to proceed by consensus only and not voting.

The exercise seemed to pay off when we came together. Several conflicts from Thursday were resolved, and we were trying at least
to listen to each other. It was relatively easy to agree on statement: that it was a statement of oppression and war, the symbol of that oppression was women. We also decided on a contemporary quasi-general post-war, though not specifically which war, detention space, possibly a fenced enclosure as the setting. The agony I feared regarding reaching a consensus was not fulfilled. We spent close to a half hour on Poseidon and Pallas, deciding that either Cassandra or Andromache would also play Pallas. The half hour was essentially spent on establishing a procedure. Randy, who had missed much of the hassles of the week, influenced greatly the ultimate procedure: each person said who they favored for which parts, then the majority opinion was announced and those with minority opinions were given opportunity to either verbalize their opinions and persuade the group or decide honestly whether they could live with any given choice. The right of each individual to hold on to his/her own opinion was fiercely defended. The following cast was drawn, with the very explicit understanding that: (1) this was still a group direction process, and (2) hence, each chosen actor must remain flexible regarding cuts, redistribution of lines, and appropriate suggestions from the group:

Poseidon: Randy Fhar, Bill Lewis, Lionel Bryne

Pallas: either Cassandra or Andromache

Hecuba: Karinn Hamill

Cassandra: Carolyn Reed
Andromache: Jo Ann Dreben
Helen: Susan Davis
Menelaus: Richard Hutchinson
Chorus Leader: Eini Johnson
Talthybius: Don Matthews

It was pointed out that all the women were the chorus and had primary responsibilities to it. Because it seemed as though my initial cast list was being accepted, I changed my opinions in two instances, both to test whether the group was not unduly/uncritically accepting my position, and genuinely because I felt Sue Smith would make an interesting Cassandra and Denise Parson an excellent Andromache; she, I think, is a sleeper as an actress. The group's list was not mine! Though a week has been lost, in terms of actual rehearsal, the amount of energy and thought given by each person to the play, the parts, and the audience was amazing. The show has been thought through with each of us having made very heavy emotional and intellectual investments. Whether we can work through the show in the remaining four weeks, or be forced to have an extension, remains to be seen. It is my hunch that we can do an intensive four week production, though we may take the extra week to polish. Now to work!

FEBRUARY 18, 1974

This was a difficult rehearsal for me. In the first place, I continued to see, whether real or not, the lingering effects of the forays of the past week. Concentration was low, there seemed
to be little willingness to engage the play at an emotional and/or imaginative level, and I was frightened; but then, I usually am frightened at those first few rehearsals when form is the goal towards which I seem to inch rather than fly. Now it is particularly difficult, since there isn't a concrete image around which to work: initially, we, I thought, agreed to explore the compound/stockade as the physical image, but during the discussion period tonight there was a lot of resistance to the idea. I don't want to force any image prematurely, yet feel the pressing need to begin working in a specific way. It is hard; sleepless nights, dreams, etc. Perhaps all of this, together with what I perceived as the emotional climate, prompted me to introduce a very low-keyed procedure: the exercises were essentially relaxing types, we talked a few minutes about publicity and the image or place; then had a timed read through (one hour and ten minutes) which was purposely unemotional, serving only to introduce the actors to their characters and relationships. Richard was upset by the lack of concern with the poetic meter, or, as he put it, the musical dynamics. I tried to explain that it was not appropriate to deal with that at this point. Though I must admit that he began me thinking that this script could be considered a musical score, in need of the same kind of meticulous attention and subtle detail that obtains with music, but it's difficult to do a symphony with untrained musicians. How do you orchestrate the essence of oppression, revenge, madness, death, etc., etc., etc. But for all my agonizing rhapsodizing, the painful pragmatic issue
before us is how to begin, again. It was suggested by a friend that I let the group itself decide. He's right, I must let the group form its own method of investigation. So, painfully, be it.

FEBRUARY 20, 1974

We got up, the stockade/compound seemed to be everyone's choice, the reading the first time through was directionless, the exploration was very superficial. But perhaps, as Denise said later, the distinction between character and life is dangerously thin. I was very afraid that people were making decisions much too soon, without giving themselves a chance to come to grips with both the character's interior and the language/situation. It may have been that which caused me to over-react and begin to direct, thank goodness for Denise, who just would not let me "do my thing," since my thing tends to be, however inadvertently, a power trip. From the first reading I suggested, strongly, that they explore their confinement; try desperately to get out and give up: which I feel is the beginning of the play; that is, given-upness. My hunch is that chaos will reign for a few more days and then a collective breakthrough, hopefully, even for Richard. The guards were not really involved, Richard said, in any way which would have made the scene more dramatically tense. I was both scared and happy; happy because we were on our feet, and scared because of the time. Thanks to Denise, whatever power I had left in the group has been equalized to an extreme extent, which is good, but very hard!
FEBRUARY 20, 1974 - SUPPLEMENTAL

After a surprisingly short period of time, one and a half hour, we were on our feet. It was decided that the space was indeed in compound. With the decision made to begin with a reading, we defined the space, placing guards at four corners, and read through the Cassandra scene. After much "emoting" and indirection, some things were found. I suggested (1) that each person define for herself the nature of the walls which enclosed the space and try to escape, (2) that each person find her space in the compound, and (3) that each person bring an object with them and use it. While the concentration and commitment were very good, something was missing. Perhaps I was expecting the rays for form and direction to break suddenly through, which of course they did not. We ran the scenes again; this time they lacked the "emotion" and were quiet. I was guilty of usurping the group's mind, since several people indicated that they would have preferred to run the scenes again back to back. Sue Smith, Denise Parson and I discussed briefly where group direction came in, and where Bill Lewis should assert direction. It was agreed that more direction should come from the group.

FEBRUARY 21, 1974

Again on our feet, again with little apparent organization, but at least people had bought into doing their own thing direction-wise. A few more people have begun slowly to accept responsibility for the direction and general order of the rehearsal, but not enough!
Still people are waiting for me to give direction. At any rate, tonight we did the Andromache and the funeral scene, Helen/Menelaus was not done, and there was a little exploration of the interaction between the women and the guards. Other than that, not much of anything happened.

FEBRUARY 22, 1974

We began running the scenes much as we have done the past two days. It was going badly; the hysteria, etc., began to get on my nerves, I suggested, after regaining control, that Hecuba cap her emotion and play down, and that the chorus explore the scene non-verbally. The results were heartening, at least we began to discover certain possibilities of movement and non-verbal expression. The problem of what the chorus' function is/should be remains a major one. Richard's suggestion that the play is like a sonata/concerto is fascinating and, I think, helpful.

We tried the proposed opening with the Andromache speech: "I am frightened." What evolved was a very sexual definition (in dramatic terms) of woman, which bothered me, and later several other people. It appears too one dimensional, without any tension or realization of the fear of which she speaks.

FEBRUARY 23, 1974

The 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. discussion was about the set and costume possibilities. Tony Buchner had several ideas which revolved around our basic image of a compound/enclosure. What will evolve
from the discussion is hard to say, though Tony agreed, in part out of frustration, to bring in a sketch based on the ideas we had discussed. The issue of costuming was equally disjointed. There was considerable discussion of nice, free-flowing abstract costumes and Jesus Christ Super Star-type soldiers; but having not seen the film, I cannot describe the costume ideas. We did make a decision: by Wednesday of next week, the sketches of the set would be ready, and by Thursday the costumes and Friday the publicity. It was decided that on Monday we would decide whether to postpone the opening. Finally, Denise, Sue, and Karim decided to take over and a rehearsal schedule was adopted for the coming week, and the issue of extra rehearsals was decided: if someone wanted to rehearse they would indicate their intention on the call board and anyone interested in rehearsing could attend. Hopefully, the assertion of responsibility will spread.

FEBRUARY 25, 1974

Ideas were generated and discussed, per the accepted schedule; after 7:45 p.m. we began to work. The Poseidon scene was worked, Cassandra and Andromache did lines, and the chorus went through the script and decided on lines. Rather than lose the time, I talked character with Carolyn and Jo Ann. We "performed" the Poseidon scene, but no one liked it, so back to the drawing board.

I must confess to feeling very uneasy with this approach to direction, but that may only be the unaccustomed role of only
making suggestions. I have concluded that we will go with the process to the end. Incidentally, we have decided to open one week later, due primarily to the cold bug which is spreading through the cast.

FEBRUARY 26, 1974

Billed by the group as a voluntary workshop, I had a hard time deciding whether to attend, what with my illness, etc., but I went. Randy, Lionel, Sue, Denise, Richard and myself were there, although Randy had already gone when I arrived. We worked several of the many ideas about Pallas and Poseidon; we talked extensively about the function of the chorus. It was decided to try the idea of possession on the group, in addition to the rest. Several other ideas were generated. Thanks to Sue, I don't have to recall everything here. If we can make the transition from word to action, we will be great shape. If not, well!

FEBRUARY 27, 1974

This group thing has become painfully frustrating! On the one hand, Hecuba, two members of the chorus, and myself have been sick for several days, which has limited what we can do; on the other, I don't feel free yet to present my ideas and to disagree/agree with others without the feeling of dominance. Further, we are still in the space of interminable discussion and little action. For instance, tonight we worked the Poseidon scene at least four different ways, the choice of the group was to place Poseidon in
one corner of the enclosure in a special costume and Pallas emerging from their midst. It seems that people generally want to keep the Gods separate, as if to hedge a bet, they might really exist, or to assuage one's lingering guilt: they really are dead. Obviously, I am having trouble agreeing with that idea, but at least a decision was made, something tried, and at least two scenes rehearsable!

We spent the rest of the time dealing with the chorus and its function. While nothing was decided, we did agree to try the African funeral ritual. I do hope that the chorus will agree to a long rehearsal Saturday.

I must stifle my enthusiasm for the play, particularly in smaller group conversations. It appears infectious and may be undermining the process. Item: we really have not agreed on what and how we want the show to be and say.

FEBRUARY 28, 1974

This evening was spent making the painful decision regarding the set and concept. The idea of a compound within a compound was hotly debated. The main question seemed to center around whether the reality of the words and the way we had approached the play was valid. The original concept was to have guards outside the cafeteria, to take the tickets upstairs, then escort the audience into an area made to resemble a holding area. At the beginning of the show, the audience would be let into the playing area through a large door. One of the main issues was whether the door was valid.
After much discussion, it was decided to leave the door and the outside area would be abolished. I sensed that several people could not "live" with the decision, although they said they could.

MARCH 2, 1974

We began this rehearsal with a "disastrous" discussion on the set, the question being raised as to whether Tony's concept of an outer compound or holding area for the audience was valid. The discussion was disastrous because of the seemingly inevitable division between those for and those against casting. Sandy Shoults had not been there on Thursday, and so the discussion was re-opened, with people taking sides. The feelings around the issue seemed to be more in regard to casting than to the actual topic, but the decision was allowed to stand.

After the discussion, the chorus began working on the Kollwitz pictures, to see if they could develop poises and masks that were expressive of where they were as women in the compound, etc.

Supplemental: Ironically, after two days of discussion, the entire idea of outer compound and door was discarded because of budget, all of which is probably just as well, since it will leave the cast with less required time to build and more to rehearse.

MARCH 4, 1974

It was a very, very difficult evening for several of us; it was the night Ron Randolph died. The subsequent notes were pieced together by several group members.
Obviously, those who knew and worked with Ron were very upset, but consciously, on my part, we tried to move ahead without any explicit reference to the event. The agenda was to discuss and hopefully decide on costumes and the set. Tony Buckner returned, but had been forced, financially, to drop the idea of an outer compound or holding area. Unfortunately, he was to reopen the issue of the big door. What it really sounded like was the same old buddy system between Sandy and Sherry. After much rehashing of the previous discussion and feelings, things were becoming extremely tense. Sandy concluded that all her designs for costumes were invalid because of the door, Sherry and Randy felt that nothing they said was listened to. Sue Smith pointed out that the time in fact had passed and that everyone except Sandy had agreed with the decision. At that point, Tony came in with information that the door and outer compound were financially impossible, which of course meant that we had wasted an hour and a half. After much silence, we decided to leave costumes until the following evening and work the script through the Andromache scene to explore blocking possibilities. That part of the rehearsal was very useful; nothing was set, but the exploration generated ideas and direction.

MARCH 5, 1974

We decided that we would work first and talk later, so we explored the relationship of Hecuba and the chorus toward the end of the play. We then tried the funeral scene as if with a body, and then using African ritual. After we had worked it both ways several
times, we decided to bring in Denise's son, Chris, and rework it with a real body and then decide.

Then followed one of the most agonizing and frustrating discussions regarding costumes. While it began simply enough, with the chorus easily deciding on their basic costumes, it began to break down around colors. The majority of the group wanted earth colors, but Sandy and Sherry wanted brighter colors. It began to appear that several of us wanted an "ugly" show and Sandy wanted a pretty show. Another problem arose because the costume renderings were very inadequate and Sandy's descriptions were very hard to visualize. As frustrations rose, Karinn exploded specifically about the proposal for Hecuba's costume. I tried to shift the focus of the discussion, because apparently the argument between Sandy and Karinn had been going on for several days. I asked people to speak only in terms of their needs such as, movement possibilities, personal problems like vision, sweat, etc. Carolyn said what she needed for Cassandra, Karinn left, and after a lot of silent hostility and frustration, the rehearsal ended.

MARCH 6, 1974

Fortunately, the presence of Chris Parson meant we needed to work. We did both Astyanax scenes over and over again. The emotional reaction to the boy was very moving. It took little discussion to decide which way we would go.
MARCH 7, 1974

This was the day of Ron's funeral; energy was extremely low. It was Carolyn who suggested to the group that I begin directing in a traditional way. It was modified so that any decisions which were to be made that would threaten the direction established by the group must be made by the group and that any ideas would still be tried, only routed through me. Although the group agreed, I had several fears: (1) perhaps it had come too late, (2) how could I remain artistically true to myself and the group, and (3) would we be disciplined enough to put it all together. It was felt that it could be done, so we got on our feet and worked the funeral scene.

MARCH 8, 1974

I suggested that I become the liaison between Sandy and the rest of the women in need of costumes: they tell me what they need/want and Sandy and I would work out a decision. It was agreed.

We found some really nice things by doing the Cassandra scene several times. The last time was really powerful, so much so that several of the chorus, including Cassandra and at least one of the guards, were so spent that we had to end rehearsal.

MARCH 9, 1974

Several good things happened during this eight hour rehearsal. Chorus defined itself and its role as being core of the play, that the speaking parts were in fact facets of their own collective mind, that much of their movement could be defined as
seeking to extend and express non-verbally what was going on with speaking parts. This seemed to free the members of the chorus to really begin to work. The rest of the day, five hours, non-stop, they followed this procedure with each member of the chorus: (a) each found a picture by Kaethe Kollwitz that best expressed their individual dilemma, (b) each recited for the group her biography, and (c) each then physically expressed the pose and one of the chorus not in it talked her through the entire play, using the biographical information as a reference. Then the actress sought to move physically and emotionally with the play.

It not only worked very effectively, but the carry-over has been good in terms of physical realness, movement, commitment and concentration. If every day could be as productive!

MARCH 11, 1974

Three rehearsals were scheduled for today: Cassandra, Poseidon, in addition to the regularly scheduled rehearsal. Cassandra (Carolyn Reed) did not show up. For an hour and a half we worked on the Pallas/Poseidon scene, but nothing felt right for any of us. After much discussion, we tried many kinetic sculptures and various relationships, spatially and thematically, but nothing seemed to work. Finally, out of frustration, we called it quits.

During the evening rehearsal, because of little Chris Parson, we rehearsed the funeral scene until he tired. For a six-year old he is remarkable. Much of what we did was stop-start the
scene, then run it once to set it. Because the "only yesterday" scene was not finished, and needed much work, we next worked the Cassandra scene, stopping and starting, trying to realize the beats, and clean up the blocking, then we ran the scene twice. Finally, we came to the "only yesterday" scene, and Sue Smith had some really fine ideas, so we began to work around the previously developed images and added new ones. After two hours of intensive work, we had the scene completed. The feeling of satisfaction which everyone seemed to experience was a kind of high.

MARCH 12, 1974

There were three rehearsals. Afternoon rehearsal with Hecuba, outdoors screaming at the skies, playing the final curse extra big. The chorus came in at five and had a line-reading to pick up cues. That evening we worked the Helen/Menelaus scenes and the Andromache/Hecuba scene. There was some progress, but the personal antagonism between Helen (Sue) and Menelaus (Richard) constantly threatens to erupt, hence they could not play the scene with the necessary emotional commitment, nor can I seem to be able to get through to Richard. The result is that any hope we had of creating a scene of minor comic relief was given up.

The Andromache/Hecuba scene went very well, but Andromache does seem to contain a lot of unrecognized rage, which gives her weird body movements, which contradict her words. Finally, that she is working is fine, but for some unexplained reason, I can not seem to
communicate with her. That scene has not found its various levels or rather realized the beats, which is to say the emotional notes or content has not been found. Less than two weeks before we open!

MARCH 13, 1974

I talked with Cassandra about beats in her speech; I also offered to work with her, but she decided to work on her own. That evening we worked and ran the funeral scene, the Andromache scene, and finally the Helen/Menelaus scenes. There is not much more I can do; they need run throughs before we start our technical weekends. I have emotionally begun to withdraw to a more objective position. We start run throughs tomorrow.

MARCH 14, 1974

We had scheduled two run throughs, but the emotional drain of one run through left us with very little with which to continue. After notes, I made the decision to stop early. Some of the feedback indicated that audience present helped move the show to a different level. In part, however, it was also, I think, the fact that we could see the continuity and thus realize that the show really can work.

MARCH 15, 1974

Another run through; the time pick-up and new levels were discovered. Again, we had to stop after one run because of the emotional drain. Tomorrow is a technical building day and rest is essential prior to this back-breaking weekend.
MARCH 16, 1974

We built the entire set, set lights and decided to hold a costume parade Sunday evening. Much of the cast showed up; others were scheduled to make costume.

MARCH 17, 1974

Technical run through with costumes. Few out of the ordinary hassles; adjusting lights, redoing costumes, taking notes, adjusting to the set, etc. Call this week is 6:30 p.m.

MARCH 18, 1974

Afternoon rehearsal with Poseidon; after much frustration, Tony Buckner suggested we lock arms and form a triangle: it worked! The energy was high going into the dress rehearsal, particularly when we added Denise's suggestions about Pallas.

The evening dress was fairly complete except for straw and the relative elegance of the costumes, but dirt, mud, and blood should take care of that. Toward the end of the run through we found out that we could not rehearse on the set. It was decided that it would be more profitable to hold a working rehearsal in the drama room rather than wait to begin around 9:00 p.m.

MARCH 19, 1974

A most fateful day. It started at 10:30 a.m. when Denise and Sue Smith cornered me to complain that they felt the chorus was being relegated to a supporting role rather than the group's concept
the chorus as the main character. After much painful talking, it was decided to bring the chorus in early for a rehearsal before the rest of the cast arrived. We explored much of the play, adding more activity to the performing, more "natural" movement during the course of the play, and much more playing off the speaking characters during their speeches. During the evening run through, the chorus began to attack Helen with clucking noises, pounding on the bucket and following her around. The scene came to life, at least for Helen, as did much of the rest of the play.

MARCH 20, 1974

After a disastrous radio interview, Sue Smith, Denise Parson and I reblocked the Helen/Menelaus scene to be tried after the dress rehearsal.

The dress was somewhat mediocre, but we have not really found the show yet. After the dress, we tried to reblock the scene, taking away some of Menelaus' implied strength with easy movement, thus using Richard's tenacious hold on Menelaus strength as the only note, to give the character more ambiguity. However, the resistance I encountered seemed to be one of fear and apprehension; thus after hours of work, I stopped the blocking rehearsal and sent everyone home.

Performance

MARCH 21, 1974

A very shabby run. Nerves were high, in part because of the small audience, an awful lot of last minute technical difficulties.
The results were less than good, but the criticisms which we received from the audience were very helpful. Amazingly, the group took them well and began to work them through.

MARCH 22, 1974

The show came together at many levels, chorus began to work, several members began to blossom. The show's weak points are the Cassandra scene; she seems to play only one note, and the Helen/Menelaus scene. The latter has never come together because of the personal animosity between Sue and Richard and the very different interpretations which he and I have. Nevertheless, the rest of the group carried the show enough to have sufficient impact.

MARCH 23, 1974

An excellent review from opening night and a very good audience helped to avoid a terrible second night let-down. The general response was very good: the audience being an exceptionally critical one. The group seems to grow stronger with each performance, rather than vacillate as many casts do.

MARCH 24, 1974

Relatively disastrous; Andromache and Hecuba changed their blocking and the relationship teetered on physical violence; as a result, the scene became a shouting match and Hecuba lost her level and hence shouted her way through the rest of the show. The audience was polite. That is, they applauded, which we had not had before,
and many seemed to enjoy the show; different perceptions bring
different conclusions.

MARCH 28, 1974

We had a very relaxed pick-up rehearsal. There was a lot of
laughing, apparent horse play and most of the people were expressly
happy to return. Cassandra and Hecuba had some kind of argument;
my own resulting fear and depression seemed to spread through the
cast. But the shadowing work on the Helen/Menelaus scene went well.

MARCH 29, 1974

SRO; we delayed the opening of the show ten minutes, which
sapped the energy and the show felt slow and tense. But the audience
stayed with it. Talthybius arrived late, that was a major factor in
the tension, which was not dramatic but was uncomfortably real. The
sensitivity of the group is amazing. One of the soldiers put a Star
of David on his costume, adding more tension. Fortunately, one of
my fears: that Micheline Keating, the Reviewer, Tucson Citizen, would
show up Friday, did not materialize. We will have a better show
tomorrow. Audience: 125 SRO.

MARCH 30, 1974

Talthybius didn't show until 7:45, nor did the light person.
Thus, this created a lot of pre-curtain tension. But no one wanted
to show it, and the group worked very hard to overcome it. The
energy that resulted was good, the show began well, even though
late comers were still entering during the first three scenes. Cassandra has really improved, though I personally feel that the relationship of individual actors, especially the women, to the group does effect the performance. In part, there is infinitely more rage, which creates different notes in the performance. The rest of the show went exceptionally well. Audience: 107.

MARCH 31, 1974

Energy seems to be at a fairly good level, but several minor miscues, not the least of which were two people who were forty-five minutes late for call. The audience was small, forty-three. Undoubtedly, this number did not help, and thus the fight was uphill all the way. Still the show works, even when functioning at less than the group's capacity. The group itself will be amazingly self-critical, so that comment will be unnecessary. People know their levels and when they have not reached them. We will be replacing Talthybius for the final weekend and hence will rehearse all day Monday and Thursday evening.

APRIL 1, 1974

I rehearsed with Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache, and a few members of the chorus. Personally, I made several quick and unexplored character choices, necessarily. However, I was surprised how much I already knew emotionally of the part. It leads me to speculate that perhaps everyone in the cast may have had the same empathetic relation with the entire play, which would explain the
rapidity with which we put the show together, three weeks. The rehearsal was for blocking lines and consisted also of lots of energy and repetition.

APRIL 4, 1974

Rehearsal began late, but the run through was moderately serious, in part because of the new actor. After the run, we called the rehearsal, asking that people protect the show, check costumes, etc. The flexibility of the cast to introduce new elements into the production, a new member of the Poseidon triangle, a new guard, and a new Talthybius, and their responsiveness to ongoing suggestions and notes has helped the production to continue to improve. This should be our best weekend.

APRIL 5, 1974

I could not give an objective evaluation of performance because my perspective had changed. It felt really good. The audience response was very positive, the running time, unfortunately from my point of view, is still eighty-five minutes. The ending, dragging the women off, was very ragged, resulting in two of the women getting hurt. Needless to say, we will rehearse Saturday before the show. Audience: 130.

APRIL 6, 1974

We did rehearse the last scene with the soldiers and the women. We lost our replacement of the night before and Tony Buckner,
the set designer, was pressed into service. We also redid the opening with the soldiers entering the compound, but treating the women much more roughly, fondling their breasts, buttocks, etc.

Thank goodness we did rehearse, it brought everyone on stage by the 7:30 p.m. call and insured us help for the enormous crowd which we had, estimated at 180, no standing room, and still at least twenty-five people turned away. The show played in one hour and ten minutes, which was the time we had been shooting for! The energy and general feelings among the cast was that we had finally found the show. How appropriate to reach your goal at the end of the run!
CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIMENT

The methods of collecting the information to evaluate the experience of group direction were varied. Interviews, written summaries, and journal entries were obtained from the actors and are expressed below in summary. The response of the newspaper critics, which were two, is contained in Appendix A and B. Also, responses from members of the audience are contained in Appendix C and D. Finally, the last section of this chapter is the writer's own evaluation of the experience.

The major issue that most of the participants agreed upon regarding the whole experience was the lack of time. It was felt that the process of bringing a group of people together into an effective theatrical entity should have been given more than eleven weeks, which included three weekends of performance. A longer rehearsal period would have made it possible for the participants to gain a more comfortable relationship to each other and would have made possible the learning of group skills such as communication/feedback, processing data, and the conscious development of group norms. Further, the development of such skills would have facilitated the entire rehearsal process, particularly the issue of casting, which
took a week to accomplish and constantly threatened to destroy the group. On the other hand, it was felt that the exercises, the seemingly endless amount of talking, and the process which developed around the issue of casting served, together with the actual rehearsing of the script, to create more cohesion than any of those interviewed had ever experienced in a theatrical situation. Two examples were given: One was the fact that several members of the group put in enough time researching the background of the play to enable them to receive academic credit for Humanities, together with the long hours of rehearsals, particularly in the last three weeks, would suggest the level of commitment the participants had. The other example, though not inclusive of everyone, is contained in the summary of audience and critical responses to the production which continually referred to the ensemble playing as the single most effective aspect of the production.

Another issue related to the need for group skills was the lack of experience which effected most of the group, either in terms of their group skills or theatrically, or both. The lack of group experience and/or skills, as already stated, could have been overcome either with more time or with the introduction, at the beginning of the process, of a few sessions devoted exclusively to the learning of requisite group skills. The lack of theatrical experience could possibly have been minimized had more control been exerted over the process of selecting participants for the group; however, inasmuch as the project was conducted under the auspices of a junior college
drama department, the minimal amount of accumulated theatrical experience on the part of most of the participants was inevitable. Lacking theatrical experience, the resulting performance level of the production remains somewhat an unknown, though several feel it was related to what the individual was able or allowed to experience; intellectually, physically, and emotionally, in relation to the script and the group, and what the actor was able to portray. Further, it was this lack of theatrical experience which seemed to truncate the exploration that might have resulted in a new production pattern. It was, however, both kinds of inadequacies which prevented the group generally from effectively using the available resources and experience available within the group. Hence, the other predominant observation that few participants assumed responsibility for the process until the show was up would, in part, seem to be related to a lack of understanding of what their responsibility was, both to the group process and to the show. Positively, though, the discipline and commitment to the show increased steadily once it was in production, which resulted in the observation that the show continued to improve and to evolve rather than solidifying and settling once it was produced.

Closely related to the above issues was that during the rehearsal process, the group and the writer did not adequately define the nature and function of leadership until three weeks before opening. It was felt, generally, that the writer who convened the group and was seen by many as teacher and director, oscillated
between direct leadership in a traditional mode, non-directive observer/participant, and guide, which represented an effective compromise between the two. This resulted, for some, in an ambivalence of power and prevented them from assuming more responsibility for the process. That several observed the increased responsibility assumed by the cast once the show was in production, together with the fact that most directors seem to relinquish control during a production, would indicate that the lack of role definition on the part of the writer did have a direct influence on the issue of group responsibility. In addition, however, the writer was confronted with the necessity of convening the group; exercises, rehearsal and group skills, and later in the process of seeking to insure a production at all. This ambivalence might well have been minimized had time been spent initially developing group skills, norms, and role definition. In spite of the confusion regarding role definitions, the rehearsal process continued to evoke creative input and self-direction from several members of the group, which increased the closer the group came to production.

Perhaps the singularly most important conflict throughout both the rehearsal and performance process centered around the issue of competition. Theatre, as it has been experienced by this writer, is constituted and maintained to a large degree by competition: expressed in the whole casting system, as well as competition for technical positions, and of course the star system; which expresses itself on less sophisticated levels in terms of audience responses,
reviews, and subsequent roles. The result seems to be a contradiction. An art form that demands an unusually high degree of cooperation is subverted by the felt need for competition. This is expressed not only in the limitations of the star-system, but also by the stranglehold the various unions have on professional theatre and the subsequent production costs. This project was not without the element of competition. It first became obvious when several of the participants began to push for the casting of parts, though a few, this writer included, felt that more exploration was necessary. The resulting week which it took to complete the casting left a lot of unresolved tension, tension which did not begin to abate until the show was in production. That is, those who did not get the part they wanted tended to withdraw, while several of those who did get the part they sought tended to feel that the group was no longer as important as it had been. This attitude tended to abort the process of buying into the group. That is, submerging one's ego needs somewhat to the needs of the group. As stated, this attitude was overcome for the most part once the show was in production. The other aspect of competition which was observed was sexual competition, though one must add that that is not so easily defined. But one of the failures of the process was that the men never felt nor behaved as an intricate and valued part of the group; in part, one might assume, because the major characters were women, and because those women involved were struggling to assert an interpretation of the script which basically reflected a feminine viewpoint. Thus, even in the
interviews following the play, two of the men continued to feel that the interpretation which the group adopted was wrong, that it was a play about war and not about women's oppression, even though much of the audience response tended to say that the interpretation was both. The conclusion to be drawn seems somewhat ironic. The element which was continually cited as the most positive aspect of the production, by critic and audience, was the ensemble playing and the degree of emotional commitment. It was observed by several members of the group that those performances which were characterized by audiences as weak were by those members of the group that had not worked through the conflicts caused by their sense of competition; also, that the discipline of the total group was impaired by the same people. The above does not seem particularly startling to the writer, for effective ensemble-playing is predicated on a high degree of cooperation, sensitivity and commitment to both the script and the ensemble (Chaikin: 1972:53). And further, the issues of commitment and sensitivity seem inextricably bound to the individual's willingness, as opposed to capacity, to open up to experiences, in this case related to the script, which in turn directly effects one's performance.

The critical responses to the production were written by Scott Carter for the March 23rd edition of the Arizona Daily Star and is contained in Appendix A; the second was written by Judith Knopp for the March 27th edition of the New Times and is contained in Appendix B. Unfortunately, only one of the major newspapers reviewed
the production, thus limiting the possibilities of a more varied critical response. Three comments seemed to summarize the audience response; at least as remembered by those interviewed. The most salient comment was the fact that several people returned to see the production, often more than once. Another consistent comment was that the show was very real and natural, which could translate that the production was able to overcome Sartre's intellectualism, or perhaps to give it flesh. Finally, the comment that the flow of the show, its movement, images, and sounds combined almost, for some, into a musical piece, which can be taken, it would seem to refer to the ensemble playing of the group.

This writer's own personal evaluation of the project agrees closely with the above. The most negative criticism, particularly in terms of Chapter 2 above, is that no new production pattern emerged. As stated, this failure was due in part to the fact that most of the group lack sufficient theatrical experience to enable them to expand the range of their exploration; also, the inability of the group to use effectively the talents and experiences of its members. Much of the responsibility for this failure centered around the writer's own ambivalence toward his role. Had strong leadership been provided, it was felt that the process of buying into the group or having a personal investment in the shape and direction of the group would have been truncated. On the other hand, there was a need for the group to develop effective tools and skills with which to explore the script's terrain in a way other than traditional. The
process was subverted by the decision to cast, placing the issue of leadership in more traditional terms. However, by the time the casting was completed, more people had bought into the group; hence, the energy was subsequently higher. It was this factor, primarily, which enabled the group to put the production together, in practical terms, in a three-week period. Regarding, briefly, the issue of casting and lack of controls, all that can be said is that within the Pima College Drama Department, with another play in rehearsal, choices and hence controls were extremely limited. Further, it did not seem fair to deny anyone with some experience and/or involvement with the department access to the group. The result was that anyone who could make a commitment to the project as outlined was accepted into the group.

The decision not to spend a few days at the very beginning of the rehearsal process learning group skills proved to be a very real mistake. It deprived the group of skills which would have facilitated and lessened the innumerable hours spent talking. In addition, such an exercise would have caused the group to cohere more quickly and on terms that might have sped the entire process. Having said that, one must acknowledge the high degree of cohesion and commitment which did exist. Also, the fact that at least three of the five men in the group continued to be outsiders in relation to the women might have been overcome with such a process, though it is also possible that the threat was too real and too enormous to them to ever move freely within the group.
In terms of following Clarke's schedule of rehearsal phases: absorption, interaction and conflict, and new pattern, it can be stated that the first phase was followed, however, the subsequent two phases were aborted for the aforementioned reasons. The concept of Group Theatre is extremely valid, to this writer, both as a way of exploring a work to present in traditional terms and as a way to develop new approaches and patterns to extant scripts. Much of the chorus work in the production evolved directly from the group exploration. Finally, the success of the project is best expressed in Clarke's own words: "If your exploration work has been thorough and you really have a group, the work will show itself in the way the company communicates with each other and with the audience" (1971:64).
APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF "THE TROJAN WOMEN" BY THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR*

Ensemble Triumphs In 'Trojan Women'

By SCOTT CARTER

The Pima College Drama Department's production of "The Trojan Women" is one of the most captivating pieces of theater I've seen in Tucson.

The 85-minute presentation of the Euripidean tragedy is based on an adaptation by Jean-Paul Sartre. The production is a masterful evocation of mood which is strong enough to transcend occasional lapses in individual performances.

After a virtuoso opening, the performance settles down into a penetrating examination of the woman's role in society. From anger and frustration emerges a play about the pettiness of wills of the men controlling our lives: Menelaus, King of Sparta, wagers a 10-year war on Troy seeking revenge on Paris, who has stolen his wife, Helen.

The production never goes for "royal" effects - the actors perform naturally rather than pseudo-stately. Their arguments and defenses seem to emanate naturally from them rather than seeming imposed by imitations of previous productions. The characterizations always manage to keep two feet on the ground, and the dialogue, surprisingly enough, sounds tailor-made.

They don't take curtain calls for this production. Director Bill Lewis hasn't seen fit to list himself in the program. When I went backstage afterwards to ask him to identify the actor (the program only lists them in a group), he refused, saying that "the group wanted it this way."

And well it should. The ensemble effect is a triumph of the production, and I hope I'm not spoiling anything by listing (in alphabetical order) the actors in this excellent cast: Sandee Brooke, Karinn Buckner, Lionel Byrne, Susan Davis, Jo Ann Drebien, Sherry Ewald, Randy Fahr, Sue Fleming, Richard Hutchinson, Eini Johnson, Bill Lewis, Don Matthews, Chris Parson, Denise Parson, Carolyn Reed and Donna Taxco.

* Tucson, Saturday, March 23, 1974
APPENDIX B

REVIEW OF THE TROJAN WOMEN BY THE NEW TIMES

The Trojan Women, written by Euripides and adapted by Jean-Paul Sartre, is one of the philosophically richest dramas to reach the contemporary stage. The Pima Community College Drama Department does both author and adapter justice.

The play deals with the problems of man's exploitation of woman, woman's exploitation of woman, and the desecration of long and meaningless war. Troy is in ruins due to a cheap Greek trick; and the few female survivors are tormented by their male captors. Cassandra, the prophetess doomed never to be believed, predicts the fall of the house of Atreus; Andromache, epitome of domesticity, sees her son murdered and herself dragged away to become a Greek concubine; Helen, the eternal opportunist, returns to her husband Menelaus in triumph.

The play is more Sartre than Euripides. The Greek playwright's dark world view is modified by the doctrine of rebellion espoused by modern French thinkers. The Trojan women never knuckle under to the inevitability of their fate; they are dragged from the stage defiant, in a triumph over absurdity that speaks hope to the bewildered non-persons of our century.

You can catch this noteworthy performance for the next two week-ends at Pima Community College.

—Judith Knopp
APPENDIX C

CRITICAL RESPONSE TO THE TROJAN WOMEN BY THREE AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Two weeks prior to the opening of the production three Pima Community College faculty members were asked if they would read the Sartre adaptation of The Trojan Women upon which the production was based, come to the opening night performance, and then write their response to the production. There were no other stipulations or requirements placed upon them. All three were present for the opening, March 22, 1974.
Jean-Paul Sartre's adaptation of *The Trojan Women* produced at Pima Community College by Bill Lewis was for me a powerful and moving experience. From the moment I walked past the male guards into the close square of "theater" the sense of tension and imprisonment dominated the atmosphere. This sense of being trapped was partly physical due to the use of tower-like scaffoldings placed diagonally at two corners of the stage which, along with aisle-less seating, enclosed the audience. The impact of the proximity to the actors also created a psychological sense of imprisonment. While such staging put enormous demands on the actors the effect seemed for me to outweigh the difficulties.

The use of a triple-figured Poseidon was an unusually fine innovation, and Athena's performance was among the best in the play. The actress who played Hecuba built a character of tremendous dignity and sustained dramatic tension rising to the final scenes with great strength.

The most disappointing acting came from Cassandra. She frothed and foamed in an embarrassingly immature imitation-madness. Helen and Menelaus almost captured their roles, but just missed being completely credible. However, Andromache's performance was excellent, controlled, high tragedy.
Still, what remains in the mind after are all the images of the women in the chorus with their stark eyes and clawing, desperate hands. Clearly it was their play, and because of their performance the theme of brutality, the rape that is war, never fades from the audience's vision. That this production of the play stressed the physical abuse of the women by men reinforces Sartre's outrage against the ravages of war.
QUESTION: Was this production a women's liberation statement?

It seems Sartre wrote a play which instead of attributing man's problems to ignorance of reason, deals more with man's problems with wars.

War brings triumph for some (in this case the winning team shows only male characters) and defeat for others (only female characters here). This would seem to allow the possibility of a strong women's liberation statement.

In the Pima production the opening scene and the change of speeches (Andromache, "I am a woman") seems to point to this very clearly. The subsequent scenes all more or less delineate the suffering of oppressed and defeated women.

But then it seems, Sartre asks, do oppressed women in essence suffer any differently from oppressed men? Ergo his strong anti-war statement.

The Pima production clearly achieved a statement about peoples oppression—the situation of the conquered and the conqueror; the entire cast seemed totally committed saying it is bad to be down; the whole cast also seemed to be saying it is really bad to be a woman and be down.
Critical Response III

The Pima College production of Sartre's adaptation of Euripides' *The Trojan Women* was an extremely ambitious undertaking. The result was a powerful study of human suffering—especially the suffering of women as a result of a war that had deprived them of their country, their homes, and their men—and the courage and dignity that arise from that suffering. Although flawed at times by the vagueries of individual performances, the play was, on the whole, beautifully conceived and performed.

The naturalistic handling of the chorus proved to be one of the most striking features of the production; this approach did much to individualize, and therefore makes more realistic, the agony on the one hand, and to unify the action on the other. Rather than standing apart from the principals, suffering a corporate agony at a distance from the suffering of the royal household, these women became central to the action serving to draw together a play that is, in fact, episodic. The lengthy speeches of the principals could easily have resulted in a somewhat disconnected display of one star after another, but the movement of the chorus, commenting individually, playing with and against the speeches of the principals, pulled the action together, and the suffering was disseminated throughout the group. One side benefit of such an approach was to eliminate the usual problems of dealing with choral reading—although the few scenes
that were handled chorally were stunning: the triumviral Poseidon, read polyphonically in the exchange with a vengeful Pallas Athena, and the women's graphic description of the fall of Troy were two of the most effective moments in the play.

There were, unfortunately, some difficulties with the acting, particularly with Cassandra, Helen, and Talthybius. Cassandra is probably the most difficult role in the play—one requiring the range and ability to move convincingly from madness to clarity and back again. The role was apparently far beyond the abilities of the actress, who seemed to be playing it without reference to the others in the cast, even when she was touching them. Her voice was out of control, lapsing from time to time into a southern accent, and her movements too frenzied. She simply didn't work. There were at least two members of the chorus who could, I think, have handled the part more convincingly. Helen, another problem, played the role in a vacuum, neither guiltless in her own eyes and therefore horrified by the accusations of Hecuba and the chorus, nor satisfied in her awareness of her behavior. Her scene with Menelaus was wooden (and here he must share the responsibility), neither serious nor humorous. The only indication of her attitude toward her role in the tragedy was a brief look of triumph as she leaves the compound; it wasn't enough. And Talthybius was still; he moved very well, but his reading failed to convince me of the extent to which he is touched by the past and present torment of the women and made to feel guilty about his role in their suffering.
Despite these weaknesses, however, the total effect of the production was still extremely powerful, due mainly to the strength of Hecuba, Andromache, and the chorus. Andromache was played with intelligence and great dignity; her reaction to the final horror—the murder of Hector's son—was beautifully restrained, leaving the audience deeply moved. And Hecuba gave the most outstanding performance, beginning slowly and quietly building to a monumental last display of strength and courage. She managed expertly, despite the fact that she is the central character and has more big speeches than anyone else, not to overpower any of the others in the cast, and it was from her and to her that the chorus played most effectively. It is together that these women expressed the suffering so vividly, and it is the suffering—the expressions of faces, the voices, and the movement of hands—that held the production together and remained in the minds of the audience when the play was over.
APPENDIX D

GENERAL PUBLIC RESPONSES TO
THE TROJAN WOMEN

The following five responses were solicited by the writer at random from audience members not affiliated with Pima Community College.
I was fortunate enough to have been a member of an audience involved in the group-directed production of The Trojan Women presented at Pima Community College. The ensemble quality achieved in this production was as fine and as tightly knit as any that I have witnessed in numerous productions both in the United States and abroad. The sensitivity of the cast members to each other and to the audience was overwhelming, as if the cast was a single organism functioning in response to its own feelings and the feelings of those surrounding it. Particularly memorable was the group interaction which was in progress as the audience filed into the theatre. This action was highly effective, not only in allowing the characters to adjust to each other, but also in letting the audience attune itself to the feelings of the cast and vice versa. Audience involvement was thus immediate and total.

The most obvious fault of the production was not in the acting or directing, but rather in the script. The Trojan Women, regardless of its translation, is declamatory in style as Greek plays tended to be. The excellent use of stage areas and the fluid movements of the actors were not enough to distract attention from the wordiness of the play. Speeches, although full of meaning, were long and physical action scant, thus making the maintenance of audience involvement difficult.
Acting faculties were those commonly found among young actors and actresses. Several cast members did not know how properly to project their voices and made it difficult at times for the audience to hear the words of Sartre and Euripides. Some of the cast members, in particular Hecuba, became so caught up with the emotion inherent in their lines that they strained legitimate feelings and lost control. The actors, overall, handled their parts well, with understanding and sensitivity. It is unfair to expect the same depth of character from a young actor that one would observe in an older, more experienced player.

The technical aspects of *The Trojan Women* were superb. The set, simple and stark, served to draw the audience into the play's action. The straw and its obvious smell was a fine touch, adding a strong dose of reality and aiding in audience involvement. Lighting was subtle and set the mood well, enhancing rather than distracting from the production. The absence of music added tension and heightened the interchange of feeling among cast members and audience. *The Trojan Women* did not depend upon showy technical effects, but rather used technical theatre subtly to augment and build the fierce personal emotions which moved the production forward.

*The Trojan Women* was a polished and smoothly executed production. The show produced a strong feeling in the audience, one which was not destroyed due to the wise exclusion of a curtain call. It was of interest to observe audience reaction to the play's end--
uncertainty whether to applaud or to remain silent, whether to leave the theatre or to remain. One thing, however, was certain; the audience had participated in a strong dramatic event and it would be a long time before *The Trojan Women* would be forgotten.
I was privileged to be in the audience of The Trojan Women, in which Bill Lewis utilized the ensemble approach. He was the guide for this production at Pima Community College. The interaction of characters particularly impressed me; I remember noticing the guards standing in overhead positions on several occasions and planning to observe when they disappeared (and how it was done), but each time I missed this because I had become caught up in the emotional linking of the characters.

To me, the set design was just right. It was not overdone, nor was it too scarce. It was appropriate for the purpose; this was also indicated by the fact that the only time I actually looked at the set and properties was before the play. During it, the set was in no way distracting.

The character of Hecuba was excellent. I have heard it said that she may have been too emotional in places (that she tried to "out Hecuba Hecuba") but I did not find this true at all. Many of her lines remained with me long after I saw the production, as they were so timeless. The other actors were reacting to Hecuba in what seemed to me an extremely natural way, considering what her place was in the social setting, not to mention her tremendous personal impact. Not only in their words, but in their gestures and facial expressions, they all showed how important Hecuba was to them, and
this was representative of the essence of the situation. Hecuba spoke for the group, the time, and the events. I believe that I would have reacted just as the characters did, had I been in Troy at that time. The expression on the child's face was perhaps what effected me most of all; his silence was one of the most eloquent parts of the production.

Mr. Lewis' guidance of this ensemble playing was definitely fine, and to be remembered. His sensitivity was obvious to me. Not knowing him at all until after the play, I felt that I knew him already, thanks to his skilled treatment of the technique. I will not forget having seen (and having felt involved with) this production of The Trojan Women.
General Public Response III

The Trojan Women, you know it is so trite to say it blew me away but it did. The Trojan Women effected me so heavily from the moment I went in there, that I did not realize my car keys were clutched tightly in my hand until it was over. During some of the emotionally agonizing scenes, I felt such empathy for some of the women in the cast that I wanted to go from my chair onto the stage to comfort them. It was with great difficulty that I refrained from doing that.

There seemed to be a real bond between the women of the cast, something that was very strong and very apparent. Some of the apparent symbolism used of the women gathering in circles and the men gathering in right angle lines was very effective to me in carrying out the essential theme of the plight.

One of the scenes that effected me enormously was when one of the women went to bring food and comfort to the pregnant woman, who was lying slumped on the stage. The only scene that I wasn't quite in tune with was when the women were picking at Helen of Troy, and throwing straw at her. It seemed much too restrained. It seemed kind of phony at that point. That was the only point I lost touch with the play.

Another scene that I remember very vividly was reaction to Cassandra's madness. The heartbreak and tears on her face,
I thought Cassandra was at times a little overdone. I mean she was just too clean! Shaven armpits and lily white arms, the whole bit. A little five o'clock shadow would have added to the illusion that she had been in the stockade for a while.

The scene, at the time that hit me heavily was the killing of the child. The taking away of the child much more than the returning of the child's body because I could put myself in the mother's position, wanting to keep the child with her and make a big fight for it, but it was obviously a hopeless position, and she had what seemed like gut courage to just hand him over, for his own sake. So that he wasn't put through a hysterical battle. He is going to be killed anyway, so why not scare him.

The total hopelessness of the situation was impressed upon me immediately. There was no consciousness at all in me of wanting to fight. The only consciousness in me was of wanting to comfort the women who were there. The atmosphere was so set, everything about it was so set that there was quite obviously no opportunity at all for any kind of fighting; or even resistance.
I was pretty well informed as to what to expect. I went there with my emotions under control, I thought. During the play I found it very difficult, even though I knew what was happening and what was going to happen, to keep myself under control. The thing I remember sharpest is sitting in the front row about five feet away from the actors and sometimes closer. One guard bent over in front of me and it seemed to me that there was a small tear in the seat of his pants. It was all I could do to keep from ripping his pants from end to end, and creating embarrassment for the guard.

In the beginning I could not understand why Helen was not included; she would have to have been as forlorn as the rest of the women. As the story developed you realized why. The emotions of the actors, I felt was extremely well played. I had a very hard time keeping my emotions intact.

My anger was directed almost entirely toward the guards, and given the opportunity I would have struck the guards or demeaned them as much as possible; although, I guess every woman would have a different reaction. I have fought male chauvinism per se, and this is pretty much what the guards went into, quite a bit, fortunately not with my husband, but in the outside world, and my thoughts were: This is ridiculous, what do you think you are doing to these people? I will not have it! I have also been a champion, many times, so again the protectiveness.
My feelings about the play: I was very impressed by it, and the sensitivity of the whole production, the simplicity and really its stark beauty. I do not know what else to say, but I found it a very moving production. I did not know the play before. I have never read Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, as had my son, so I had no preconceived ideas, but the time went very quickly. I think the only thing that I found that was a little shocker was the end; and not realizing that it was all over. There was something there at the very end that left me hanging just a little bit. I think that the whole play was very well done.

The simplicity and grace of movement on stage by the chorus, reminded me of Martha Graham's Dance Theatre back east.
LIST OF REFERENCES


