AN EAR FOR AN EYE:
GREEK TRAGEDY ON RADIO

by

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Abstract

An Ear for an Eye: Greek Tragedy on Radio examines the dramaturgical principles involved in the adaptation of Greek tragedies for production as radio dramas by considering the classical dramatic form’s representational ability through purely oral means and the effects of dramaturgical interventions. The inherent orality of these tragedies and Aristotle’s suggested limitation of spectacle (opsis) appears to make them eminently suitable for radio, a medium in which the visual dimension of plays is relegated entirely to the imagination through the agency of sound. Utilizing productions from Canadian and British national radio (where classical adaptations are both culturally mandated and technically practical) from the height of radio’s golden age to the present, this study demonstrates how producers adapted to the unique formal properties of radio. The appendices include annotated, chronological lists of 154 CBC and BBC productions that were identified in the course of research, providing a significant resource for future investigators.
The dissertation first examines the proximate forces which shaped radio
dramaturgy and radio listeners. Situating the emergence of radio in the context of
modernity, Chapter One elucidates how audiences responded to radio’s return to orality
within a visually-oriented culture. Chapter Two then analyses the specific perceptual and
imaginative activity of individuals, considering how audiences experience acoustic space.
I describe how the audience’s central position in the reception of radio drama is integral
to the completion of the dramatic frame of radio.

The second part of this dissertation addresses radiophonic dramaturgy and issues
in representation. In Chapter Three, the didactic and nationalistic impetus for the
adaptation of classics as radio plays is considered and the principles of radio adaptation
are outlined. The final two chapters examine the formal properties of productions in
adaptation through case studies to illustrate where the play’s inherent orality allows for
ease in adaptation or where greater dramaturgical intervention is required. Chapter Four
examines the construction of dramatic figures, music and song, the use of paratheatrical
materials, and narrative strategies for the representation of action, space, and time.
Chapter Five examines productions where greater dramaturgical intervention and
innovation is in evidence, including the manipulation of perspective (in the CBC’s 2001
Medea), the use of music to modernize setting (in the 1998 CBC-BBC co-production of
The Trojan Women), the use of experimental montage (in the BBC’s 1976 Ag), the
introduction of flashback sequences (in the CBC’s 1987 Antigone), and solutions to the
problem of what I term “dramaturgical erasure” (the inadvertent removal of silent figures
from the perspectival field).
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INTRODUCTION

Remediating Tragedy for Radio

Sophocles’ dramatization of the myth of Oedipus Tyrannos is widely regarded as one of the greatest tragedies composed for the stage. However, in its transmission from the fifth century BCE to successive cultures, in its adaptation and remediation for subsequent audiences, certain aspects of the play’s original context have been forgotten. Sophocles composed for an audience where orality was dominant and literacy was only beginning to develop. A fifth-century BCE Athenian audience held an awareness of a deeper tragedy in this play, one that a twentieth-century audience is likely to overlook given our preoccupation with vision and the “reading” of signs.

The play’s central tension involves Oedipus’ inability to comprehend the truth of his own situation. He cannot “see” the truth. Due to his hubris and hamartia, he is doomed. This predominant contemporary interpretation of the tyrant king’s fall reveals the primary mode of recent reception by linking knowledge to sight, privileging the ocular and finding Oedipus’ fault in his vision. Yet a significant part of this tragedy is clearly the failure of signs in all sensorial dimensions\(^1\), with the most spectacular failure being not of vision, but of the aural reception of the spoken word.

In the astonishing climax of the play, Oedipus is revealed to have gouged out his eyes. There are a number of possible reasons for his act. The act is symbolic, in that Oedipus realizes that he did not see the truth before him (and indeed, there were a great number of visual signs, beginning with

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\(^1\) Oedipus can smell the stench of pollution and decay in Thebes, but can not identify that he is its cause. He can feel the scars on his feet yet can not connect his swollen feet to the oracle’s prophesy.
the marks on his ankles). The mutilation could also be seen as the ultimate act of self-condemnation and punishment in that he willingly disables himself. The act has also been described as one of cowardice in that he saves himself the shame of looking upon his children (the products of incest) or of returning the gaze of others who know of his guilt and shame.

However, the act’s greatest tragedy, which the original Athenian audience would have found most ironic, is that in his mutilation Oedipus seems to entirely miss the point of what has occurred. While throughout Sophocles’ dramatization of the fall of Oedipus there is a marked tension between visual signs (which are misinterpreted or unnoticed and unappreciated) and verbal signals (where past prophecies are followed but onstage and present warnings are similarly misinterpreted or willingly ignored), the onstage action emphasizes Oedipus’ failure to appreciate repeated verbal warnings. While he cannot be persuaded to “see”, he seems capable of hearing. While Oedipus focuses his punishment on his eyes, his actual sensorial problem is that he can hear but fails to listen and comprehend and is therefore unable to “see”. By mutilating his eyes, rather than demonstrating enlightenment or recognition (anagnorisis), he merely compounds his problems. Being attuned to oral communication, the fifth-century Athenian audience would have known that in his self-mutilating act Oedipus, again, missed the mark.

While the original audience of Oedipus Tyrannos would be cognizant of this auricular dimension of the play, a contemporary theatre audience may overlook its significance. Indeed, most contemporary critics would be similarly distracted by other elements as the theatrical stage and dramatic text are received in a cultural context that has become “retinally dominated” (Pietropaolo “Narrative and Performance in Radio
Drama” 72). In the rush to respond to new media, the unique formal properties of existing media are often overlooked. The study of theatre and drama in the twentieth-century, perhaps reflecting the attitudes of society (and holding a “mirror to nature”), has invested its energies disproportionately in favour of visual and tactile elements: the text that can be read, the theatre space that can be inhabited, the performance that can be viewed and, consequent to the development of modern recording technologies, re-viewed. In the study of drama, a major shift in the direction of late twentieth-century scholarship has been from the study of texts to the study of staging, from a literary and historical approach to an approach that emphasizes the full dynamics of performance in production and reception. However, in this shift of emphasis a key feature of drama was frequently overlooked: the sound of drama.

Theatre scholars rarely address the one form of drama that relies almost purely on sound as an agent of communication: radio drama. There is a marked difference here between the Canadian and British theatre traditions and in the attention received by works produced through their respective national broadcasters, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Damiano Pietropaolo, the Head of Drama for the CBC from 1990 until 2004, writes that while there is an abundance of radio plays in Canada “it is not until they have had a stage production that these plays receive critical attention” (“Narrative and Performance in Radio Drama” 71). This marginalization occurs even though “the audience they reach in a single broadcast would probably fill a medium-sized theatre [. . .] for an extended run

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2 Damiano Pietropaolo’s title changed throughout his tenure. He was initially Head of CBC Radio Drama and Features (1990-95), then Head of CBC Radio Performance (1995-98), and finally Head of CBC Radio Arts and Entertainment (1998-2004).
of at least a couple of years” (71). While radio plays reach mass audiences, they do not hold a treasured place in Canadian theatre history. In contrast with this, the BBC tradition has certainly experienced greater long-term popularity and, as I will explore fully in Chapter Three, this is likely due to a greater degree of centralized state control of radio’s competing media. Indeed the “marginalization of radio drama in scholarly and critical studies is in large part due to the role of radio in the modern world of electronic and performance media” (Pietropaolo 72). The encroachment of other media – as a force that limited the impact of radio and, as a result, radio drama – has been noted by numerous scholars, including Marshall McLuhan who in *Gutenberg Galaxy* correlated the decline of radio audiences with the increase in television audiences. As Andrew Crissell writes,

> until the middle of the twentieth century radio was the major broadcasting medium, a primary provider of information and entertainment to audiences around the world. But with the arrival first of television and then of other, mostly visual media its role was gradually reduced [. . .]. (“Introduction” *More than a Music Box* vii)

However, in both Canada and Britain, restrictions on commercial media and the control of both radio and television by a single, state-supported corporation allowed some room for creative developments in radio. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, CBC and

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3 For example, Anne Nothof provides an estimate of 65,000 listeners for a broadcast in the late 1980s (See “Canadian Radio Drama in English: Prick up your Ears”).


5 McLuhan wanted to study the introduction of television to Greece as it was a relatively late phenomenon in that country. The development of television in Greece was delayed by the instabilities caused by the second World War, a subsequent Civil War (1946-1949) and the military dictatorships of the late 1960s and early 1970s. While television arrived in Greece in 1966, its use and programming was severely restricted and access to televisions sets was limited.
BBC programming decisions were not driven by audiences and commercial or popular interests as such decisions were directed in other markets.\textsuperscript{6} Even so, the history of radio drama is one that occurs within a milieu of other mediatizing forces.

In the predominantly commercial American radio context where, from its inception, the creation of programs was market-driven, the neglect of radio drama and radio studies is similarly lamented. Speaking from this perspective, Edward C. Pease and Everette E. Dennis reflect on radio’s marginalization in the face of competing media:

> It is not uncommon for media critics to ignore radio altogether in their treatment of the larger modern media mix. Although the average American owns multiple radios and lives with this most portable medium in every room in the house, in the office, the car and even in parks, mountain retreats and on the beach, radio is very rarely the topic of public discussion, giving it the dubious identity as “the forgotten medium” […] However] a close look at radio demonstrates its vitality, its economic, political and social importance, as well as its staying power in the communication field. (“Introduction” *Radio: The Forgotten Medium* xv)

Pease and Dennis illustrate how it is important to note that the absorption of radio in everyday life is a late twentieth-century phenomenon and that at this point it is competing for attention within a greatly saturated media environment. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the absorption may be attributed to radio’s significant potential for creating an intimate experience for its listener. It becomes a familiar companion at home, in the car, and through portable, hand-held devices while the receiver is on the move.\textsuperscript{7} However,

\textsuperscript{6} Also see my analysis in Chapter Three of John Reith’s reign at the BBC, and “No Virginia, a Canadian is not free to decide what he will watch on television or listen to on radio,” for the CBC context.

\textsuperscript{7} While a completely attentive listener is ideal, this is clearly only a theoretical construction as most listeners engage with radio plays while they are involved with other daily tasks (such as driving, domestic
Radio is erased or obscured from our consciousness primarily when it is competing with other media and with television in particular. Radio’s most significant challenge for attention came from the music video in the 1980s. While radio had been the domain of music, the music video challenged its primacy as the dominant distributor of new music. Indeed, the first music video played on the American music station, MTV, was the Buggles’ “Video Killed the Radio Star.” The song had been released in the United Kingdom in 1979 but it was only with its U.S. broadcast in 1981 that it became popular in North America. It is significant that in the U.S., the song essentially bypassed radio play and was popularized by virtue of its exposure to television audiences.

In spite of radio’s noted popularity in Britain, where the quality of BBC programs has received international attention, British scholars still feel that radio scholarship is lacking. Tim Crook, author of the influential *Radio Drama: Theory and Practice*, writes that “radio drama has been one of the most unappreciated and understated literary forms of the twentieth century and [...] this neglect should not continue into the twenty-first century” (3). Peter Lewis, another London-based scholar, calls radio drama “a Cinderella subject” and laments that scholarship on BBC Radio had been “virtually monopolized” by scholars from Germany until the 1980s (“Introduction” *Radio Drama* 1). What is interesting is that Lewis makes his complaint even though he notes a number of critical forums for the discussion and analysis of radio drama in popular media.\(^8\) Canadian

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\(^8\) He finds “a short weekly piece” that summarizes radio drama in most daily newspapers (1). While Lewis, writing in 1981, is right to indicate that this is insufficient due to the large output of drama by BBC Radio (and contrasts the weekly radio reviews with the daily television, film and stage reviews) in Canada even this degree of exposure does not exist. Lewis attributes the discrepancy partly to the devaluation of free culture: “Today in Britain we pay nothing for radio drama; we do pay a great deal to go to the theatre. Is it true that we appreciate only what we pay for, and the more we pay, the greater our appreciation?” (1).
scholars are able to point to no such domestic forum. As Damiano Pietropaolo finds, in assessing radio scholarship from a Canadian vantage point, there is an “appalling dearth of scholarly interest in the cultural role of radio, not to speak of the total neglect of an aesthetics of art forms idiomatic to radio, or dramaturgical theories of narrative and performance as they apply to radio” (“Narrative and Performance” 71). One of the aims of this dissertation is to attend to these critical gaps and to address radio’s unique aesthetics, avoiding the tendency in contemporary scholarship to treat radio adaptations as literary texts or theatrical productions that lack presence and a mise-en-scène.

It is not surprising that in the movement from text to stage, one’s eyes would be preoccupied. Indeed, Western cultures have become increasingly “eye”-dominated to the point where modern audiences have developed a sophisticated mediatized gaze. The shift from aural to visual culture, from the authority of the spoken word to the authority of text and other ocular media has been described by Marshall McLuhan as a movement from “ear”-focused to “eye”-focused consciousness – “An Eye for an Ear” (Understanding Media 81) – in other words, the dulling of the aural sense and the amplification of the visual sense. Radio, however, attempts an abrupt reversal of this process. Radio runs against the dominant media of its time, creating a unique instance of reception. The resulting shift, the abrupt substitution of pure sound within a predominantly visual reception environment, forms the title of this dissertation and describes my central preoccupation; this shift substitutes An Ear for an Eye.

As an amplifier of orality, the radio would appear to be the ideal medium for the performance of plays from oral cultures. To make the link between the classical dramatic course, Lewis fails to acknowledge that radio drama is subsidized by public funds which are derived from taxation.
form and radio drama is simply a natural extension of this idea. The original audience of ancient Greek tragedy was fully accustomed to operating in an acoustic cultural space, as theirs was an oral culture. While all drama is oral in the sense that performance relies on communication that typically utilizes sound in some way, the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides could be said to possess a high degree of inherent orality. This is due to their composition in a culture where the predominant communication technology\(^9\) was language that is transmitted orally. For example, Aristotle argues these plays emphasize oral delivery over visual transmission by minimizing the spectacle, or \textit{opsis} (as described and prescribed in \textit{Poetics}). Indeed, in Aristotle’s time, reading was predominantly a collective experience as one did not read alone, but instead read aloud in the company of others\(^10\), so even the reading of a text was an aural experience. By virtue of this orality, these plays are eminently suitable for radio, a medium in which the visual dimension of plays is relegated entirely to the imagination through the agency of sound.

In radio, however, we find a unique and unusual instance where acoustic space is reasserted, creating a purely oral environment within the landscape of modernity which is governed by visual and tactile media. There is evidence of sensorial sensitivities in the dynamics of these ancient tragedies, being produced in an oral culture at a time when the introduction of the alphabet and written language generates tension between that which is spoken and heard, and that which is committed to the page and viewed or even reviewed. Since the fifth century BCE, the preoccupation with the visual at the expense of the aural

\(^9\) Oral communication is a technology in the sense that language is a culturally constructed tool that requires specialized knowledge in its application.

\(^10\) While some scholars believe that silent reading was possible in Ancient Greece (see Bernard Knox “Silent Reading in Antiquity” and William Johnson’s “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity”) others feel that, for example, the lack of spaces between words would have required the reader
has increased with each successive medial development (script, print, photograph, film, television, internet, and new wireless technologies). While radio appears to have a great deal in common with ancient drama, radio is also of particular interest as its aural reception runs counter to the reception of its contemporary, predominantly visual, media.

Both the early Greek tragedies and the earliest modern radio adaptations emerge at a point in time where there are tensions between competing media, where the introduction of new communication technologies drastically alter individuals’ personal and social experiences. Just as the individual is newly mediatized in each instance, the dramatic form in question formally responds to cultural pressures. The form of artistic expression and the perceptual position of audiences are both challenged. In this dissertation, I will focus on the formal properties of productions in order to investigate the phenomenon of adaptation and new radio orality, and place at the center of this analysis the “mediatized” individual as our audience.

The “mediatized” individual who responds to radio is generally thought of as a product of the twentieth century. While this is indeed a time of increasing media saturation, and its effects on the individual are most apparent at this point in time, the experience of mediation is also evident at other points in history. When, in the late 1990s, Philip Auslander wrote on the experience of “liveness” in a mediatized culture, he spoke of the phenomenon of twentieth-century media, and specifically of mass-broadcasts and the mass-distribution of recorded media. “Mediatization” (a state of some distance from the “live” and the “present”) is frequently thought of as a contemporary concern, a product of the post-MTV, post-internet age. However the effects of new

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to sound out words in order for a reader to distinguish between words. The latter theory is supported by scholars such as Paul Saenger (see *Space Between Words*).
media on individuals (specifically) and culture (generally) has been studied in a variety of disciplines without the issue being identified as one of “mediatization”.11

Rather than relying on contemporary definitions of mediatization (which tend to privilege the “original” and “unmediated”, a condition which seems to exist only in theory, while also relying on a contemporary understanding of space and time that is informed by the ability of recording media to modulate spatial and temporal relations)12 we can find a more universally applicable description of the events which result in a modulation of the individual’s (theoretically) “pure” state of being and of perceiving. For example, we may define “mediatization” as the confrontation with and adaptation to things that mediate one’s “pure” and “direct” experience of the self and their world. The possibility of an unmediated experience is, of course, only theoretical, and I reject the common prejudices which privilege such a theoretical state, but in establishing this opposition we can instead focus on degrees of mediation and the resulting effect. We can focus on what occurs between perceivers and their world, what shades and shapes their experience of that world, what modulates the expressions an individual attempts to utter or emote, and what acts as “interference” within these exchanges. Similarly, in the adaptation of a play from one medium to another (an intermedial13 shift that we could

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11 Indeed, Auslander’s 1999 work does not fully explore the full implications of mediatization as much as it traces the history of media as a capitalist industry. The view of mediatization to which he responds is primarily a result of economic pressures emerging from the original/copy, unmediated/mediated debate. To be fair, he returns to this subject matter in 2008 in an article entitled “Live and Technologically Mediated Performance” and pays closer attention to the impact of temporal and spatial proximity on perceptions of “liveness.”

12 A pre-literate society’s perception of these phenomena (additive vs. linear organization, ephemerality, etc.) will be discussed in Part One.

13 Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt use the term “intermedial” to denote what occurs to art forms and audiences when recorded media are employed in live performance (Intermediality in Theatre and Performance). I am interested in the term as a way to denote adaptation between media (intermedial adaptations).
label an “intermedial adaptation” or a “remediation”) we can consider how forces are
enacted upon the play in its adaptation and how the play behaves in this new media
environment. At this intersection, of the play and its new environment, I will
demonstrate what interventions, interferences, or enhancements occur in production and
reception.

While we may see the proliferation of contemporary mediations as overwhelming
and, as some have claimed, determine that the mediatization of the late twentieth century
is of greater significance than in earlier ages, this would seem to diminish the significance
of earlier cultural shifts that occurred in response to “new media” of their times. How
can we say that the introduction of the alphabet was “less” mediatizing than the
introduction of the internet? As I will demonstrate in Part One of this dissertation (Radio
Reception in a Mediatized Culture), the reason that we tend to think of mediatization as a
twentieth-century phenomenon is that the destabilization of central meaning (of
transcendental certitude in particular) and a coherent world view makes the effects and
implications of mediatization more immediately apparent. The acceleration of change
that marks late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernity\textsuperscript{14} and the increasing
saturation of industry and technology, particularly communications technologies, have
produced concentrated and widespread effects. Earlier mediatizing cultural moments
simply occurred with less speed, but the struggle to adapt to new media and the resulting
shift in world-views has long been evident.

My example from \textit{Oedipus Tyrannos} demonstrates a preoccupation with verbal and
visual signals, an individual struggling with communication through competing senses,

\textsuperscript{14} See Paul Virilio (\textit{Speed and Politics}).
and this example does not exist in isolation. Marshall McLuhan uses another Greek myth (one that was not dramatized, but one that was transmitted as oral narrative) to explain the effects of man’s confrontation with mediatized experiences. In *Understanding Media* (1964) McLuhan discusses the myth of Narcissus, who becomes transfixed by his reflection in a pool of water. McLuhan dismisses the idea of Narcissus as one who falls in love with himself, instead noting that his obsession stems from his inability to comprehend that the reflection he sees in the water is indeed his own. For McLuhan, the Narcissus myth illustrates the numbing effect of a mediatized experience. He writes: “The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions until he became the servomechanism of his own extended or repeated image” (41). Indeed, when Echo calls out to Narcissus, he experiences yet another repetition (as she echoes his own voice) and he still cannot distinguish between himself and the other. While McLuhan does not fully explore the significance of sight and sound, he does (elsewhere) appreciate the significance of the new literacy which was emerging in Ancient Greek culture. If we reconsider the Narcissus myth through McLuhan’s interpretation and further through its original cultural context, in which the new technology of the alphabet resulted in written texts that were being increasingly reproduced and consumed, in this context, we may attribute greater importance to the calls of Echo. Narcissus is not merely confused about his image, but he can also not comprehend the source of Echo’s calls, misidentifying them as his own. While the voice is spatially dislocated (being produced outside his body) the sound is of his own voice (as Echo mimics the object of her love). Further, the voice is temporally dislocated, as Echo replies to her love with fragments of speech
which he has articulated, and the noise Narcissus experiences is a repetition of his own utterances. Narcissus can not locate the source of the sound and so he misidentifies it.

Where McLuhan is most persuasive is in his description of the effect of this misidentification. As a result of his inability to recognize the mediation in effect, Narcissus “was numb” (41). As he was confronted with his extension, in the form of the reflection and the echo, he could not comprehend his physical and social boundaries, specifically the boundary between self and other. Unable to shift his perception (and in doing so, his understanding of himself) when dealing with his mediated image (the reflection in the pool of water and his echoed voice) Narcissus rejects the possibility that the reflection and echoes are simultaneously of himself but not himself. Essentially, “he had adapted to his extension of himself and had become a closed system” (41). This numbness is described by McLuhan as a kind of “auto-amputation”, where in an act of self-protection, the “offending organ, sense, or function” is minimized “by a strategy of amputation or isolation” (42). In the instance Narcissus the numbness, of course, “forbids self-recognition” (43).

Similarly, Oedipus struggles with self-recognition, and we witness his ongoing lack of anagnorisis as a self-anesthetizing act. The climax of Sophocles’ play produces not a full anagnorisis, but Oedipus’ willful and literal auto-amputation of his eyesight. Oedipus and Narcissus both deal with tensions between hearing and seeing, struggling to cope with these senses which act almost in competition with one another. Their respective failures illustrate the stress of mediatization on the individual who can easily

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15 See Rom Harré’s psychology-based study on the distinction between the social, physical, and mental “self”, how identity is organized and formed, and how self-perception occurs (Personal Being: A Theory of Individual Psychology).
misinterpret signs as they struggle with their “media literacy” (their ability to comprehend new communication systems).

Not all mythical figures struggle with their mediated selves. On the contrary, the figure of Tiresias demonstrates the result of greater experience with sensorial and mediated shifts. Where Narcissus and Oedipus exhibit sensorial confusion, Tiresias represents the fully mediated individual. His frequent dramatic positioning as a wise man is primarily due to his experience with different perspectival modes. Tiresias has experienced both the male and female body (when Hera punished him for harming a pair of copulating snakes by turning him into a woman for several years) and experienced the loss of his vision (when Hera punished him for revealing that the female sexual experience was superior to the male experience). The experiential shifts which he undergoes make demands on the body and on the mode of perception and reception, a demand which occurs in an abrupt manner.

The modern day radio listener is at times a Narcissus-like figure, confronted with a fragmented and incoherent self, at other times like Oedipus, utilizing his or her senses but unable to fully translate the messages being transmitted, and alternately a Tiresias figure – sensorially accustomed to the amplification of particular senses and then forced to contend with an abrupt shift to a new form of perception and reception.

While our audience experiences a perceptual shift in the confrontation with new media, the process of mediation also occurs when adapting plays to a new form in a new cultural context. While all performances subsequent to the first production of a play are,

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16 Some have attributed the blinding of Tiresias to Zeus, suggesting the offence was not of a woman’s secrets being revealed (Hera’s) but of a man’s offence at being told his experience is inferior (Zeus’). Where Hera removes Tiresias’ sight, Zeus is said to have “restored” it through the provision of foresight. Other versions of the Tiresias myth involve Athena sharpening his aural skills to the point where he can understand birdsong.
to some degree, adaptations, by adapting to a different form of media we are here considering not just an adaptation but also a remediation of the play. Linda Hutcheon describes adaptation as both a process and the final product of that action (A Theory of Adaptation 7). The process of adaptation is a “transposition” or “transcoding” which “can involve a shift of medium” or other contextual shifts in narrative frame, perspective, and so on (7-8). In this dissertation, I consider all of these shifts, but label them as being specifically a remediation or an intermedial adaptation: an adaptation that specifically involves a shift from one form of media to another. “Remediation” does not suggest the application of a remedy in order to produce an effective transition, nor should it suggest any correction or rehabilitation. Rather, to remediate is to transport and transform in order to be reconciled with the selected medial form and “produce agreement” where the adapted play is effective in the new form.17 In the natural world, adaptation can mean “the process by which an organism or species becomes suited to its environment” (“Adaptation”). The remediation of works from stage to radio is an adaptation whereby the play is changed to “produce agreement” in radio form and become “suited to its [new] environment.”

Adaptation and remediation are processes not limited to artistic works. As I have previously demonstrated (with Narcissus) the individual who is confronted with new environments and with new media specifically, experiences a kind of mediation. Mediation is the process where an individual or work is engaged in the shift, while the resulting effect, the final product, is someone/thing which has been mediatized. There

17 Here, my definition of “remediation” is quite different from how media ecologists use the term. See, for example, J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s Remediation: Understanding New Media for a discussion of this type of remediation which involves the refashioning of earlier media into new forms (an idea that clearly derives from McLuhan).
are going to be gains and losses in this process. As we have seen, Narcissus’ confrontation with visual reflections and oral echoes resulted in a numbing or self-alienating response. The remediation of tragedy for radio similarly demonstrates gains and losses through the dramaturgical interventions employed to make the play suitable to its new environment. In later chapters, I will question how this occurs and what kind of dramaturgical intervention is required to adapt ancient oral drama to a modern oral medium.

In my examination of the dramaturgical principles involved in the adaptation of Greek tragedies for production as radio dramas, I will consider the classical dramatic form’s ability to transmit through purely oral means, and assess the effects of dramaturgical interventions in adaptation to radio. This study demonstrates both how producers attempted to solve problems in adaptation and how innovations in radio dramaturgy further remediated selected classic plays. Testing the play’s ability to transmit orally involves a focus on aural reception and, as such, the receiver must be positioned at the centre of our analysis. Therefore, this analysis will focus on the material and cultural context of adaptation and production, broadcast and reception, in order to illuminate the resulting effects on the audience.

The materials of this dissertation include productions from Canadian and British national radio (where the adaptation of classics is both culturally mandated and practically appealing) from the height of radio’s Golden Age through to the digital age (1945-present). Productions from throughout this period, including adaptations of surviving works from all three major tragedians – Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides – will be utilized as examples to demonstrate consistent formal choices in adaptation, while
selected plays will be analysed in greater depth. The use of productions from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and English language productions from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is motivated by their availability as the largest body of existing adaptations in the English language, and also by the relationship between their selection and the broadcasting mandates in their respective national contexts.

Questions of translation as well as the creative approaches of individual actors, directors, and producers deserve attention however a comprehensive investigation of these issues is beyond the scope of this dissertation although there is significant room for additional scholarly inquiry. Rather than dealing with the mechanics of how each adaptation was produced, I will deal primarily with the final product in performance. These performances have been preserved in audio recordings and, in some instances, as production scripts. Further, while I draw parallels between contemporary and ancient contexts of performance, this project does not attempt to construct a model of reception for ancient drama in the context of ancient staging conditions. Rather, I look to the past in order to understand how the drama of its time works in the present, in adaptation for radio. While this yields interesting information regarding the unique qualities of the classical dramatic form in performance, a result that will be of interest to scholars of drama and classics alike, the focus remains on adaptation and modern performance.

Others have developed foundational work on the history of broadcasting and communications media (e.g., Andrew Crisell, Eric Havelock, Marshall McLuhan, Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth) and the theory and practice of radio drama, including plays written specifically for the CBC and BBC (e.g., Tim Crook, Alan Beck, Peter Lewis, Ian Rodger, Dermot Rattigan, John Drakakis and Val Gielgud). My thesis is restricted to the
issue of adaptation and addresses the single most evident omission in the scholarship of adaptation: the transition from classical stage to radio.

The dissertation first examines the proximate forces which shaped radio dramaturgies and radio listeners. Chapter One begins by linking modern radio orality to ancient oral forms. I will then contextualize the emergence of radio drama as a phenomenon of modernity, outlining the key markers of modernity and considering radio’s broad social functions and effects. Finally, in this chapter, I will elucidate how audiences responded to radio’s return to orality and its primary focus on the ear and listening, within an “eye”-focused technological landscape (a kind of “reversal”).

The “reversal” of radio discussed in Chapter One in terms of broader social structures, is analysed in terms of the individual in Chapter Two. Here I will consider the specific perceptual and imaginative activity of individuals in order to understand how audiences experience acoustic space. Beginning with a contrast between dramatic frames (theatre space, acoustic space, imagined space), and taking sensorially limiting evaluations of radio to task, this chapter concludes by considering the function of individual perception and imagination in depth.

In the second part of this dissertation, I consider radiophonic dramaturgy and strategies of representation. In Chapter Three, I first look at the status of the adaptation as a cultural product (The Problem of Adaptation) and the popular desire to experience adaptations (The Pleasure of Adaptation). The impetus for the adaptation of classics as radio plays and their cultural impact are then considered first through an analysis of the mandates and methods of national broadcasters (The Project of Adaptation) and then through a consideration of the practical issues surrounding adaptation for a mass
audience, with special consideration of the remediation of ancient plays in a modern medium through a comparison of dramaturgical forms (The Principles of Adaptation). Theories of adaptation are central to this chapter as the motivation for adapting, the process of selection in programming, and the framing of the broadcast experience, illustrate the broadcaster’s expectations of their audience.

In the final two chapters of this dissertation I consider formal properties of productions in adaptation to illustrate where the inherent orality of the text allows for ease in adaptation, and where dramaturgical intervention is employed or even required. While all adaptations involve mediation, there are particular interventions which appear to be exceptional in their departure from the conventions of the original dramatic form and in their employment of conventions unique to radio.

Chapter Four examines narrative strategies for the representation of action, space, and time, as well as the construction of dramatic figures and the use of music and song. This analysis includes a discussion of the use of diegetic and non-diegetic narrators, introductory lectures and other additions to the received text (paratheatrical features) in its adaptation as a radio play. Chapter Five examines productions where greater dramaturgical intervention and innovation is in evidence, including the manipulation of perspective (in the CBC’s 2001 Medea), the use of music to modernize setting (in the 1998 CBC-BBC co-production of The Trojan Women), the use of experimental montage (in the BBC’s 1976 Ag), the introduction of flashback sequences (in the CBC’s 1987

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I am utilizing diegetic/non-diegetic in the sense of that which is part of the fictional world of the play, and that which exists outside these boundaries. I find this distinction, borrowed from formal film analysis (see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Film Art) most useful and am not referring to Patrice Pavis’ definition of these terms.
Antigone), and solutions to the problem of what I term “dramaturgical erasure” (the inadvertent removal of silent figures from the perspectival field).
PART ONE

Radio Reception in a Mediatized Culture
CHAPTER ONE
An Ear for an Eye: Radio and Modern Orality

Radio developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and subsequently connected mass audiences through the experience of a new, disembodied orality. Operating as a product of modernity, where the individual’s experience of the world and organization of selfhood underwent a radical change, radio promoted a widely available and direct form of communication. This was also a form of communication that was faster than any other, accelerating the spread of information. However, radio also worked against the predominant perceptual modes of modernity as a sound-based medium within a visually oriented cultural landscape. Radio’s abrupt reversal of sensorial demands is particularly forceful in the early to mid-twentieth century as it developed within a culture focused on print media, photography, and film. While the dominant technologies of the time demanded visual attention, radio required aural reception. Its requirements in fact surpass the auricular demands of previous oral cultures as it transmits exclusively through sound. This focused transmission creates greater demands on audiences who must adapt not only to modern orality but also to a message that, in its transmission, is devoid of visual information.

The impact of the introduction of radio has been described as an abrupt return to orality. Marshall McLuhan found that American and English cultures developed “an intense visual organization of experience” due to their “long exposure to literacy and industrialism” (Understanding Media 297). Radio, however, acts as a “subliminal echo chamber” with the ability to “touch remote and forgotten chords” (302). These forgotten
chords, McLuhan suggests, are the chords of orality. The echoes heard constitute the “tribal drum” of man’s inherent, primitive, and natural oral state. While we may not fully accept the oral state as “pure” or “natural”, as language itself is already a constructed and mediating social force, McLuhan was not alone in finding precedents for modern communications phenomena in ancient culture. Eric Havelock, Walter Ong, and other communication and cultural theorists looked to ancient oral culture, operating in a time when orality experienced a collision with the emerging literacy, in order to explain the radical shifts of twentieth-century life. In particular, these theorists sought to explain orality’s reversal of sensorial demands and its re-emergence within a literate and visually oriented culture.

To explain the conditions of modern orality, I will compare modern and ancient oral communication and trace the decline of orality prior to exploring the conditions of orality’s return through radio. I will look to the present through the “rear-view mirror” (McLuhan *The Medium is the Massage*) developing an understanding of the eye/ear tensions in radio and radio plays through an understanding of the ear/eye tensions in ancient oral culture and ancient tragedies. Part of the discourse of modernity is looking to the past, considering what has been lost in modernity. As I will demonstrate, Walter Benjamin employs a particularly nostalgic view when considering the loss of orality, as exemplified through the decline of storytelling against the rise of the novel. This change in communication modes is significant because it demonstrates a shift from ear-focused communication to eye-focused communication.

In this chapter I will begin by outlining the precursors to radio orality in ancient oral culture. Considering tensions between this cultural orality and the emergence of
literacy, I will situate the development of tragedy within this period. The chapter then evaluates the loss of orality by tracing the shift from ancient oral culture to visually-focused and highly-mediatized modern conditions. I will contextualize the cultural landscape into which radio emerged by examining modernity’s temporal boundaries and key markers. Then I will focus on the experience of radio and modern orality within a mediatized culture. By exploring the social experience of radio, I will demonstrate how new technologies affect the perceptual and organizational abilities of the individual. This shift in perception constitutes the “reversal” of radio, where the sensorial hierarchy of the twentieth-century that privileges the visual is disrupted by the introduction of an oral medium that privileges sound. By outlining the context this medium and its audiences, I will explain the implications of adapting for radio and provide a frame for the investigations of later chapters (most notably Chapter Two where the reception conditions of the individual receive greater attention).

**Radio Orality and Ancient Oral Forms**

It is not surprising that modern thinkers look to ancient Greece for explanations of the phenomenon of radio and to explain the social and cultural implications of oral communications in their time. In *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (1986) Eric Havelock hypothesizes that the proliferation of texts on the subject of orality, from 1962-1963, was inspired by the collective experience of radio:

I think a nerve had been touched common to all of us, an acoustic nerve and so an oral nerve, something that had been going on for over forty years since the end of
World War I, to the point where it demanded response. [ . . . ] We had all been
listening to the radio, a voice of incessant utterance, orally communicating fact and
intention and persuasion, borne on the airwaves to our ears. Here was a new type of
demand on our attention, even a new force exercised over our minds. (*The Muse
Learns to Write* 30)

This new demand was in fact a kind of echo of an older form of communication. Radio
“provok[ed] an awareness of tensions set up between the spoken word and the written
[work],” prompting communications theorists to locate “a possible historical origin for
this in the experience of the Greeks” (30-1). This pre-literate oral experience is not
identical to the experience of radio, but in tracing the nature and development of ancient
orality, and locating the form of tragedy here, we can understand the precursors to radio
orality. In both instances, competing media create tensions that affect the development of
dramatic forms.

To imagine how ancient culture constituted an oral state, we must first remind
ourselves that “before there were books and readers in Greece, there were poets and
audiences” (Knox “Books and Readers” 3). With a developed “literature” that pre-dates
common literacy, the relationship between orality, literacy, and poetry is a complex one
in the Ancient Greek world. What we presently identify as prose, poetry, and drama, was
all considered strictly “poetry” as its written form was not an issue and as all were
communicated in a performative manner. This was a primarily oral culture where all
word-based art was spoken and heard rather than being written and read. All art that
presents spoken words does so in a performative frame as the only avenue of
communication was in an aural space that required the presence of both speaker and
receiver. As Havelock notes, our contemporary reception is informed not merely by oral transmission but often initially by the work as “literature”: “We read as texts what was originally composed orally, recited orally, heard acoustically, memorized acoustically and taught acoustically in all communities of the early Hellenic civilization” (“Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 263). In agreement with McLuhan, he further asserts that “the ‘natural’ condition of human speech is acoustic” and that written communication created a “clash of the senses”: To put the new invention to full use, its users were now required to mate the inherited habits of mouth and ear to the acquired habits of hand and eye. A completely new factor was introduced into the act of verbal communication, namely vision. (“Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 262)

The development of written script, aided by a simplified alphabet that coded verbal communications, produced an efficient written system that demanded visual attention. Oral culture was certainly transformed by the new alphabet and the development of literacy but it is not clear when this occurred. The tension between verbal and visual communications has been widely noted although the timing and development of literacy, its rate of acceptance and employment, and the impact of its influence are still very much contested.  

While the tension between the traditional oral mode of communication and the new system emerged, it must be noted that this was not at the speed we would expect in

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19 To appreciate the position of the spoken word in Greek culture one must only think of the perfection of the acoustics in theatre spaces such as the theatre at Epidauros where, even with roughly 15,000 audience members filling the space and absorbing sound with their bodies, whispers from the centre of the orchestra carry to the further reaches of the theatre. The Greeks were serious about being able to hear, even in situations where it is quite likely that there was great difficulty in seeing. See also Chourmouziadou and Kang’s “Acoustic Evolution of Ancient Theatres and Effects of Scenery” 230-232.

20 See Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy* (drawing on Milman Parry’s work, among others).
contemporary culture. While writing systems had been in evidence in the Mediterranean region from nearly 3,000 BCE, the Greek system developed around the eighth century BCE. Unlike other writing systems which had been in limited use, this new system flourished due to its “economy and clarity” (Knox “Books and Readers” 1). As an adaptation of the Phoenician system, the Greeks “added vowels” and “removed redundant consonants” (Knox 2) which resulted in the Greek alphabet becoming “an instrument of symbolic efficiency greatly superior to the non-Greek systems from which it emerged” (Havelock “Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 261). This allowed writing to become a more accessible system, with widespread applications where this form of communication was no longer reliant on trained specialists.\(^ {21}\) Indeed, later evidence of written communication and of readers indicates that the task of reading was not restricted to those with such specialised training or to those of specific classes.\(^ {22}\) Finally, the act of reading remained an oral art as “silent reading as we know it was very rare until the advent of printing” (Goody and Watt 42).

The new written system was still limited in terms of its distribution as there was no market for written texts and so things committed to script were not for commercial trade. While the economic imperatives are clear, including evidence of the recording of inventories and the like being useful for the exchange of goods, there was not yet the kind of economy where this new system would create a book trade that would impact

\(^ {21}\) However, it should be noted that early texts had little or no punctuation or other indications of word division. This new system was still somewhat difficult to decode. Also see Patricia Easterling’s “Books and Readers in the Greek World.”

\(^ {22}\) Knox shows evidence of a surviving sixth-century note that addresses a slave, giving the master’s instructions. He further notes vase paintings that depict women reading poetry (Knox 8). Goody and Watt also discuss literacy amongst slaves as being common (42).
Indeed, with the theatre festivals having such a significant civic function, and with entry being private, determined by political and social affiliations and not being open to the public in a commercial manner, there is no real concept of a “culture industry” as of yet. Art was not for commercial exchange but for civic engagement and the preservation of cultural memory.

Havelock notes that there is only indirect evidence of when the reading public became the majority of the population. While Havelock estimates that the “condition of general literacy came about in Athens in the last third of the fifth century B.C.” as an earliest possible date, this does not preclude a later date (“Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 261-262). Even given this early date, this would mean, “in the case of the Greek mainland, a time lag of well over 250 years between the date of the original invention and its complete social application” (262). Why this delay? Havelock interrogates “obstacles to achieving the transition” (262), including physiological changes required to adapt to the alphabet, writing, and reading, as well as the cognitive shift which requires a level of abstraction not familiar to oral thinking.

In terms of the co-existence of orality and text, Alan E. Samuel describes these as being “near-exclusive concepts” stating that “where there is text, it eventually supplants orality, and with orality, no text exists” (“Text and Ideology in Hellenism” 5). However, Samuel notes that text eventually replaces orality and so, logically, there is a period where texts exist in an oral culture. The introduction of text does not extinguish the oral

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23 There is evidence of books being sold in late fifth century Athens (Knox 9-10). Knox also speculates that those who could not attend the Athenian Festival of Dionysus created a demand for copies of the plays.
24 Havelock provides a detailed yet concise summary of this scholarship in “Oral Composition of Greek Drama.”
25 Also see Rosalind Thomas’ Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece (1992), W.V. Harris’ Ancient Literacy (1989), and Jack Goody and Ian Watt’s “The Consequences of Literacy” (1968).
habits and markers of that culture, although it does change perception, consciousness, and social organization, creating a shift from primary to residual orality. The return to orality in the twentieth-century has been described (by Havelock and McLuhan) as a secondary orality.

How did the shift to a residual orality occur and what was the impact of literacy on Athenian culture? Havelock writes that there was a delay in the full adoption of the “technologies of reading and writing”:

One must distinguish the original act of invention from the methods required to realise its potential. At the time when it occurred, these did not exist. There were for example no primary schools for teaching letters, and no body of documentation large enough to provide the occasion, let alone the desire, to learn to read. Obviously a few people did learn the art. The question is How many, and where did they belong in the social scale? The existence of a general literacy depends upon the existence not of writers as such, but of a reading public large enough to form a majority.” (“Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 261)

Pursuing the exact moment where a culture becomes “literate” is likely not to be a fruitful pursuit. For the purposes of this dissertation I am persuaded by the suggestion that literacy’s effects were being felt while the culture remained oral.

But what then is the impact of the new possibility of committing works of oral art to paper (or papyrus as the case would have been) and of creating a fixed mark of that work? How would this impact the production and reception of such works. Samuel, for example, suggests that when Homer’s Iliad was recorded, in the sixth century BCE, this “written form established a text for the Greeks” and “froze the potential of impact which
the work in oral form could make ideologically” (Samuel 6). Samuel suggests that the influence of the written form of the text, its commitment to some degree of permanency, had significant ideological implications as “almost every important Greek author whose works we have intact, or nearly so, falls into the period 450-350 B.C.” (Samuel 6-7).

The significance of surviving texts may not necessarily be located in their commercial value, as I have already dismissed, or as indicators of a fully literate culture. The existence of texts of drama is no more evidence for the written-culture mentality of dramatic expression than the texts of Homeric epic would argue for an essentially written culture as the background of epic. (Samuel 8)

Indeed, Samuel suggests that the textual evidence could merely indicate that “the developing importance of writing could have motivated the writing down of play scripts in much the way the interest in history motivated the writing down of the traditional (oral) Athenian archon list and list of Olympian victors” (8). The presence of text, then, does not preclude the culture that produced it from being an oral culture.

The impact of text on the individual’s perception of their world may indeed have been significantly limited. While on the one hand, there is evidence of “graffiti” in the sixth century BCE, and some early vase painting which depict “young boys in school scenes learning to read,” it is generally agreed that literacy was not widespread (Knox 6). What is unusual about this is that some evidence includes notes written to slaves, providing instructions for specific tasks (Knox 6). If this is the case, then could we assume that the slave receiving the instructions was literate? Was literacy not a marker of class and status but simply a practical tool? And further, what is the difference between these markings related to work and those related to art. As Knox writes, books were used
as “a script for recital rather than as a text for individual study” (7). Yet there appears to be some tension between inscriptions meant for focused and private use (the slave’s instructions) and those meant for general and public use (the recitation of Homer, for example). The coexistence of emerging literacy and the dominant orality appears to have led to some unusual circumstances and even some uneven developments.\textsuperscript{26} Scholars agree that the audience of Greek poetry was primarily constructed of individuals who were adept at listening rather than reading.

As I have shown, the belief that ancient culture was oral, and the nature of that orality, is not in great dispute. While we can not easily locate the point of transition from an oral to a literate culture, it does at least appear clear that this was an uneven development and that the use of terms such as “primary orality” and “residual orality” can help describe the shift towards literacy and the gradual loss of orality. If we now turn our attention to ancient tragedies, I will demonstrate how, in practice, the mentality of orality, its social implications, and the form of oral narratives underwent some changes in response to tension from the emerging literacy.

An oral mentality leads to a particular way of organizing experiences of the self and the community at large, and further affects how communications are expressed. Samuel writes that the Hellenic mentality consists of two conflicting forces. First, there is the earlier Homeric, dramatic and oral way of thinking, [which] sees human beings developing understanding and experience through direct perception: with the inevitably fragmentary and personal nature of perception, this mentality sees the human condition as fundamentally limited, buffeted and at the mercy of a

\textsuperscript{26} Also see Charles Segal’s “Tragedy, Orality, Literacy” for a more in-depth treatment of this timeline.
cosmos which is poorly understood or known not at all and which itself is inaccessible to and uncaring of humanity. (Samuel 10-11)

Second, the other ideological force is what Samuel calls “the mentality of writing” which “is based on faith in human reason and on the view that human beings using their minds are capable of reaching accurate conceptions of the nature of the cosmos” (Samuel 11).

The latter mentality, the mentality of writing, resulted in changes to how information is processed. Orality necessitated a close connection between the sender and receiver of each communication. The perpetuation of communities depended upon this intimacy and on the collective memory generated by the repetition of cultural narratives (which I will return to momentarily). While Plato “in the Phaedrus was concerned that writing would erase memory” Samuels notes that script formats did not immediately create distances and fragmentation of narrative transmission due to the inconvenience of scripts committed to lengthy rolls (as this was still an emerging script culture and bound books had not yet been developed).27

The difficulty of using the roll to refer back to specific passages or even, to find specific information in it seems to have made that threat [of extinguishing orality] a little remote. Certainly the inaccuracy and approximation by which earlier writers were cited by later among the Greeks suggests that memory was often used in preference to arduous precision. (Samuel 14-15)

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27 “Indeed, since we know from administrative practice in Egypt that the roll was even used for filing, that is, disparate documents were pasted together to form rolls which made individual texts virtually unfindable, the mentality of using writing for reference and consultation was a long time coming. The convenient codex, with pages that can be turned quickly, back and forth, more accommodating to scholarship and science, was a very late arrival on the scene in the ancient world. The earliest Christian codex is dated by its editor to 100, and only that editor was convinced that it was that early.” (Samuel 15)
Samuel also notes that these rolls were still read out loud and not read in isolation. This creates a continuation of orality and “the combination of the transmission of text in this manner may well encourage styles and thought less Aristotelian, that is, less oriented to data and precision” (Samuel 15). And so, the oral and literate mentalities continued to co-exist in a residual oral state.

In addition to framing the experience of life through direct perception and direct communications, there is evidence of a specific formal logic to communications from oral cultures. Oral narratives are largely formulaic, relying on identifiable conventions in order to aid both the storyteller and his audiences. Elements of this form include unity, repetition, and variation. Due to the inability of the listener to review elements of the story (as one could easily do with a book by returning to a favoured passage) repetition is particularly important. Also, as this form is not linear but additive, such framing structures allow not only ease of comprehension but also time for the consideration and processing of important narrative elements. As one cannot act as an independent consumer of the narrative and re-read key points, or dwell on phrases, the collective audience is guided to significant elements and indulged through repetition. Oral formulas also employ conventions (e.g. the use of epithets) that act as shortcuts to the trajectory of the primary narrative. These formal elements reveal a narrative that is easy to recollect and convey. As Havelock writes, one significant aspect of the language in the early part of this period is its use as “an instrument for the preservation of oral speech through memorization” (“Alphabetic Mind” 134). This, he explains, is evident in the form of works we have received, beginning with Homer. He notes that Homer is not representative of everyday speech, but of “an artificially managed language with special
rules for memorization, one of which was rhythm” (134). Havelock contrasts this with later works, such as Aristotle’s which represent a period of more widespread literacy where the work shows evidence of a construction increasingly suitable for readers rather than listeners. In these later works, cultural artifacts are constructed “not through memorization but by placing it in a visual artifact, the alphabet, where the content can survive as long as the artifact and its copies survive also” (134).

Form is of course linked to the broader social function of oral communication. Orally transmitted stories are formed in order to be easily transmitted, but their social function is to condense and contain images from our collective unconscious. This repetition forms cultural identities by modeling prevailing assumptions about class, families, gender, and so on. While it can reflect and produce dominant ideologies, it can also present political and philosophical critiques of society. Narrative formats can also act subversively in that the social critique is embedded with and disguised by myths. Plato’s objections to the influence of theatre may have been influenced by a realization of this power.

The utilization of theatre as a vehicle for the construction and preservation of culture has been identified by critics such as Eric Havelock and Derrick de Kerckhove. In 1963, with the publication of Preface to Plato, Havelock first discussed Greek poetry as “preserved communication,” expanding on this in his 1982 work, “The Oral Composition of Greek Drama” and later in “The Alphabetic Mind” in 1986. While Havelock’s argument is more persuasive when he deals with oral epic poetry than with drama, it is still of interest to me here in order to establish the orality of Greek culture. De Kerckhove contributes to this discussion with “A Theory of Greek Tragedy” (1981)
where he identifies the same Western phenomenon not as “preserved communication” but as “information processing” (23).

De Kerckhove posits that theatre in fact emerged from Athenian society’s desire to preserve its culture, but specifically to do so by training its community to process language in specific ways. Theatre for de Kerckhove shows markers of the alphabet’s influence on an oral society. He writes that

Greek theater was one of the developments of the phonetic alphabet specifically, and that its effect was to transform the sensory life of the Athenian community. The Greek stage projected the prototypes of Western man as models for the acquisition of private consciousness. The theatrical processes amplified and extended to the non-literate members of the Athenian culture, some of the discreet effects which the phonetic alphabet generated among those who could already read and write. While they were attending stage productions illiterates might be deemed to develop their attention span, their concentration, their critical faculties and their capacity for abstraction, their manipulation of language, and even train their visual skills from peripheral to centralized and directional vision. They might be encouraged for the first time to define and fragment experience in sequences and reorganize its patterns in a unified visual space. (de Kerckhove “A Theory of Greek Tragedy” 23)

Havelock refers instead to preservation, rather than processing, identifying the emergence of theatre as being a natural extension of the process of memorization and recitation. Repetition, as a primary means of creating memories leads to performative actions and
thus the theatre developed as a site of cultural preservation. Ultimately, both Havelock and de Kerckhove agree that the function of poetry (theatre) is didactic.

While some argue that Greek tragedy benefited from the tensions introduced by the existence of the scripted word and an emerging literacy, others question this influence as the markers of literacy are not fully evident in the surviving “literature.” Samuel explains that

writing both permits and calls for logical sequential development in argumentation. It also permits lengthy, complex, and variegated narrative. It can accept a bewildering array of people, places, events, can reach over a long period of time and even allow for frequent forays back and forth in time. When the writing is presented on the pages of books, in the manner of modern texts, rather than in the rolls of early and middle antiquity, pages over which the reader can turn back and forth to be reminded of ideas and names, the complexity, subtlety and content can be almost limitless. Today, for example, historians can dump all sorts of obscurities into their texts, in the confidence that a reader who has got lost can be reoriented by using the index. (Samuel 10)

While an oral drama can accomplish a number of things, it can not present a “sequential argument, moving from starting point through a series of ideas and steps to reach a conclusion,” partly since oral form is additive but also because the oral form can not bear the weight of extended “constructions of logic” (Samuel 9).

I will now turn to the question of how orality and, later, written culture impacted the composition and reception of Ancient Greek tragedies. While it is difficult to show direct causality and demonstrate a shift to a residually oral state, the plays themselves do

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28 See Charles Segal’s “Tragedy, Orality, Literacy.”
demonstrate tension between that which is spoken and that which is seen. This does not necessarily indicate that the development of eye-focused production and reception occurred exclusively as a result of a new literacy. Ancient Greek culture developed sculpture and architecture as some of its art forms and clearly had a sense of spatial and visual communication beyond the strictly oral. While we can say that this culture is ear-focused in its communication of language, this does not preclude a developed visual aesthetic.

Drama can be said to be inherently oral. The difference between all drama and ancient tragedy is one that must be clarified here. The consideration of all drama being oral is one that defines drama and performance as an ephemeral experience. As Samuel writes

drama is per se oral. What is said by the characters and playwright comes out in the “winged words” of epic. Enunciated, they fly away, and if the force of their impact is not great, the impact itself will be slight, and listeners will either forget what was said or will miss its significance. (Samuel 9)

Others take the ephemerality of performance to further extremes and insist upon a limitation of drama’s entrance into an economy of repetition.29 While the finer points of the liveness/mediatisation debate30 are not of interest to us here, I should note that in my opinion, rehearsals are a means of ensuring future performances (even if it is only a single “debut” or “premiere” performance) and that in this sense, even the ancient tragedies, originally meant to be performed a single time at the Festival of Dionysos, have already entered an economy of repetition of sorts. However, the immediacy of

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30 See Philip Auslander’s Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture.
orality is not affected by such repetition. Orality is indeed based upon repetition (the repetition of myths to construct a shared sense of identity and to ensure the survival of social history).

It is not only the construction of ancient drama that makes it particularly oral but also the choice of content. These “winged words” are in fact grounded in common cultural myths. For example, Euripides’ *Medea* gains some of its effect by playing on the audience’s expectations of the narrative. At least three different versions of the Medea myth existed, with the variation primarily being in how Medea and Jason’s children meet their demise and how Medea makes her escape. Euripides, in constructing his drama to represent Medea as the murderer, played on the audience’s expectations and produced a greater dramatic effect through this variation.\(^{31}\) In this instance, and as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, the audience’s identification with Medea, as the play’s protagonist, results in an experience of shock and surprise when her final act of vengeance is revealed. Pleasure is derived here from identification within the act of representation and specifically from the adaptation’s selection of endings in a variation on the known myth. Indeed, given the extensive use of familiar narratives, the audience of ancient tragedy is always receiving the drama as adaptation. This allows the audience to focus on the nuances of delivery and on variation from the essential aspects of the myth.

Early cinema capitalized on this very technique, although the mass medium found that common stories were more difficult to identify. Distributors quickly began to use an oral preface to the film in the form of a short lecture to prepare the audience for the film, to familiarize them with the narrative. There is an equivalent in theatre in the common

\(^{31}\) For example, in another version of the myth, it is the Corinthians who kill Medea and Jason’s children (see Creophylus in Martin West’s *Greek Epic Fragments* 172-177). Further versions show Medea fleeing with one of her sons or Medea accidentally killing her children.
practice of providing plot outlines in program notes. The lectures and program notes are predicated on the belief that audiences require some sort of guidance. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, narrative additions are also employed in radio adaptations of tragedies in order to remediate for audience members who are not familiar with the dramatized myth or the play that is being directly adapted. In the ancient context, the choice of subject matter may not be motivated by a belief that audiences will only be interested in stories they know. Rather here, the motivation for utilising common myths is in the common use of narrative repetition as a vehicle for the preservation of culture. The act of narrative repetition through performance was considered central to the activities of citizens and essential for the survival of the polis.32

In addition to the choice of subject matter, the form of tragedy exhibits a number of specific indicators of its inherent orality. In a primary oral state, narratives were repetitive and elliptical in order to act as a memory aid and cultural inscriber. In a state of literacy the ability to record language in script (with the aid of a newly streamlined alphabet) the ability to produce a permanent record (which is verifiable and accessible at any point in time) means that other techniques of committing words to memory are not required. Ancient Greek drama was composed in a primarily oral culture and its narrative structure (alternations between choral episodes and exchanges between primary dramatic figures) use of space (limitations on the level of visual detail in onstage action by staging complex actions offstage) and limitations on the number of dramatic figures in use, are all indications of a drama that is geared towards an ear-focused audience. Havelock provides a detailed examination of *The Frogs* (“The Oral Composition of Greek Drama” 268 –

32 For more on the civic function of Ancient Greek theatre, see Oddone Longo’s “The Theatre of the Polis,” Jasper Griffin’s “The Social Function of Attic Tragedy,” and Edith Hall’s “The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy.”
Seven Against Thebes (293 – 299) and his comparison of the relationship between the early works of Aeschylus and the later works of Euripides (299-313). Here, Havelock demonstrates tensions between orality and the emerging Athenian literacy and illustrates changes in the dramatic form of these selected tragedies that he believes were a result of a changing Athenian consciousness and its resulting onstage representation.

Samuel is more critical of the effects of literacy on Athenian drama, noting changes evident as early as Aeschylus’ Oresteia. He follows the change in subject matter and alleges that the emerging literate consciousness coincides with a shift in the view of humanity.

The atrophy of the tragic drama came quickly after the birth of written philosophy, and within a decade or two the stage was occupied by comic writers and melodrama like that of Menander. The genre in which thought was carried on altered irreversibly. […] Meanwhile, for the rest of antiquity, poetry and the drama would be devoted, for the most part, to entertainment and the expression of personal feelings – or at the most impersonal, ideas and ideals about society and human affairs or metrical renditions of philosophical tracts. (Samuel 12).

The “Euripidean vision of the cosmos as a moral shambles” is in Samuel’s opinion the perspective which fits the events of the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, which Aeschylus explores in some plays and rejects in the Oresteia, that remarkable account of transition from divine to human justice, from cosmic conflict tormenting humanity to the settlement of scores both divine and human. The view of humanity floundering in a cosmos neither understood nor manageable in any way […] No
longer an Oresteia on the stage, but dialectic and argument, recorded for reminding
and discussion, as Plato would put it, carried the burden of human cosmological,
ethical and moral investigation for Hellenism. (Samuel 13)

While Samuel comments on the shift in worldview, he also notes the extensive use of
improper and flawed citations that mark most literature from the period, presenting these
as evidence that memory retained its cultural standing in spite of the existence of the
script culture (rolls which, as I noted, were not efficient or useful tools of reference).

As Havelock and Samuel demonstrate, the markers of the emerging literacy are
evident in tragic drama from the period. While Athenian culture remained a
predominantly oral culture, the development of the alphabet and script culture instigated a
shift that would ultimately cause the loss of primary orality. The dominance of visual and
tactile media was accomplished over centuries and it is not until the twentieth century
that we find a return to orality (a “secondary orality”) through radio’s reversal of
sensorial hierarchies. I will now trace the loss and resurrection of orality from ancient to
modern western culture.

The Loss of Orality and the Rise of Visual and Tactile Media

While I have discussed the period in which the drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles,
and Euripides was produced, and the period immediately following (in my discussion of
Aristotle’s Poetics), I will now account for the loss of orality and the shift from ear-
focused culture to eye-focused culture. Following the end of the Peloponnesian war, there
was a marked decline of Athenian tragedy. In the two thousand years between this
decline and the rise of radio (with its invention at the turn of the twentieth century) there
was a shift in the dominant mode of perception of western cultures. Here I will consider both what led to this shift, and also how it changed the individual’s experience of the world around them.

As I have shown, the introduction of the phonetic alphabet instigated the shift towards visual and tactile media as it allowed for efficiency in the recording of events and ideas, creating interest in reading and writing. While this new technology was met with some suspicion, its use increased and gained influence. The phonetic alphabet was not immediately interiorized and the process of change must be recognized as taking place at a gradual rate, at least in comparison with the speed at which new technologies are absorbed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Literacy was further reinforced by the invention of movable type and the printing press (credited to Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-fifteenth century) which allowed for the increased production (although not yet a mass-production) of print materials and, as a result, marketable goods. Moving from the reproduction of written works through hand copying and wooden block printing, to the movable metal type, production gained a new level of flexibility and efficiency. The book trade identified in the Hellenic period was limited compared to the increase in the production and consumption of books in the “Gutenberg Age” (McLuhan). McLuhan identifies this moment as an event that instigated a new phase in communications history. It is also a moment that is frequently cited as the start of modernity. Paul Heyer summarizes McLuhan’s four phases as follows:

History is divided into four phases characterized by the prevailing means of communication. In the first phase, rule and logic are dominated by the properties of

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33 See Max Picard’s “The Radio.”
the spoken word; examples in more recent times include the nonliterate cultures studied by twentieth-century anthropologists. This oral phase is followed by the emergence of the phonetic alphabet, the scribal tradition. [ . . . ] The third phase McLuhan highlights is the Gutenberg revolution utilizing printing via movable type. This is followed by the electric age [ . . . ]. (132)

It is worth noting that the ages cannot be said to have clearly delineated beginnings and endings. For example, script culture and handwriting persists long after the invention of print. While this dissertation primarily considers the first and last ages, it is the transition from the oral to the electric age that interest me at this point. This shift primarily involves different methods and speeds at which information can be processed and disseminated.

Heyer further notes how Harold Innis was “more respectful of non-phonetic systems” seeing that

writing, not just alphabetic writing, was the major historical-technological development. It conferred on its practitioners a particular kind of visual bias, whereas the early alphabet, particularly in Greece, retained several aspects of orality – a position diametric to McLuhan. (Heyer 132)

While Heyer is also interested in describing the ideological implications that Innis posits34, illustrating how dialogue (rather than simply the aural nature of the oral tradition) resulted in a specific kind of political economy, inhibiting “the emergence of monopolies of knowledge leading to overarching political authority, territorial expansion, and the inequitable distribution of power and wealth” (117-18), what is most significant to us is his description of the effect of writing. Heyer’s take on Innis suggests that

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34 See Innis’ Empire and Communications.
writing “yield[s] a ‘transpersonal memory’” (118). This is quite unlike the collective historical account supported by oral traditions which emphasised a collective effort in the absorption and continued transmission of self-defining mythologies. Rather, writing allows for permanence, although not a defined and indisputable concreteness, and in the inscription of events creates a new sense of temporal and spatial relations. While the ancient orality involved the sense of past being present and also future, this new perception promotes linear thinking. From the inscriptions on papyri to the printing of the Gutenberg Age, script and print created a distance between the time a communication (a mark, in this case) is created the time it is perceived. Where speech was immediate, script and print delineate time in a more specific manner which, in effect, creates greater distinction between what is past and what is present. This is emphasised further with the development of longer works such as novels. Walter Benjamin describes the differences between storytelling and the reading of novels. The storyteller, performing in an oral tradition, “takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale” (87 “The Storyteller”). This absorption of “experience” results in a collective cultural memory which “creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation.” (Benjamin 98) Benjamin’s description of the relationship between the telling of stories, cultural memory and the experience of the individual in this oral culture is worth citing at length:

There is nothing that commends a story to memory more effectively than that chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis. And the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes
the story’s claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later. This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience. A rustling in the leaves drives him away. His nesting places – the activities that are intimately associated with boredom – are already extinct in the cities and are declining in the country as well. With this the gift for listening is lost and the community of listeners disappears. For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to.

The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory. When the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself. This, then, is the nature of the web in which the gift of storytelling is cradled. This is how today it is becoming unraveled at all its ends after being woven thousands of years ago in the ambience of the oldest forms of craftsmanship. (Benjamin Illuminations “The Storyteller” 91)

There is a sense of a collective in the oral tradition which is eroded with the increasing authority and influence of written text and the printed word. Further, the intimacy of oral reception is emphasized and the degree of integration in the narrative suggests that the impact of the story is significant and personal. The reader of the novel, however, merely
consumes words in an isolated and selfish manner (87). Benjamin describes this contrast in terms of the activity of the novelist and the reader of the novel:

The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. (Benjamin “Storyteller” 87)

In contrast to this, the storyteller and his audience, even in the case of a solitary listener, share “companionship” (100). The change in technology in evidence here is one that moves from being in the presence of the communicator (even if that communicator represents a link in a chain – for example, the orator who performs Homer or the private citizen who reports a message) to one where the message can be inscribed and later received. The temporal and spatial fragmentation is more significant here than in the oral chain. Further, the shift relocates the individual from a space where the speech is based on the dramatization of events (in storytelling) to one that fragments our understanding of time and space, relegating the speaker and listener to a new mode of perception. The experience of the individual within society then changes from an individual in a collective oral culture to an individual in a fragmented mass culture. The individual who experiences radio, however, experiences both a sense of fragmentation and, simultaneously, the “companionship” which Benjamin observes.

**Modernity and the Emergence of Radio**

Just as Benjamin looked to the past in order to explain the transition from storytelling to the consumption of novels, Havelock, McLuhan and others cast their
minds to Greece to explain radio as a return to orality. These scholars revisit the oral culture of ancient Greece in order to explain the social and cultural implications of oral communications in their time. Understanding our experience of the present through the past (McLuhan’s “rear-view mirror” theory) is a typically modern preoccupation. This is partly a reflexive act of self-protection where, in response to the disorientation of modernity, an individual re-orient themselves by looking to a pre-modern existence. While the modern individual cannot return to a pre-modern state, it is through the reflection of the past that greater understanding of the present can occur.

To further situate radio’s emergence in the history of communications, I will reveal the major social, economic, and cultural conditions which frame the emergence of radio. In characterizing this landscape, my concern is to define modernity’s temporal boundaries, identify its key markers and dynamics, and assess the impact of “modern life” on the individual. This individual will then become central to our study of radio audiences in subsequent chapters.

As Ben Singer writes, “modernity is ostensibly a temporal concept”, a time after the premodern and before the postmodern, yet also a time that is largely undefined, where “there is very little agreement on which centuries that span covers” (17). It is common to loosely define modernity as a whole as “something taking place over the last 500 years” (Berman 53).

Determining what is “modern” and when “modern life” begins requires that one decide, among other things, whether the temporal boundary be defined by a causal action or by the manifestation of the resulting effect. A number of actions have been identified as initiating the modern age, including:
Gutenberg’s invention of mechanical printing in 1455, the discovery of America in the 1490s, the Reformation beginning in 1517, the publication in 1543 of Copernicus’s heliocentric theory of the solar system, or, in the same year, Vasellius’s publication of the first anatomical studies based on systematic human dissection. (Singer 17)

However these acts do not occur in isolation, nor do they emerge spontaneously and without precedent. Indeed, while some would attempt to pinpoint an early date for the dawn of modernity, others focus on the cumulative effects of early discoveries and developments, placing greater importance on impact and influence as a marker of modernity.

For example, Jürgen Habermas identifies the eighteenth century as a time when the effects of earlier developments was recognized and felt, where the “monumental events around the year 1500” (the discovery of the “new world,” the Renaissance, and the Reformation, specifically) were “conceptualized as this beginning, the beginning of the modern age” (Habermas qtd. in Singer 17-18). As Singer notes, those who “bypass the Renaissance” find the eighteenth century to be significant as “the moment of self-conscious recognition: the emergence of the scientific method, secular philosophy, and democratic political theory in the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution” (18). However, again, we may dispute the degree of “self-consciousness” in effect at this moment in time, as it appears to remain an isolated phenomenon and not a widespread actuality.

Some would suggest that it is only fair to speak of modernity once the “new science” actually catalyzed major economic, demographic, and socio-political
transformations, for example “when the Scientific Revolution expanded into the
Industrial Revolution of the late 1700s and 1800s” (Singer 18). Others, while not
discounting the events which preceded the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,
“position modernity within an even briefer and more recent time frame, focusing on the
decades around the turn of the century, or what one might call ‘modernity at full
throttle’” (19). As Ben Singer writes “these decades saw the most profound and striking
explosion of industrialization, urbanization, migration, transportation, economic
rationalization, bureaucratization, military mechanization, mass communication, mass
amusement, and mass consumerism” (19). The most significant aspect of this
“explosion” is the degree of speed and connection. The effects on the individual reach
critical mass at this point in time as the saturation of connections and the acceleration of
both additional connections and of the speed of communication, creates not only self-
consciousness but inevitable confrontation.

Since a marker of modernity is mass connections, then while the seeds of modernity
may have been planted in and around 1500, it is the manifestation of the late nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries that are of primary interest to us. It is at this time that
connections among vast groups of people were created to the degree where the individual
was not only “self-conscious” but also conscious of their relationship to a mass
population. This period, where the cumulative effects of the changes of modernity
manifest most notably in the individual, has been identified as the “high modern” period.
It is in the high modern period where we experience “modernity at full throttle” (Singer
19). Most significantly, modernity is marked by significant changes in the relationship
between an individual and their sense of “self” (the personal), the individual and their
community (the social), the individual and governing bodies, authorities within the material world (the political), and the individual and religious bodies, authorities beyond the material world (the transcendental).

There are several aspects of modernity that relate more specifically to radio’s emergence and reception. As has been demonstrated, modernity is marked by the acceleration of communications from point to point, the expansion of the quantity and quality of connective communication points, the organization of production (industrialization) and reproduction. The markers of modernity that relate directly to radio include trends in specialization, repetition, extension, acceleration, dislocation and alienation.

“Specialization” is primarily the outcome of the Industrial Revolution, where individuals develop isolated skills and their application is governed by centrally organized capitalistic and bureaucratic structures. As a result of the increasing specialization of acts, individuals rely on the participation of others in order to ensure that production continues. However, this reliance, paradoxically, also weakens the position of these individuals as the decentralization of power and skill means that such individuals are interchangeable and given the availability of labor, also dispensable. Individuals are also further estranged from others as specialization leads to isolation and individualism rather than collective actions. Power and skill are decentralized and this dispersal, while allowing efficiencies of production and cohesion in an abstract sense, fragments the process and allows the individual only a limited view of the whole.

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35 In a work that perhaps inspired Philip Auslander’s work on “liveness” and describes the effects of modernity’s reproduction on art, see Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”
“Repetition” is clearly evident in the specialization of tasks where the individual isolates their activities limiting the range of activity in order to repeat the act for efficiency in production and reproduction. However, in industry and sociopolitical life, the ability to produce and reproduce is significantly aided in communications media that flourish in the twentieth century. Moving further back in time, Gutenberg’s invention of movable type is one of the suggested starting points of modern life. However we may wish to consider this along a continuum beginning with language, the alphabet, and systems of writing (in accordance with a view of history upheld by communications historians). In the high modern period, the development of photographs, recorded sound, moving pictures, and finally television, computer and new digital technologies creates an environment where there is a proliferation of reproductive media. It is evident that in terms of the repeatability of acts, these communications media allow codification, recording and reproduction (a repetition and iteration of an act) at greater speeds than ever before and also in greater volumes. “Acceleration” is a key marker of modernity as the transportation of people (via new modes of transportation to physically move them) and messages (via communications media to transport parts of the individual – voices, images, words) exhibits an increasing velocity at the height of modernity.

The specialization and repetition of production and communication leads to “extensions” of individuals and communities in space and time. Extensions in time allow access to events that would otherwise be ephemeral (where technologies of repetition now allow recordings) or inaccessible (where technologies of amplification now allow broader access, regardless of spatial configurations). Radio most clearly allows for the

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36 Not reproductive in a self generating or biological manner but in the sense of a recording’s ability to reproduce an event in multiple iterations over time.

37 See Paul Virilio’s work, including *Speed and Politics.*
latter, although as an oral medium, it provides the appearance of ephemerality while potentially employing recordings. Detecting “liveness” on radio is not always possible with broadcasts.

Paradoxically modernity is also about an increased alienation. The mass and velocity of specialized, repeated, and extended acts outlined here, have the effect of creating connections that extend the boundary of the individual’s world dramatically. McLuhan describes this connection as a “global embrace” (Understanding Media 3) however others, like Max Picard, see the extensions of the individual’s experience in a more negative light. Max Picard’s 1950s criticism of early radio illustrates a paradox of radio where “everything is present and at the same time nothing is present” (196). Picard finds “radio noise” to be pervasive and “unnatural” (198). Yet Picard’s objection seems to arise from his view that the radio is perceived as something natural and present but that in his view it actually offers only the illusion of “appear[ing] as natural as the sounds of nature herself” (198). By personifying nature, Picard further emphasizes radio’s alleged dehumanizing properties. Unlike Benjamin, who found that the mechanically repeatable nature of the modern work of art was democratizing (although he did lament the loss of the “aura” of authenticity)38, Picard finds the repeatability of the expression to be distasteful. Further, Picard laments that radio “has no beginning and no end” as even when turned off, radio “seems to go on inaudibly” (196). Radio then “surrounds” and “covers” man; “Man has become merely an appendage of the noise of radio” (198). Where just ten years later, McLuhan would find the extensions of man in media to be a connective and positive development, Picard illustrates a response where radio,

38 See Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”
specifically, causes fragmentation and alienation. Even McLuhan admits that the experience of modernity can be precarious:

In a world of electric all-at-onceness, as everybody begins to include everybody else, many people are inclined to feel that they have lost their private identity altogether. Instead of feeling enriched, they feel deprived. (“Great Change-overs for You 32)

The results of these new dynamics are that the individual’s experience of their world is marked by dislocation and alienation. Interactions are no longer reliant on “presence” but through things that allow permanent markers, things that can be reviewed and repeated – including print, recorded speech, etc. – they create a dislocation in space and time.

The characteristics of modernity that I have outlined (specialization, extension, acceleration, and dislocation) are useful frameworks to describe the effects of radio on a modern audience. Again, the relationship between the early twentieth century AD and fifth century BCE is not insignificant and, as I have suggested, it may be more useful to consider communications histories that begin at least a century before the earliest dates of the start of what is “modern,” with the height of modernity most noticeable in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at a point where the accumulation of effects results in a degree of experiential saturation. In both instances we can observe the emergence of a new medium, requiring a particular sensorial extension, which operates in a manner converse to the mainstream. If we now turn our attention to the specific manner in which radio emerged, the relationship between modern and ancient mediatization will become more apparent.
Radio emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an improvement on earlier methods of “point-to-point communication” (Crisell Understanding Radio 17). While telegraphy was increasingly in use, the connection of two distant points was still limited by direct, physical cable connections. Although developments in telephony created greater public access to such communications (for example, whereas telegraphy required specialized skills in Morse code, telephony allowed widespread and more direct participation) the medium was still constrained by the terrestrial constraints of the technology. Although sounds could be carried across certain distances, there remained significant limitations in sound quality and amplification, due to the conductivity of the cables. The discovery of wireless capabilities occurred through many experiments in the early nineteenth century, where a relationship between electric currents and magnetic forces was observed. Scientists such as Thomas Edison developed coherent theories of these “etheric forces” (in 1875) in the pursuit of wireless telegraphy. Whereas previous distance communications required expensive and cumbersome cables to transport sound, the delivery method of the emerging wireless only required air and the vacuum of space. The wireless, also known as “radio telegraphy” and later simply “radio,” offered something that no other communications medium has been able to offer in the century since its public use began: cheap, direct, and mass communication. This had a profound impact on the experience of radio for the modern listener.

Radio was not initially used as a means of public communication even though its signal was essentially broadcast, meaning that it was not a closed and private

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39 For a full history of radio, see the introduction to Timothy C. Campbell’s Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi and Lewis Coe’s Wireless Radio: A Brief History.
communication, but rather a signal that could be picked up and “overheard” by anyone. Indeed, in Britain, initial responses to radio as a medium were often critical of its “primitiveness” and “lack of refinement” since it “addressed the world at large rather than maintained confidentiality by addressing private individuals” (Asa Briggs qtd. in Crisell 18). This lack of enthusiasm was, notably, expressed by politicians who were responsible for the regulation of communications, and further reservations were expressed by the military who were concerned with eavesdropping on their own signals. These groups viewed radio as “a mere by-product of point-to-point communications” and not a medium with wider “social possibilities” (Crisell 18).

However, after the Marconi Company began its broadcasts from London, in 1922, and concerns about a monopoly on transmissions by wireless manufacturers led to the genesis of the British Broadcasting Company, radio use proliferated. By 1924, “1 million [radio] licenses were issued, but up to 5 million sets were in use” (Crisell 19). By 1925, a mere three years after Marconi’s first British broadcasts, “a national network had been established” and “reception was available to 85 per cent of the population” (Crisell 19). And, “by 1928 radio audiences were never less than 1 million and often as high as 15 million” (Crisell 19). The speed of radio’s communication, as a discrete event and also in its adoption as a major means of public communication, is a marker of radio’s modernity.

Radio is not only a medium of speed in the production and reception of the communication event, but also in terms of its rate of adoption as a major means public

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40 Indeed, during the Second World War, Britain suspended television broadcasting as signals could potentially used to locate broadcast centres which, being in highly populated urban areas could be used to guide enemy bombers to their targets. Television was suspended on September 1st, 1939 after the broadcast of a Mickey Mouse cartoon. When broadcasting resumed on June 7th, 1946, the same cartoon was rebroadcast. This period, where television broadcasting was suspended, allowed radio to flourish in the UK. See also Burton Paulu’s *British Broadcasting* 247-249.
communication. Radio is affordable to produce and to receive. However, some of the paradoxes of modernity are particularly evident in radio. By considering the medium’s place in a mediatized culture, and scrutinizing early responses to radio, I will be able to contextualize the experience of radio in the twentieth century.

**Mediatized Culture and the Experience of Radio**

Radio reverses the eye-ear hierarchy of the early twentieth century in an abrupt and temporary manner, further dislocating the listener. A great deal has been written on the experience of modernity, but the unusual circumstance of radio reception and reintroduction of a primarily oral medium within an eye-focused culture, has not yet received a significant degree of attention within this field. The substitution of ears for eyes, in the reception of radio, reverses the sensorial hierarchy of modern western life. Radio’s resurrection of orality is noticed primarily because it enacts this in direct contrast and opposition to the dominant modes of modern communication. Unlike other twentieth-century media, radio demands the attention of the ear, unites its listeners regardless of geographic location, is affordable enough to reach across most economic demographics, and can instantly send messages that are received almost simultaneously and en masse. Radio reflects the central dynamics of modernity, as it is a product of this time, and also exhibit markers of modernity’s paradoxes.

As I have established, in the shift from oral to visual cultures, there is a shift from a collective experience of culture, space and memory to an increasingly fragmented and interiorized experience of life. The primary distinction between ancient oral conditions of reception and modern radio is in the collective versus the individual experience of
listening. Modern radio allowed for the individual to be removed in space from the broadcast source, and with the employment of pre-recorded broadcasts, the individual could further be temporally removed from the source of the drama (although the listener can not verify temporal disjunctions as they have no immediate access to the source of the broadcast).

Radio culture developed in a manner similar to the efficiencies discovered with the development of the phonetic alphabet and literacy, where the radio afforded new and streamlined modes of communication for its own context: mass culture. The application of radio allowed for the dissemination of information to groups of people in disparate spaces, where such information would not otherwise reach. To return to an ancient Greek example of evidence of the fifth-century vase painting depicting a woman reading alone, we can see that (much like in radio) the technology of the written word allows for the review of works not otherwise accessible. As Knox believes, it is possible that this woman is reading a play, a work that would only be available in performance with restrictions (both in terms of the gender of those attending, but also in terms of a geography which could limit both this woman and indeed other men from attending should they be unable to travel). It has been suggested that the reading of play scripts provided the possibility of bringing performance to the people rather than requiring that people travel to the site of performance. A primary feature of radio, after its orality, is its ability to reach a broad geography.

It is in this manner that radio technologies were first popularised, except that radio operates in a mass culture and thus, on a different scale. Radio could reach extraordinarily large groups of people and removed barriers of spatial, temporal and even
class restrictions for the dissemination and consumption of not only information, but for our purposes, of art.41 The cost of owning a radio (and paying the license fee, in certain countries) was not prohibitive for a wide sector of the population. The radio was used to broadcast live performances (which other paying customers were consuming simultaneously) and eventually to broadcast recorded performance. Recording drama on radio was particularly cost effective as the only requirements were the production of sound.

In the absence of visual elements the oral elements of tragedy are effectively amplified when tragedies are adapted to radio. This occurs since there is little competition with the ear, but also because in the adaptation information that would be provided otherwise (visually) is not available. And so the strictly oral elements are highlighted and amplified. Two questions then arise: What requires further dramaturgical intervention and what can stand on its own? Is the degree of orality directly related to the degree in which the play stands on its own without additional intervention? I cannot say that the ancient oral context is one that divorced sounds or words from other contextualising elements; in this the radio is unique.

McLuhan describes the effects of radio as both an intimate and “private” experience (Understanding Media 299) but also as a return to a collective experience, where radio links its mass audience by extending their “central nervous system to create depth of involvement for everybody” (298). The mesmerizing and intimate sensorial experience of radio is “charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique

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41 Indeed, even at present, at the start of the twenty-first century, radio remains a major tool of communication in certain global communities, such as remote locations where television, internet technologies, and wireless telephones are not affordable. Further, during disasters, radio has proven to be an essential form of disseminating communications (as wireless carriers often cannot handle the demand created during such crises).
drums” (299). While McLuhan refers to this orality as “primitive” and calls the experience of radio a return to a “tribal” state, he is not entirely suggesting that this particular orality is somehow “pure” or “natural.” Like Havelock, McLuhan acknowledges that this orality is a secondary orality, even an echo of ancient orality.

Radio does have one significant element in common with ancient orality and this is the demand upon the audience’s imagination. As I will expand upon in Chapter Two, radio, like ancient oral narratives, demands that the audience contribute to the construction and completion of the dramatic frame. As McLuhan notes, “given only the sound of a play, we have to fill in all of the senses, not just the sight of the action” (McLuhan, *Understanding Media* 264). In the following chapter I will pursue an exploration of the intimate and collective nature of radio and modern orality by demonstrating how perception functions in the reception of this intimate medium.

As has been demonstrated, radio’s “reversal”, its dramatic and abrupt shift in focus from the visual to the oral, illustrates the central paradox of radio. While the medium appears to limit communication to a single sense and to dislocate the listener by not requiring the spatial and temporal coherence of a stage play, radio simultaneously creates a context of reception that can be sensorally multi-dimensional and unifying. While audiences are removed from the source of production, and often removed from one another in independent and isolated listening environments, radio has the ability to reach a greater audience (in both mass, total number, and total simultaneous receptive locations.) With the introduction of radio in the twentieth century and with the introduction of the phonetic alphabet in fifth century BCE, the experience of listening changed radically. The individual in each circumstance has experienced a remediating
perceptual shift. Having historicized and contextualized these modes of reception I will
demonstrate, in the following chapter, the operation of individual perception and the
audience’s activity in the reception of drama, more specifically, the role of the
imagination in the completion of the dramatic frame.
CHAPTER TWO

Adjusting the Receiver:

Audiences and the Experience of Radio Drama

W. Terence Gordon inducts his readers to the auricular dimension with the following instructions: “Look behind you without turning around. Now you are in acoustic space” (31). As we are accustomed to seeing, absorbing visual cues, and even defining most things in our world as “texts” that can be “read,” the appeal to vision, the dominant contemporary sense, is used to illustrate the difference in the dimensions of the auricular and ocular worlds. Our cultural mode of reception is a product of the shift from the authority of the spoken word to the authority of text and other media. McLuhan calls this shift “An Eye for An Ear” or, in other words, the dulling of the aural sense and the amplification of the visual sense (Understanding Media 1964). Radio adaptations of stage productions attempt an abrupt reversal of this process, substituting “an ear for an eye.” Radio productions re-establish acoustic space, while operating in an increasingly eye-focused technological landscape. Audiences, who have become increasingly comfortable with a cultural mode of reception that is predominantly visual, must adjust to radio’s orality and reorient themselves within an acoustic space. In this chapter I will consider how we adjust the receiver from a purely theatrical space to the theatrical, acoustic, and imaginative space occupied by radio drama.

42 Gordon is explaining McLuhan’s similarly phrased maxim (Crook 22).
43 My thanks to Natalie Corbett who had originally titled her own dissertation “Adjusting the Receiver.” She granted me the use of the phrase as the title of this chapter since it is so perfect for radio audiences and as I can’t resist the pun.
As I established in Chapter One, for the adaptation of ancient Greek tragedies, plays originally composed and performed for an oral audience, the return to radio would seem to be natural, if not ideal. The ancient play on radio isolates oral elements in a medium where ocular elements do not provide competition. This distillation of orality in the shift from stage to sound wave, from one cultural ritual to another, raises the question of how the perception and reception of radio drama is distinct from the reception of theatre in other contexts. In this chapter I will consider the position of the audience within the radio frame, discuss the phenomenon of perception of the listening event, and describe the nature of the individual’s experience of radio. In the next chapter I will look at adaptation in its broader social context (in Canada and in Britain).

Here, I will first consider the dramatic frame of radio, defining the space of this experience by contrasting traditional theatre spaces with the predominantly acoustic dramatic space of radio drama. As the space of the radio play is not limited to acoustic space, the nature of imagined space and its significance to the radio listener will be introduced.

Once radio’s frame is established, I will then consider the act of perceiving the production. The audience’s experience of receiving a radio play must be contrasted with the experience of receiving a stage play as the two phenomena sensorially manifest in different manners. This perceptual difference reveals the sensorial tensions involved in the act of reception. Indeed, much of the criticism associated with this phenomenon pits the visual against the acoustic, both demonstrating a hierarchical privileging of the visual, but also revealing that the listening act has yet to be attended to fully.
In addition to the necessity of adjusting the receiver in the unique conditions of the reception of radio drama, there is the question of reception conditions that blur the lines between the fictional world of radio drama and the real world. Incursions of the real world occur due to the space of reception as it intersects with public and domestic spaces. This problematizes the question of the audience’s “presence” in the radio frame (an issue already complicated by the spatial and temporal dislocation between radio transmissions and their receivers).

Lastly, the role of the imagination will be shown to act as an agent of cohesion in the audience’s perceptual activity. Again, while most theorists place significance in the work of art as the site of meaning-making, here it will be made evident that radio drama, perhaps more than other art forms, demonstrates how central each audience member is to the collaborative completion of the drama. I call their action “imaginative completion” and it is a necessary and defining feature of radio dramaturgy and its intimacy. In this discussion of the reception of radio drama, I hope to also open another avenue of inquiry in audience and reception studies, where the role of the imagination (this quiet, personal, and often difficult to document, audience activity) is re-thought and included in the framework of audience activity.

**Defining the Radio Drama Frame**

In order to position the audience of radio drama and consider how the experience of the acoustic space of radio is both unique and ideal for the adaptation of Greek tragedy, I will now consider how the theatrical experience is framed and how radio drama audiences operate in relation to other audiences. To situate the audience more effectively
and to explore the implications of this positioning, I wish to utilize Erving Goffman’s frame theory. This approach to “the organization of experience” (his 1974 work’s subtitle) is useful in describing spatial-perceptual relationships. To arrive at a definition of the radio drama frame, I will consider the correlated frames of theatre space, acoustic space, imagined space, and radio space. The radio drama frame involves some aspects of conventional theatre frames, yet performance on radio more fully embraces and even exploits acoustic and imaginative properties. These properties are not absent from the conventional theatrical frame. My study of the radio frame also aims to highlight the acoustic and imaginative aspects of other forms of drama.

It is important to acknowledge that when we describe “frames” we are creating a distinction between the performance event and other events (some call those “everyday” events). While I am not discounting the theatricality of everyday life, or the potential for incursions of the “everyday” into performance (which will be discussed later in this chapter) I will, for the sake of initiating a discussion on radio “frames” maintain a distinction between the everyday (which includes that which is performative and theatrical) and intentional performances (which includes that which is everyday). However, the “everyday” intersects with and influences intentional performances. The “everyday” involves a number of forces that influence the audience’s experience of the performance (including physical spaces, social interactions, personal histories and memory).

Susan Bennett’s model of theatrical frames is perhaps the most useful for defining theatre space and describing how it is experienced. Bennett positions the audience, and their experience of theatre, centrally in a model with an outer and inner frame.
The outer frame is concerned with theatre as a cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience’s definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame contains the event itself and, in particular, the spectator’s experience of a fictional stage world. This frame encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material conditions of performance. It is the intersection of these two frames which forms the spectator’s cultural understanding and experience of theatre. (*Theatre Audiences* 1-2)

The theatrical event’s “outer frame” is primarily the subject of Chapter 3, while the “inner frame” is the subject of this chapter, as well as Chapters 4 and 5.

Critics most frequently define the theatrical inner frame as a space of presence: both audiences and performers inhabit the same space. Indeed, Susan Bennett’s work on theatre audiences begins with a classical philosophical problem on presence and absence in the theatrical frame. Bennett quotes Jerzy Grotowski who, in 1968, wrote: “Can theatre exist without an audience?” (qtd. in Bennett *Theatre Audiences* 1). The conclusion Grotowski arrives at is that “at least one spectator is needed to make it a performance” (qtd. Bennett 1). In other words, if no one is present to witness the event, the event can not be considered a performance (and if this were a tree falling in the forest, it would make no sound). While a play will not likely be performed to an empty theatre, radio drama broadcasts “blindly” without a guarantee of an audience (making it impossible to ensure the satisfaction of Grotowski’s requirement). That said, the number of radio listeners is, in practice, consistently and significantly larger than the number of “live” theatergoers at even the largest theatres. Due to this, the question of “presence” in terms
of the initiation of the performance event is problematized in radio, as I will show later in this chapter.

But the issue of presence defining the theatrical event persists. Both Bennett and Grotowski demand a physical and visual presence of the audience (referring to audiences as “spectators” – although Bennett also employs the ear-centric “audiences” frequently in her work). However, the focus on presence often has more to do with the “liveness” of theatre than it does with the audience’s ability to influence the work of art (which I will discuss shortly). Theatre’s “liveness” leads to variability and theatre’s perceived ephemerality. The variability of performance is usually cited as the main distinction between theatre and other works of art. While there is disagreement about certain kinds of theatre (theatre which has entered an economy of reproduction and is considered less ephemeral\textsuperscript{44}), the “live” presence of both audience and performers is usually the factor that is used to define the theatrical frame and distinguish it from other art forms. Even when the condition of a physical presence is met, the audience is considered by many critics to face (and to have faced, historically) additional barriers to participation in the performance event.

On radio, the question of immediacy is somewhat more complicated than in the theatre. Aside from the (now rare) case of broadcasts produced live-to-air, radio drama is typically recorded and then broadcast. The audience has no ability to verify when/where/how the production was recorded, or how many times it has been repeated (beyond the signposting of an introduction that may provide such information, indicating that the program is a re-broadcast, etc.). The broadcaster may not be able to determine how many people are, in fact, listening. So unlike the “live” theatre production, the radio

\textsuperscript{44} See Patrice Pavis and Phillip Auslander
play would appear to be mediatised to a degree that lessens (or extinguishes) the “liveness” of the radio event.

If the presence of the audience is what defines theatre space and the theatrical event, what is its function? The inherent assumption of “liveness” is that presence leads to increased engagement. However, physical presence is not synonymous with engagement and spatial or temporal dislocation does not automatically result in a passive audience.

One of the most consistent assumptions of modern and contemporary theatre movements, from Brecht to Richard Schechner’s “Environmental Theatre” in the 1960s, for example, is that modern audiences had become passive and disengaged. The participation of audiences in the performance event is considered deficient and this detachment results in a psychological absence and, as a consequence, the death of theatre. Critics identify moments in the history of theatre where this passivity was reinforced, with the most significant example being the increased separation of audience and performer with the darkening of the auditorium and illumination of the stage (as a result of developments in lighting). The suggestion, in this instance, is that audiences have less influence on the performance event as they sit in the darkened auditorium, where the actor can not “read” their responses to the performance and the opportunity for “feedback” is limited. The audience member’s responsibility to the play and to their fellow theatregoers is also considered to be diminished because the darkness increases anonymity and allows individuals to disengage in a manner which is not immediately and obviously perceptible by others involved in the performance event.
Another often cited example of increased audience passivity involves the rise of the commercial franchising of theatre in the 1980s (e.g., the “mega-musical”), there was production of a “fixed” performance that is repeatable from night to night and reproducible for simultaneous production in multiple locations. Criticism of this kind of performance event centers around the manner in which the performance becomes a consumable product, where audiences, in spite of being “present” at the site of one such performance, are disengaged due to the product’s “absence”. The performance product, having entered the economy of reproduction and saturated its iterability, becomes mediatised to a degree that disallows audience engagement.

The positioning of the spectator within the theatrical frame can affect the audience member’s passivity or engagement with the performance. The contemporary concern with the position of the audience is not new but there is a sense that the audience has, over time, become “de-centered”. The goal of a number of modern movements in drama (primarily in the twentieth century) involved re-centering the audience. Bennett notes that theatre which “self-consciously sought the centrality of the spectator as subject of the drama” developed starting in the 1960s (1).\textsuperscript{45} Ironically, as I will demonstrate, it is in the experience of radio, where the audience is spatially and temporally dislocated from the source of performance, where the audience finds itself closest to the “center” of the performance.

Many of the attempts to re-center the audience have involved either redefining what constitutes “theatre” or reorganizing the performance space. In redefining theatre, there was a push for the recognition and inclusion of events that would not traditionally be

\textsuperscript{45} In Susan Bennett’s view, the theatre of the 1960s that focused on the development of this “emancipated spectator” emerged in order to “speak for dominated and generally marginalized peoples” (\textit{Theatre Audiences})
thought of as theatre. In *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (2003), David Wiles begins his analysis by contrasting what he defines as the “theatre-as-institution” with more contemporary views of theatricality and performativity. The former is confined to traditional theatre spaces (those defined as a special place of performance) and site-specific as well as everyday occurrences of theatrical activity. The shift towards including the everyday within the theatrical frame is largely a shift that increasingly prioritizes the role of the audience. For example, the inclusion of events such as parades as theatrical events emphasizes the activity of spectators as performers (as the event is a community event, often dependent upon non-specialists in the production and performance of the parade). In *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (1989), Marvin Carlson also sought to redefine theatre but he did so by expanding the theatrical event to include the space outside the playing space (be it an auditorium or an alternative space) and even outside the structure of the building in order to consider “its contributions to the meaning-structure of the theatre event as a whole” (*Places of Performance* 6). Carlson follows Umberto Eco’s work that was the first to apply semiotic analysis to architecture.46 The signification of a performance space influences the work being performed and the audience’s reception. As Carlson writes, the space’s social meanings can make a theatre “a cultural monument, a site of display for a dominant social class, an emblem of depravity and vice, a center of political activism, a haven of retreat from the world of harsh reality” (8). Carlson traces the evolving relationship of the actor and audience in space that has “naturally changed according to changing ideas about the function of theatre and its relationship to other cultural systems” (130).

46 See Umberto Eco’s *The Absent Structure* (1968).
In reorganizing the performance space, contemporary experiments largely abandoned fixed seating or otherwise reorganized the audience’s orientation. This produced performances involving audiences that wandered through spaces, selecting what they would experience and when they would turn their attention to different aspects of the performance. This also resulted in production forms such as theatre-in-the-round. While practitioners such as Richard Schechner attempted to position audiences and actors in the same space, with no distinction between them, Carlson rejects this possibility, which he identifies as also being the “dream of Rousseau, and later of Adolphe Appia, Antonin Artaud, and others” (Places of Performance 129). Carlson finds that attempts to reorganize spatial relationships are not meaningful and ultimately unsuccessful since the “essential spatial dialectic” that “remains a constant” requires that the actor inhabit “a world with its own rules, like a space traveler within a personal capsule, which the audience, however physically close, can never truly penetrate” (130). The actor’s “other”-ness maintains a separation, on a fundamental level, between audience and performer.

With the increase of technologies of reproduction, particularly post-1960, and the commercialization previously noted here, the disengagement of audiences and the attempt to reposition the audience member from the margins of theatrical experience to the centre, became a primary contemporary concern. Interestingly, critics of performance continue to a) dismiss the possibility that the silent, physically immobilised spectator, in the darkened auditorium, may in fact be quite active and engaged with the performance event, and b) overlook the intensely active role of audiences in another form of performance: radio drama (from its origins and continuing for over 100 years).
It would appear that the concerns about the audience’s presence/absence, passivity/engagement, and centrality in the performance space, manifest at times when there is concern about whether the audience is receiving theatre’s message clearly. Yet models of communication reveal that reception involves more than positioning the audience to most effectively receive a message. The receiver is an interpretive subject whose perception of the object (the performance) is informed as much by the receiver’s own beliefs, attitudes, and experiences, as it is by the work itself. In this chapter, I will suggest that the audience is thus responsible for the completion of the dramatic frame and for contributing to the meaning of the work of art.

To describe the audience’s experience of radio drama, we must understand their position in relation to the making of meaning within drama. First, I shall do so with regards to their function in theatre space.

As I have demonstrated, many approaches to the theatrical frame consider the conditions which shape the work of art, conditions which shape the audience, and then consider how audiences interact with art, including their positioning. However, this model continues to suggest that the work of art is complete (if not wholly, then at least predominantly) before it comes into contact with the audience. Yet communications are not one-sided. Rather, the audience is actively involved in the making of meaning. In traditional theatre spaces, as in radio space, the message is not received passively. Critics often distinguish between plays, films and literature by noting degrees of influence. To some degree, all of these works of art are “fixed” or complete products prior to their introduction to the audience. A position gaining momentum in the twentieth-century finds
critics of drama claiming that theatre is unique in that the dramatic text experiences changes based on the influence of directors, actors, and designers.

Susan Bennett provides a point of view that typifies the approach which emphasises the interactivity of audience and performer. Bennett describes how “the literary, as well as the filmic, text is a fixed and finished product which cannot be directly affected by its audiences” (Theatre Audiences, 20). Bennett contrasts this with theatre where the audience “is involved in a reciprocal relationship which can change the quality and success of a performance” (21). This positioning of the work of art and its perceiver places unusually restrictive limits on the reading and spectating. While all of these works can exist without an audience, in some form, it is in the act of performance that the work is “complete.” I suspect that the act of viewing a film and the act of reading a novel have more in common with the theatre audience’s experience than has been acknowledged.

For example, while the responses of a cinema’s audiences cannot change the pacing, intonation, or other qualities of the performers and the performance as a whole, audiences do influence the responses of other audience members. Watching a horror or action film, or even a comedy, in the company of different audiences, will necessarily change the experience of the film. Perhaps this impact is not felt to the same degree as it may in the theatre, but I would expect that the variability is more significant than Bennett allows.

In contrast with Bennett, Umberto Eco finds that “every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself” (The Role of the Reader 13).

Also see Thomas Leitch’s “Twelve Fallacies in Adaptation Theory” (159- 161) for a discussion of the function of the audience’s imagination in the reception of cinema.

Of course, one can not help but think of the obvious exception to this: silent cinema. The musical accompanists who would play at such screenings did not work from prepared scores, but instead improvised as they viewed the film and as they responded to the audience. The possibility of interaction and of the audience’s influence on this work is clearer than in later cinematic traditions where sound is recorded, but in my work I am primarily contrasting the latter situation with theatre in order to arrive at a theory of the reception of radio drama.
Similarly, while Bennett states that “no two theatrical performances can ever be the same precisely because of this audience involvement” I would expect that many stage productions (in repertory theatres, for example) can be perceived, by an audience member in repeated performances, as invariable (Theatre Audiences 21).

In addition to the audience’s more overt actions in the reception of a work, we must consider their role in the making of meaning. The work of art is not a fixed thing that simply communicates its message to the audience and is complete once perceived by that audience. The act of perception (that will shortly be explored in greater depth) involves both “noise” and “feedback” (if we can use sound qualities as metaphors for this act). “Feedback” is what I have been discussing in terms of how the audience can influence the work of art as it is being performed (and the degree to which the audience influences other audience members as well). “Noise” on the other hand, involves the experiences, attitudes, and beliefs that an audience member brings with them to the performance. This noise affects their reception and interpretation of the work. Most importantly, the audience’s noise makes the works deeply personal in their reception. This is perhaps more evident in radio drama where noise is amplified due to the work’s demands on the audience’s imagination. Yet it is also important to acknowledge that noise operates within the theatrical frame in general. In addition to “noise” and “feedback” the act of perception is not concluded at the point of contact with the performance. Rather, there is a temporal quality to the audience’s experience where the act of recall continues to reform the experience, creating reverberations of the act.

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50 The concept of noise originally comes from Shannon and Weaver’s model of communication (see The Mathematical Theory of Communication 1949).
Clearly, the organization of the phenomenological experience of performance (its “framing”) reveals assumptions and expectations of what the performance event is and what it is thought that it should be. The redefinition of the boundaries of the theatrical event and the attempt to resituate the audience both reveal that the properties of the supposedly limiting traditional theatre space have been underappreciated. While these reconstitutions effected change, they did not change the basic nature of the theatrical frame. The most significant features of the theatrical frame as it relates to the audience’s perceptual activities are the features of “feedback” and “noise”.

Since radio drama relies on acoustic space, I will here consider the properties of acoustic space and the audience’s perceptual activity within that space. I will define acoustic space (which operates in 360 degrees rather than in a linear manner), position the audience within that space (where they are always at the centre), and discuss the perceptual function of listening. It is evident that the issues of acoustic space overlap with those of theatrical spaces and that these frames of experience are related.

According to Marshall McLuhan, media that predominantly stimulate the eye create a visual space where perception is organized in a linear manner. A visual medium (such as print) is made up of components which are combinable in various permutations, yet when visual space is perceived, the components are made to appear linked. The logic of their combination requires that the perceiver understand each component and, as McLuhan describes it, break down these components objectively in order to perceive and comprehend the medium’s message.

Acoustic space cannot operate in a linear manner. It is experienced in the fullest dimensions of space that a human can perceive. Limitless in its production and
surrounding the perceiver (in 360 degrees, spherically) sound fills both time and space. Acoustic space is simultaneous and continual, whereas visual space is sequential and discontinuous. McLuhan considers acoustic space to be multi-sensorial.

Other aspects of acoustic space involve its primacy. In human development, the sensation of sight is the last to develop, while sound has been observed as playing a significant role in the earliest stages of life.

An unborn child may be startled at the sound of a door slamming shut. The rich warm cacophony of the womb has been recorded: the mother’s heartbeat and breathing are among the earliest indications babies have of the existence of a world beyond their own skin. (David Burrows qtd. in Crook 53)

The primal nature of auditory perception makes all aspects of life part of the acoustic frame.

Acoustic space and our perception of sounds are perhaps best illustrated in contrast with visual space. Visual experiences can provide a great deal of information about an object’s attributes, including their “colors, shapes, and sizes” (O’Callaghan 5). Sounds, however, “do not seem in audition to have detailed shapes and sizes; they do not seem to have mass, to be solid, or to flow” (5). Further, without the aid of vision, the source of sound is not always immediately apparent. For the perception of objects, it would initially seem that the object’s appearance provides more information. But does this information mean that the visual experience is more immediate or important than the auditory experience? In the theatre, is the visual more significant than the auditory? Do we prefer the theatron (and accept it as a “seeing space”) or an auditorium? Spectators, or audiences?
Casey O’Callaghan summarises philosophy’s traditional categorization of sounds, colors, tastes, and smells as being “among the secondary or sensible attributes of objects” (5-6). However this prioritisation of the visual in a sensorial hierarchy, this organisation of spatial experience, is informed by a tradition that, we could say, neglects to comprehend its own capacities. This becomes clear when we reconsider the formula that equates sound with the material attributes of objects. O’Callaghan notes that “sounds as we experience them in hearing are audibly independent from ordinary material objects in a way that colors and shapes are not visibly independent from objects” (6). Indeed, the source of a sound is not always immediately apparent. Further, sounds can carry meaning on their own, whereas a color can not be separated from its object and even exist, let alone carry meaning. We could say that sounds can operate in a more independent manner, where visual objects are more closely tied to a network of information.

The interest in reorganizing the sensorial hierarchy is, for my purposes, required in order to fully understand how sound operates. Clearly, in radio drama, this is critical. However it also points to issues that are relevant for other modes of theatre. Cinema was confronted with this problem directly as early films were silent and the transition to “talkies” required significant shifts in production and reception. While film theory has not only taken the impact of sound into account, but also theorised its function within the medium, the theory of drama has not attempted to do the same. By reorienting the auditory experience from the margins of valued perceptual activity, we will not only gain an understanding of its existing function and possible functions, but we will highlight the
role it plays in all theatrical forms. Most significantly, this reorientation will “end the tyranny of the visual” (O’Callaghan 4).

The impact of the visual versus the impact of the auditory is neatly summarised by D.L.C. Maclachlan, who describes how “sounds are mental”:

Like the pain I feel when the mosquito bites, the noise I hear when the dog barks is also an effect produced in me by the creature concerned. The sounds I actually hear are as private as the pains I feel. There are therefore good reasons for grouping together the experienced sounds and the experienced pains and calling them sensations. (Maclachlan qtd. in O’Callaghan 7)

This privacy of sound, its distinctly subjective, personal experience, is what creates the intimacy of radio. The reception of sound can be described in terms of how it is broadly to affect the audience, but the individual variation that comes with private experience (everything that informs the processing of the sound) is not a fault in radio, but a key component that lends itself to a more immediate experience, in spite of the spatial and temporal dislocation of broadcaster and receiver, of actor and audience.

Acoustic space is not the equivalent of the sound space of radio. The primary difference is that radio recordings aim to eliminate traces of the technological production of sound. This stylization and codification is a means of focusing the listener. The experience of a dramatic narrative requires greater attention than the experience of everyday life (where attentive selection occurs with a different set of priorities, based on needs that are quite unlike the attentive mode required for the reception of creative works). The narrative is selective in terms of the components of the story it includes and
arranges within the plot. In radio, as I will show in Chapters Three, Four and Five, this selectivity is critical for the audience’s focus on the narrative.

The attempt to make sound “natural” and to conceal this naturalisation (and the resulting stylized but seamless illusion of natural sound) is part of radio sound but not distinctly part of everyday acoustic space. In reference to the cinema, Mary Ann Doane believes the development of sound technology involves “an ideologically determined progression toward self-effacement” (Doane 35). However, at the same time, as John Belton finds, “the work of sound technology, through its very efforts to remain inaudible, announces itself and, though concealed, becomes audible for those who choose to listen for it” (Belton 377). The codified nature of recorded sound’s naturalisation makes it easy to distinguish from regular sounds, when one is “attuned” to this activity.

For example, a recorded sound may attempt to take on the characteristic of a sound produced in a particular environment. The clang and echo of a metal door’s closing provides information about the door, the location where it is situated, and the nature of its surroundings. The listener who experiences such a sound must notice that they are not in a similar location, and that their comprehension of that door is based on the ability to imagine the experience of being elsewhere. This function of the imagination, in conjunction with suggestive sound, is clearly a critical component in the reception of radio drama.

The imagination functions to complete the internal theatrical frame and the radio frame. This essential operation makes the audience an active and present participant, central to theatre, including radio drama. As Robert Stam notes, “we read a novel through our introjected desires, hopes, and utopias, and as we read we fashion our own imaginary
mise-en-scène of the novel on the private stages of our minds” (“Dialogics of Adaptation” 54). Stam’s words apply to reception in general, but also quite specifically to radio. While I will discuss the problems inherent in the construction of the “theatre of the mind” shortly, for the moment the metaphor of the imagination creating a stage in our minds will be useful.

**Imagined Space: Radio’s Stage**

When I say “imagined space” I essentially mean the space where the dramatic action is conceived as occurring. As I suggested, we can think of the imagination as a kind of stage. However, unlike most other performance spaces, the imagination is highly individual and difficult to control. Imagined space relies upon stimulation, experience, and recollections from the “real” world. These memories of lived experiences make it impossible for imagined space to be neutral; rather, it is highly subjective. It is perhaps more akin to a found performance space, or the nature of performing guerrilla theatre in unstable environments. The variables of the imagination are almost limitless. While this is also the case when reading, the permanence of the text, and our ability to re-read and review, make texts easier to anchor. Interpretations of read texts are not limitless, and the limits of a “successful” reading can be tested by returning to the text. In radio, while interpretation is not limitless, there appears to be a greater degree of variance in how the play is received and interpreted due to the subjective nature of the imagination and the variable conditions of reception.  

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51 There is one significant exception to this contrast between radio reception and reading and that is to be found in the reception of graphic novels. Scott McCloud suggests that the reader’s imagination completes the comic in the space between graphic panes (just as some find that radio allows what I term imaginative
The interpretation of radio plays is not left to the audience without any form of guidance. In later chapters I will discuss the use of signposting as a means of directing the audience’s listening activity, but even with detailed or excessive signposting (where information is unrestricted and a production attempts to strictly control the reception of the play) the variables of the imagination come into play (or “come in to play” even). The imaginative space where radio plays thrive is a space that encompasses fantasy and dream (phantasia and oneira), memory and recollection, emotion and feeling, images, sounds, touch, etc. A key feature of the imagination is that while it springs from the individual, that same individual is never in complete control of it. William Stanton, a BBC radio producer, describes how sounds “play across and within our memories” (105). While fantasies can be created, and largely directed by s/he who experiences the fantasy, they can not be fully controlled. Even with signposting, the listening activity of the individual relies heavily on the imagination where subconscious thoughts can permeate created fantasies.

Early ideas on the psychological function of the imagination (from the mid-nineteenth century) include research into the distinction between imagination as the experience of images as opposed to sensations, as well as the consideration that the imagination was in fact “imageless thought” (meaning a non-sensory idea). However this is not the predominant discourse and so I will not consider it here. Rather, I will begin with the branch of thought on the imagination that emphasized the function of the senses. Working with the latter belief, it was Stephen Colvin who provided the first “science”-based approach that attempted to explain the imagination’s function with some degree of

theoretical clarity in his 1908 work “The Nature of the Mental Image.” Colvin summarised thoughts on the imagination that had been developed in the preceding years, finding that “the term usually stands for a state of mind given over to the contemplation of unrealities and to the creation of fancies; to delusions and extravagant romancing” (158). However Colvin rejected suggestions that the imagination operated mainly as fancy, and found instead that “even in its forms of free productive creation” the imagination maintains a “very firm grasp on the real universe” and is “by no means an airy nothing, divorced from the realm of concrete being” (159).

Colvin describes the operation of the imagination as a process that involves the suggestion of an object (that which is perceived, in his example, a book), and the mental reference of “the imagined book to a world external to my passing momentary thought” (159). This function of the subject, the perceiver, is what completes the experience of the object. Most importantly, Colvin views the imagination’s function as one that related the “perceived book” back to the “same external world” (159).

One interesting aspect of this process is that the recollection of a “real” book, for employment in the “non-real” realm of the imagination, involves a kind of fictionalisation of the “real-world”. However, Colvin does not suggest the need to find a book, and in its immediate presence transform the real thing into a mental image. Instead, he recollects the experience of a book (whether it is a general concept of “book” or one book in particular) and uses this memory to create the imaginative experience. Colvin comments on this by rejecting other approaches which involve distinguishing perception from imagination. This distinction is made by psychologists who observe biological changes in the nervous system, based on different stimuli (and I imagine this would mean, for
example, being presented with a book and asked to look at it, and alternately being asked to think of a book). Colvin is rejecting the idea that the imagination is purely subjective and fanciful since one can only imagine what one has experienced. As I will discuss shortly, with regards to Don Ihde’s view of the imagination, Colvin’s view may be too restrictive.

Colvin also continues to describe the imagination as being image-based. I would like to consider the imaginative process neither as being constructed of images, nor as “imageless thought” (which is a concept that still relies on the binary of image/that which lacks an image, with the latter being marginalized as “less than” the image). Instead, I think we must consider the imagination as the experience of sensations. This may include imagistic experiences, but also includes other senses as well as other experiential processes. Indeed, Colvin’s definition of the imagination allows for this. In his words, imagination is: “that activity of consciousness in which an object of sensation is experienced as not immediately present to the senses. In other words in order to have a genuine state of the imagination there must be the direct experience of the object not being actually before the senses” (162). However, the imagination also operates in conjunction with experiences where objects of sensation are also simultaneously present, even as aspects of them are being imagined. This will be described in my discussion of the intimacy of radio and the role of the audience in the reception of radio drama. Also, in my discussion of Don Ihde’s work, I will show how the imagination offers greater flexibility than Colvin allows, meaning that the individual can extrapolate from the “direct experience of the object” in order to construct an imaginary experience.
The consideration of the imagination as an experience of sensations, rather than as the formation of “mental images,” is an attempt to describe the experience as I believe it occurs, and not as it has been repeatedly described. I am, effectively, rejecting a great deal of critical opinion as well as individual reports of the phenomenon of imagining. I believe that the dominance of vision in the twentieth century leads to (what McLuhan would call) the “numbing” of other sensorial processes. As I revealed in Chapter One, the preoccupation with vision is partly a product of the experience of modernity, where our other senses have been anesthetized. For example, Martin Esslin believes that man is a creature of the eye and that all experiences are translated into visual terms (“The Mind as Stage” 172). He uses an odd example to demonstrate this; he writes, “the smell of olive oil will evoke a picture of the streets of Seville” (172). We must ask, how is this the case? Why Spain and not Italy or Greece? Why a picture? Why not the recollection of a meal, of tasting good olive oil? Why not the sound of olive oil as it makes contact with a hot pan? The imagination is capable of dynamic sensorial recall and creation and radio drama is particularly adept at stimulating an experience that moves beyond the construction of “mental images.” Esslin even concedes that the evocative nature of radio drama can be attributed to the function of the imagination. In an example that will be discussed further in Chapter Five, Esslin notes that the casting of Helen of Troy (described as the “ideal” woman) is particularly difficult for stage while on radio, each listener can imagine their ideal (172-173)\(^\text{52}\). This demonstrates how radio’s form can be exploited to its fullest effect, using the audience as an “active collaborator” (177).

\(^{52}\) While qualities of the voice certainly guide interpretation and stimulate the imagination, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, I would argue that radio still offers greater flexibility in casting choices than the stage or cinema.
Andrew Crisell notes that the image-based description of the imagination simply mirrors existing sensorial hierarchies. However, he concludes that the visual is primary: Because radio offers sound-only instead of sound and vision the listener is compelled to “supply” the visual data for himself. [...] It would seem that the primary and dominant function of the imagination is visual, as its derivation from “image” suggests; for in replicating the functions of our senses it seems also to replicate the hierarchy into which they appear to arrange themselves, with sight at the top: in our ordinary deployment of our sensory faculties our primary means of understanding or interpreting the world seems to be visual. (7-8)

Crisell suggests that the sense of “knowing” something is most significantly defined and reinforced through sight, and that only when “we have an actual or figurative picture” of the object, can other senses be engaged (8).

But what this process seems to exclude is the function of recollection, association, and other abstract processes that are also stimulated, and which - as they are references to sensations that are not immediately being experienced – also operate on the level of the imaginary. Crisell does effectively remind us that (while radio does not “lack” for images, as I discuss elsewhere) film and television do not “lack” the necessity for imaginative function. In reference to this, he describes how imagination operates beyond the imagistic. It can “re-create abstract qualities and processes, as when the viewer imagines the inner thoughts or feelings of a character in a film merely by observing the expression on her face” (Understanding Radio 7). Of course, Crisell stops his analysis short and should probably have written “merely by [extrapolating and imaginatively completing the dramatic frame, based on] the expression on her face.” While I will
shortly consider “imaginative completion” as the audience’s activity in radio drama’s performance event, I wish to first consider, in more detail, the nature of perception and the function of the imagination. Then, I will continue by reassessing the suggestion that radio is “blind” (as Crisell finds) and address perceptual tensions.

Having broadly defined the imagination as the subject’s experience of “an object of sensation” as being an experience while not in the object’s presence, I must now further interrogate the finer points of this experience. I would like to consider the views put forth by several modern critics of the phenomenology of perception and imagination, focusing on phenomenologists of the twentieth century, including Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Mikel Dufrenne, Bert O. States, and Don Ihde.

At the turn of the twentieth century, German philosopher Edmund Husserl developed phenomenology, a theory of how we experience the world. Husserl sought to describe how things are experienced from a subjective (first person⁵³) perspective. He distinguished between the actual thing and the meaning of the individual experience of that thing. In this sense, Husserl’s phenomenology is transcendental, moving beyond the physical and focusing on “appearances” (although he does not mean this in a sensorially restrictive manner). Phenomenology is also separate from the study of how we know things (epistemology) and the study of being and existence (ontology, or metaphysics). The subjective experience of the world means that actual things are “bracketed” as they can only be known through individual and subjective experiences. Rather than knowing the actual book, I can only know the [book] as I experience it. Further, individual experiences of phenomena are not always in the realm of pure consciousness; we are not

⁵³ See Husserl’s Ideas 33.
always fully aware of all aspects of an experience and yet that which occurs in the
margins of our experience also constitute part of our perceptual activity.

With regards to the imagination, Husserl maintains a distinction between
perception and imagination. As Richard Kearney explains,

To *perceive* my brother and to *imagine* my brother are two different ways of
intending the same transcendent object. The intentional percept refers to the same
object – my brother – as the intentional image; but the crucial difference is that
the first intends him as *real*, the latter is *unreal*. In this way, phenomenology
rescues imagination from its ‘naturalistic’ confusion with perception, and restores
it to its essential role as a power capable of intending the unreal *as if* it were real,
the absent *as if* it were present, the possible *as if* it were actual. (Kearney 16)

While images and percepts are connected with the object and must resemble it, “the
object of perception is intuited in its presence, whereas the object of imagination is
intuited in its absence” (17).

In the 1940’s, Maurice Merleau-Ponty developed aspects of Husserl’s theory by
focusing on the body. Merleau-Ponty broke down the barrier between empiricist and
rationalist thought. Rationalists focused on a priori knowledge (knowledge derived
independently from experience, for example through reasoning) whereas empiricists
focused on empirical knowledge (knowledge derived directly from lived experience).

Merleau-Ponty’s central principle is that embodiment is linked to a priori concepts. The
body is a phenomenon that “embraces and constitutes the world” and “by thus remaking
contact with the body and with the world, we shall rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as
we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception”
(Phenomenology of Perception 239). As man gives meaning to things (being transcendental) this embodied perception is what constitutes the world (Baldwin 10). The most essential aspects of Merleau-Ponty’s theory, for our purposes, are first, his emphasis on embodiment (which contributes to our interest in sensations) and second, his emphasis on how “our perceived world is structured by a plurality of overlapping perspectives” (Baldwin 16) yet these various subjective experiences all derive from the same world (which contributes to our interest in how personal and intimate the imaginative experience of radio drama can be). Contributing to this plurality is the lack of coherence in the conception of self-consciousness. Rather, Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl’s argument that transcendental subjectivity is intersubjectivity, pointing to the influence of various mediations that affect our self-consciousness (including things such as language).

Merleau-Ponty also defined a sensation as a thing that is the product of an exchange between the subject and object. In agreement with Merleau-Ponty, Cazeaux finds that “a sensation is not a thing that is received by the subject from the object but rather sensation is a thing that is a product of a reverberation between the subject and the object. Thus, sensation exists as a result of interaction, not one-way directional delivery, and the intersection where the subject and object meet reveals the essence of both” (162). The mutual contribution of subject and object to the phenomenon of embodied experience is what distinguishes phenomenological experiences from empirical experiences.

To further consider the use of phenomenology as a framework for organizing the experience of radio drama, I will consider the most significant contribution to phenomenology and aesthetics as made by French philosopher Mikel Dufrenne. Dufrenne
finds that the world of art is distinct from the real world. However, the work of art is not the same as the aesthetic object. For example, the materials that contribute to a painting – the paint, the canvas – are objects, but not aesthetic objects. As Dufrenne writes, “the aesthetic object claims the autonomy of an in-itself [...] the aesthetic object finds its completion in perception” *(Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* 333). It is perception that carries additional meanings that make the object aesthetic. Without perception, the object is merely the material sum of its parts. While the work may be “finished” it “has not yet been made manifest and present” until it is being perceived by the audience (4). For the work to manifest, first the work “must offer itself to perception: it must be performed in order to pass, as it were, from a potential to an actual existence (19) and second, for the aesthetic object to appear “a spectator or, better, a public must be present before it” (17). Further, Dufrenne specifically notes the collaborative nature of aesthetic perception and emphasizes the activity of the spectator-subject rather than the activity of the artwork’s producer (49-50).

While Dufrenne sounds sympathetic to my argument that the audience’s collaboration is essential to the completion of the radio drama frame, he also falls into the trap of the “liveness” debate which I discussed earlier in this chapter. He finds that “radio theatre” is “present – more so, surely, than when I simply read the text or the score, but less so than when I attend its performance” (40-41). Dufrenne finds that the “absence of actors is a distinct loss, as is the absence of a surrounding audience” (40). Dufrenne’s consideration of presence does not exclude the possibility of radio’s intimacy. Rather, his conceptualization of how we listen, and of how the imagination operates, involves a cognitive act that requires perceptual detachment from the present. The imagination is in
fact a “higher level of perception” yet one that still “creates the liaison between mind and body” (345-346). Dufrenne describes representation as “the heir to what the body has experienced” (346). He writes “I perceive only from the past and into the future; in the present, I can only act” (347). Because of this, Dufrenne describes the process of imagining as one of detachment, because “only by detaching myself from the present where I am lost in things do I cease being one with the object through presence. The re of “representation” expresses this interiorization…” (347). Yet this detachment does not mean that the audience’s experience is less intimate. In a later work, “Perception, Meaning and Convention” (1983), Dufrenne describes how when we read poetry “we assume an almost bodily presence at the words” (210). Further, art “invites us to a more intimate communion with the object” and “makes us present at the very birth of the aesthetic object” (211). The audience is, of course, present at this “birth” since they are what stimulate its “aesthetic-ness”.

The radio drama listener is particularly collaborative in activating the aesthetic object. However, the activation clearly involves an awareness of the aesthetic object’s life as a material object. And so, the audience agrees to “suspend disbelief” and is complicit in the decision to experience the object aesthetically rather than as material reality (however subjective that reality may be). Considering the subjective position of being an audience member, Dufrenne relates how “music or drama transports me on a magic carpet and puts me down in another place which is no longer the world” (The Phenomenology of the Aesthetic Experience 153). The “magic carpet” must be, at least partly, constituted by the audience’s suspension of disbelief. And yet there is a strong
relationship between the real world and that “other place” and even the danger of incursions of the “real” into the fictional world.

As Bert O. States describes, in *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*, “in theatre, image and object, pretense and pretender, sign-vehicle and content, draw unusually close” (20). States draws on Peter Handke to describe how “in the theater, light is brightness pretending to be other brightness, a chair is a chair pretending to be another chair, and so on” (20). The proximity of the thing and the thing as an aesthetic object is so close that “in theater there is always a possibility that an act of sexual congress between two so-called signs will produce a real pregnancy” (20). Unlike many other forms of art, performance demands that its audience attend to things that are remarkably close to “reality” in that the illusion of artifice can be broken at any moment.

In most instances, perception of a work of art is different from the perception of everyday life events. This is due to the audience’s expectations of art. With theatre, specifically, the conventions of performance condition the audience to experience the theatrical event as a performance, marking it as different from real life. The aesthetic object announces itself as an object that demands a certain kind of perception where the audience takes the object as a figurative representation rather than a literal presentation. Yet, as States describes, the presence of things which can cause “phenomenological distraction” creates danger in performance. His example of the most significant distraction is the stage animal, where the animal “doesn’t know it is in a play” and “consequently, we don’t get good behavior, only behavior” (32). The audience’s awareness of the animal’s incapacity for pretense, of the fact that it is simply being itself
and not pretending to be a “dog” onstage, disrupts reception and breaks the illusion of the play. Yet, in other instances, the audience is not always aware of breaks in the intended illusion of the play. An actor may forget their lines and improvise so effectively that the audience does not take notice. However, generally speaking, there remains the ongoing threat of “distraction” or of a break in the audience’s reception of the fictional world.

We might expect radio drama to be free of such incursions of the “real.” Certainly the radio audience may be listening while performing daily tasks or they may simply be intensely aware of their surroundings (e.g., their car, their living room, etc.). Yet the source of performance appears to offer something relatively stable. The spatial and temporal dislocation of the audience in relation to the source of broadcast seems to limit the possibility of a “real pregnancy” between signs. However, there is one notable exception to this apparent status. On October 30, 1938, Orson Welles took to American airwaves with a modernized adaptation of H.G. Wells’ novel, War of the Worlds. When listeners mistook the drama for a real invasion from Mars, the result was a “tidal wave of terror that swept the nation” (Cantril The Invasion from Mars 3). In this instance, the confusion that led audiences to believe that the new-styled broadcast was real was caused by confusion about the boundaries of the dramatic frame which lead to a “misinterpretation” of the play’s signifying system.

Welles fooled a nation by exploiting radio’s unique qualities. While the production was announced as a radio play four times (at the beginning, before the station-break, after the station-break and at the end) 28 per cent of the conservatively estimated audience of six million believed that it was a real news bulletin (Cantril The Invasion from Mars 56-58). Hadley Cantril’s study of the event shows that the vast majority of
those who mistook the fiction for reality (63 per cent of the audience) had tuned in late, after the initial introduction indicating that the program was Orson Welles’ Mercury Theatre of the Air (Cantril 76-84). It is interesting to note that of those who tuned in from the beginning, a full 20 per cent still came to believe the program was real (78). Cantril’s interviews with people from this latter category reveal that the reason for their confusion was that the play utilized the sign system of a real news broadcast. Welles began his program with music, announced as being broadcast live from the Meridian Room in the Park Plaza in New York City. The music is interrupted by an announcer to give a news bulletin indicating “disturbances occurring on the planet Mars” (Welles’ script qtd. in Cantril 6). The program returned to the live music only to be increasingly interrupted by updates, until finally the news report takes over the broadcast. As one listener stated, “I have heard other programs interrupted in the same way for news broadcasts” (79). As Cantril noted, at the time radio was an “accepted vehicle for important announcements” being used to broadcast election returns and to make announcements about world events, including tensions in Europe and expectations of a declaration of war. By mimicking the form of another radio genre, the trusted and relied upon news broadcast, Welles successfully created the illusion of a news broadcast, causing his audience to lose sight of the dramatic frame of the radio play.⁵⁴

Obviously there is a range of desired responses to a radio broadcast and the radio drama producer may choose to limit the imagination’s activity or let it loose. For example, the evening news will limit the imagination’s activity. But Orson Welles’ The War of the Worlds, in providing just enough tangible and realistic referents in order to tap

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⁵⁴ For a full account of the panic, a more detailed analysis of Welles’ radio dramaturgy, and the full script of the play, see Hadley Cantril’s The Invasion from Mars.
in to its audience’s anxiety, clearly unleashed the American imagination in a monumental manner. Welles’ radio ruse demonstrates the power of the imagination and the power of sound as a means of stimulating that imagination. Would Welles’ program have had the same effect if it had been a stage play? Certainly not: the theatrical frame announces itself in a more pronounced and constant manner than the radio play, largely by virtue of the spatial orientation of audience and performers. What if it had been a television program? Here there would be a greater possibility of success given that Welles’ program mimicked a news program and the television became a vehicle for news delivery (in the decades following Welles’ original broadcast). However, the television’s reliance on images limits the function of the imagination. The radio broadcast was able to transport the audience from location to location in an instant, requiring no elaborate props or settings to construct its fiction. A televised program would have had difficulty making the Martian ships and the Martians themselves seem real. On radio, Welles only needed to suggest a few vague characteristics of each and the audience’s imagination completed the rest. Indeed, Welles often did not use specific descriptions in the first-person accounts in his play; he used similes that invited the audience to further imagine the most terrifying possible reality.55

The operation of sound on the imagination is particularly potent. To complete my discussion of the phenomenon of radio drama, in addition to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Dufrenne, I must draw from American philosopher Don Ihde’s work on the phenomenology of sound. In his 1976 work, Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of

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55 First, the reporter describing the Martian ship vaguely states that “The metal on the sheath is… well, I’ve never seen anything like it” and then he describes the Martians emerging from the ship as “wriggling out of the shadow like a grey snake […] They look like tentacles to me […] The eyes are black and gleam like a serpent.” (12, 16).
Sound, Ihde discusses sounds and acknowledges that they have previously been unjustifiably neglected by philosophers:

I speculatively reflect upon the history of philosophy with recollections of pages and pages devoted to the discussion of “material objects” with their various qualities and upon the “world” of tables, desks, and chairs which inhabit so many philosophers’ attentions: the realm of mute objects. (50)

Ihde notes that while the visual dimension involves a “forward oriented directionality” the auditory field is “omnidirectional” (74, 75). As a consequence, Ihde finds that the auditory field spherically encompasses the subject, immersing and penetrating the body to the point where the whole body can reverberate (75). He attempts to subvert the modern hierarchy of senses by illustrating how non-visual experiences are present but simply often unattended:

I stand alone on a hilltop in the light of day, surveying the landscape below in a windstorm. I hear its howling and feel its chill, but I cannot see its contorted writhing though it surrounds me with its invisible presence. No matter how hard I look, I cannot see the wind [rather] wind is “seen” in its effects on the landscape being surveyed. (Ihde 51)

However “listening makes the invisible present” and the storm’s fury is sensorially made immediate (51).

When turning to the imagination, Ihde maintains the intensity of the sensorial experience while also describing the interiorization that Dufrenne posited. Ihde explains that “…as I turn to ‘inner’ experience in the mode of the imaginary, I note that these
experiences may ‘echo,’ ‘mimic,’ or ‘re-present’ any ‘outer’ experience” (121). And yet
this re-presentation of lived experience can be intensely vivid.56

Imagination presentifies “external” experience. I see the butterfly alight upon the
sweet pea; I close my eyes and recollectively imagine the same event. I heard the
distinct foghorn in Port Jefferson, but I can imaginatively remember it now. These
re-presentations may be exceedingly varied in form as memories, recollections, or
fantasies, etc. but in each of these they replay themselves as irreal. It is not that
irreality is lacking in vividness; a lack of vividness may be a contingency of a
particular person’s imaginative ability, or it may be the result of a lack of attention
and ‘training’ in imaginative acts. (Ihde 121)

Ihde in fact conducted an experiment with his students where he asked students to
imagine experiences they had not actually experienced before. The students were asked to
describe what they imagined. Two students described the imagined experience of
jumping from an airplane with a parachute. One of the two students imagined the feel of
the air on his face, the sight of the ground as he approached it, and the sound of the
airplane receding as he fell (122-123). While the first student’s experience involved
multiple senses and a first-person subjective point of view, the second student witnesses
himself falling. The second student observes his body falling towards the ground, but can
not hear or feel the sensations described by the first student. In the latter case, the student

56 The intensely vivid nature of the imagination is best described through Ihde’s example of Beethoven’s
later compositions: “Auditorily Beethoven was able to imaginatively ‘hear’ an entire symphony at will.
Even after deafness his ‘inner hearing’ did not fail him as the magnificent Ninth Symphony so well shows.”
(Ihde 121)
has objectified the experience and placed himself “‘out there’ apart from their sense of body as an ‘objectified quasi other’ in the imaginative experience” (123). What is intriguing is that most of Ihde’s students found “that they can vary embodied and objectified self-imaginations at will” (123). The power of the imaginative activity to occur “either spontaneously or at will” (Ihde 122) allows for a range of experiences.

Between spontaneity and at-will presentifications lie other gradations of possibilities. The occurrence of one imaginative content may spark by “association” a series of others, or a “line of thought” may lead “linearly” like a deduction to something else, and so forth.” (Ihde 122)

The associative potential of the imagination is what makes the audience’s activity in the completion of the radio drama frame particularly individual and subjective. Indeed, Ihde suggests that polyphonic listening, the awareness of the object and the aesthetic experience of that object, leads to the subject “hearing” themselves, where what is heard is “from myself” (119). This emphasizes the intensely subjective experience of sound and, by extension, of radio plays.57

Another feature of the imagination that Ihde illustrates is the transformation of vision within the imaginative field to become “omnidimensional.” Ihde evokes the image of a bee buzzing before its subject. The bee is seen, heard, and perhaps the rapid fluttering of its wings is even felt to some degree. Ihde asks us to imagine that the bee flies behind the subject’s head. Much like the parachuting example, the movement of the bee can be imagined in the first-person perspective or through the willful shift between embodied and objectified experiences. This possibility moves beyond the limits of actual

57 Gaston Bachelard goes even further by claiming that “through the imaginative activity of reverberation, the poem becomes as much part of us as we are part of it” and the poem becomes part of us to the point where “we could have created it” (On Poetic Imagination xxiii).
vision, where “the shape and limit of the imaginative field ‘exceeds’ its visual limitation of being ‘before’ one” (Ihde 126).

In the reception of radio, the imagination operates along the lines of a similar duality. The receiver hears the actual sounds of the drama, yet simultaneously activates the imagination to supply a full sensorium of imaginative experiences (including memories, fantasies, and recollections\(^\text{58}\)). While Ihde does not consider the example of radio drama reception, his consideration of polyphony bears relevance. Ihde suggests that when one listens to a symphony, for example, one can “‘embroider’ the perceived piece of music with co-present imaginative tonalities” (135). Ihde considers this activity one where the perceiver is, to a degree, distracted. Ihde posits that Mozart was a “‘distracted’ though intense” listener who was “always accused of never listening to anyone else’s music but was busy creating his own version of it even in the presence of another’s music” (135). Ihde suggests that this “co-presence” creates “a slight sense of distance between the modalities either in the sense of one being the ‘echo’ of the other in a version of foreground and background attentiveness or in the form of alternating bursts of perceptual and imaginative sounds” (135-135). In this case, that which is perceived and that which is imagined can be either harmonious or dissonant. By this I believe that Ihde suggests that the harmonious experience brings the subject closer to the aesthetic object while the dissonant experience creates greater distance between the two.

\(^{58}\) Memories are passively evoked while recollections are actively sought by the subject (See Aristotle).
The Role of the Audience

While the transmission between the broadcast and the audience may occur through sound, it cannot be said that the performance and reception of radio drama is limited to sound. The dramatic frame of any radio drama involves multi-sensorial fictions. As Erving Goffman writes, in reception “obviously the audience can only hear” (164). But the audience is not limited to the sounds of the radio as they experience their immediate surroundings without limitations to their senses. So while the point of direct connection between the production and reception of radio occurs through sound, it is unnecessary and limiting to suggest that the performance event is restricted to sound. Rather, the audience enjoys a full sensorial experience as stimulated by the imagination. Further, the audience completes the frame of radio drama through imaginative completion.

 While it is somewhat true that radio carries the play’s mise-en-scene with every word, this again emphasises not only the visual but also the activity of production minimising the role of the audience as contributors to the work. Alan Beck says that “Radio drama is rightly claimed to be the 'actor's medium', as well as the 'playwright's medium'” (“Point-of-listening in radio plays”). This conclusion seems logical: It is an Actor’s medium as the Actor’s voice (as others have said) carries with it the entire mise-en-scene, and the Playwright’s medium as their words are usually the primary sound, the foreground of any radio drama. But what I suggest here is that the activity of the audience is not merely complementary but critical. After all, the radio broadcasts but without a single receiver tuning in, the soundwaves are effectively contained and silenced. The audience’s imagination plays a critical role in the completion of the
dramatic frame. The act of listening to radio, more than participation in other media, requires not only a contribution from the audience member, but their complete immersion in the play. I suggest that we consider radio drama to be the “audience’s medium.”

In radio adaptations of stage productions, all sensorial dimensions are relegated entirely to the imagination through the agency of sound. These dimensions are not absent (again, this is not a reduction but a distillation and amplification) but, as guided by the aural stimulus, their source is no longer a singular distanced representation in a tactile and limited space, but a multiplicitous, boundless and active thing, fuelled by the imagination, and generating an immediate and personal response in the mind of each “receiver.” The perceived limitations of radio can in fact be its greatest assets as the single external stimulus – the audio stimulation - creates less interference than other media. Radio can obviously not “show” us everything, but it can make the suggestion. This promotes the activity of the audience on both conscious and subconscious levels.

Despite the spatio-temporal fragmentation inherent to the reception of radio, where the transmission is broadcast remotely and possibly also pre-recorded, its audience, paradoxically, experiences an immediacy and intimacy that can not be achieved in other media. While radio drama exists in a technological landscape of highly visual stimulation and saturation, it relies on the agency of sound to appeal to something more potent: the imagination. Radio’s intimacy transcends distance and the radio play is virtually inside us. Individual audience members, through their imagination, complete the dramaturgical frame as the radio drama producer’s active collaborator.

This collaboration is also present in acts such as private reading, yet the experience of radio drama is more intense. For example, Bert O. States distinguishes
between the theatrical frame and the frame of imagination by describing the difference between experiencing a live play in a theatre and reading that same play. The relationship between modern, solitary reading, and the reception of radio is clearly close:

In one respect, a play read and enacted in the mind’s eye is more “real” than one seen on stage. By “real” I mean nothing palpable or objectively real, obviously, but that our mental enactment of [the play], however vague or fleeting, has something of the realism of a succession of dream images; it is an imagined experience that floats wherever the text leads. […] But however fantastic or surreal the image, it is all real in the sense of its springing to an imagined actuality. Whereas a theatrical representation of the text is precisely marked by the limits of artifice: the frontal rigidity of our view, the positional determination of everything onstage […]. (States 28)

Similarly, Susan Bennett notes that “reading is a private experience⁵⁹, while theatre and cinema involve social gatherings” (Theatre Audiences 21). In its initial social manifestation, radio drama may have operated as a somewhat collective experience, but with the proliferation of increasingly affordable radios and lighter units which offered greater mobility, the experience of listening to radio drama increasingly became an individual one. But is the listener who is physically isolated necessarily incongruent with a performance event that can be described as “live” or “immediate”?

Other forms of theatre, and even film, are experienced by a group that gathers and appears to experience a performance collectively. But is physical proximity a measure of a collective action? Why should we measure the engagement of the audience based on

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⁵⁹ As I noted in Chapter One, the private experience of reading only applies in a modern context. In Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, reading was predominantly a shared experience where works would be read aloud. In oral cultures, to “read” meant to listen, while to “write” meant to dictate.
their engagement with those around them? I would suggest that many theatre audiences maintain a degree of psychological isolation even while in the presence of other audience members. This is not necessarily visible, but most certainly can be felt. If the interactive exchange that is touted as a hallmark of performance is being directed from the performers to the audience, with little thought to the way in which audience members relate to one another, the mental isolation of each audience member can be reinforced.

Radio, on the other hand, involves an audience that is [usually] isolated, creating a mode of reception where the collective audience is invisible. It appears then that radio listeners are isolated individuals. However, as Dermot Rattigan observes, radio “has the unique ability to communicate directly with each individual while broadcasting to all listeners” (13). This creates an unusual performance condition where a mass audience can exist but not perceive its own constituents. The audience is aware that there are likely to be other listeners, but unlike the situation of the radio call-in show (such as Cross Country Checkup) the audience of the radio play is not explicitly incorporated into the broadcast. So while radio, broadly, “gives the isolated listener a feeling of community” (with the broadcast but also with the other isolated listeners), there is no interaction between members of that community (Crisell Understanding Radio 212). For some, the possibility of interaction and some resulting influence seems to be a significant condition for the “live” performance event. However the actual possibility of influence and exchange between audience members, or between the audience and the performance, is limited (in traditional theatre structures) and restricted (even in avant-garde structures

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60 This programme, broadcast on the CBC since 1965, involves listeners from all areas of Canada. Audience members become contributors, being interviewed or recording comments on contemporary issues and personal anecdotes through call-in lines. A degree of national unity is created through radio where individuals in remote areas and from diverse communities are edited together.
where interaction is encouraged but guided and, as a result, limited). The physical isolation of the radio listener allows for a more direct engagement of audiences and for an experience that is still, on one level, collective.

Radio, by its nature, always broadcasts on a macro scale, that is, to all listeners at the same time; but is heard on a micro scale by individual listeners in the private act of conscious (active) and unconscious (passive) listening [...] . (Rattigan 13)
The privacy of the act, the isolation of the individual listener, can result in greater immediacy and intimacy, as well as greater activity. The engagement of the listener is not diminished by the lack of other visible and physically “present” audience members nor is it diminished by the absence of the performers and the lack of potential for “feedback”.

Given the freedom from the “limits of artifice,” the activity of listening to a radio play allows for an experience that is more intimate than reading a book, viewing a film, or receiving a stage play. Indeed, in the absence of other people and objects (be they other audience members in a traditional theatre, or the book that requires a tactile manipulation of the pages) not only is the imagination allowed to work unfettered, but the subconscious is activated to immerse the audience member in a dream-like activity.

The experience of radio as intimate and dream-like has been commented upon by numerous critics since radio was invented. In “The Mind as Stage,” Martin Esslin explained how “concentrated listening to a radio play is more akin to the experience one undergoes when dreaming than to that of the reader of a novel: the mind is turned inwards to a field of internal vision” (177). Radio can deal with this internal dream world quite well as it is free of the “disillusioning heavy materiality of […] flesh and blood”
And, even when audiences “physically listen together, the collaborative mental activity [of each audience member] is unique to each mind” and therefore experiences are highly personal and intimate (177). William Stanton, a radio drama producer for the BBC, also describes the experience as “personal, like dreaming,” and one where a “collaborative dramaturgy” is at play (103, 105). Marshall McLuhan describes the intimacy of radio listening in terms that unite the listener with the broadcast: “I live right inside radio when I listen” (qtd. in Crook 8). These responses are due primarily to the overwhelming power of individual imagination and the inherent privacy of the act that radio requires of its listener, who must complete the radio frame in their mind. The radio directs sounds to a listener who is free of other influences, enabling them to absorb and re-shape the acoustic stimulation to suit themselves. The listener is then an active collaborator in the process and the play’s meanings and evocations become multiplicitous as millions of listeners experience the play in their highly personal unique way. As Damiano Pietropaolo writes, on the contrast between stage and radio: “The contrast between the two media is a contrast between the primarily auricular demands [of] radio and the temporality of its syntax; and the primarily ocular destination of stage performance. The former is a private, intimate experience; the latter a public ritual” (“Narrative and Performance” 74).

The intimate presence of radio is, of course, a product of the lack of physical and mental barriers to the audience who experience the radio play inwardly. In the experience of a live theatre performance, the audience can affect the performance but must also observe rules of social decorum (behaviour in theatre, behaviour when in public – in the company of others) etc. There is a social negotiation at every turn and the audience is
continuously conscious of themselves and of others. I would concede that radio is not exclusively free of distraction. While the radio drama listener “is not influenced by other audience members” he or she “can be interrupted by outside factors (the telephone’s ring, the doorbell, a baby’s crying)” (Cantril and Allport 227). Also, the audience of radio drama can leave at any moment by turning the dial. While it may sound antiquated or unrealistic, the suggestion to listen in isolation and potentially even in the dark is one to consider. This suggestion has been made by many producers and critics, in addition to Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport in their 1935 study on the psychology of radio where they observe that “some listeners prefer to sit in the dark or with closed eyes, for then their imaginations are unfettered by the visual constraints of their familiar surroundings and their fantasies are free” (232). Limiting interference allows the imagination to operate with greatest efficacy. Then, “All the dramatist need do is suggest to the listener that the transformation be made, and presto, it is accomplished” (Cantril and Allport 232). The dramatist and producer simply appeal to the imagination and create a condition by which each individual audience member completes the dramatic frame of the radio play.

Not only does the power of imagination allow for a more personal and intimate experience, as the audience takes an active role in the construction of the theatrical world, but it allows the drama to circumvent issues of verisimilitude and engage in theatrical illusion to the fullest possible degree. In ancient drama, the principle of imagination over explicit representation is followed due to rules of decorum, but also likely due to the problem of achieving verisimilitude on the ancient stage. While it is widely acknowledged that on stage there are some things best left to the audience’s imagination,
Reassessing “The Mind’s Eye” and a “Blind” Medium

While it has been useful thus far to accept the metaphor of the “mind as stage” I must now interrogate this notion further. Often when we hear about the “theatre of the mind” it is the “mind’s eye” that is said to be operating in creating a drama in a “blind” medium. This concept carries with it some significant sensorial hierarchies that must be attended to and contended with.

On a phenomenological level, radio’s perceived “lack” can be interpreted as a remarkable opportunity for a particularly intense and meaningful experience. According to Cazeaux

the phenomenological tradition in aesthetics offers an alternative perspective on sensation that can help to reconfigure radio drama’s lack of imagery as a positive ‘invitational’ quality. This is not simply the point that the imagination is invited ‘to fill in the gaps’ left by the absence of imagery, but rather the far more fundamental assertion that, from a phenomenological perspective, it is wrong to speak of an absence at all. The reason for this is that phenomenology reassesses sensation in such a way that the state of “calling for completion” becomes a vital component in artistic expression. (157-158)

For radio drama, this “incompleteness” creates a “particularly invitational modality of sensation” (172). Here, Cazeaux agrees with Merleau-Ponty who would find that all
works of art are incomplete and that the object’s full representation always requires the participation of the audience.

The twentieth-century preoccupation with vision is likely the root of comments on “picturing” the radio play and reconstructing “images” in the mind. Alan Beck reports on the responses of radio listeners who “claim that they get ‘the best pictures on radio’”, identifying their “wakeful and active” roles as one where they are “the most stimulated in imagination” (“Point-of-listening in radio plays”). For the study of radio drama, the consideration of sight, of the radio merely being a coded device that requires us to attempt to reconfigure and restore the stage in the “mind’s eye”, reduces the experience to being defined in terms of what it lacks – visual elements. The medium is often described reductively as “blind.” In his discussion of the phenomenology of radio, Clive Cazeaux concludes that “it is because radio is representing people and events that have appearances but is unable to convey these appearances that the charge of impoverishment is made” (Cazeaux 158). Yet, as Damiano Pietropaolo finds, “… the question of what we see when we listen to a radio play is sure to lead us to a further marginalization of this form” (“Narrative and Performance” 74). Locating a theoretical “stage” in the mind of each audience member does not account for the full experience of listening.

The “blindness” of the medium depends on what is included as part of the performance event and how this radio frame is defined. As I have established, the frame of radio drama is somewhat unusual in that it does not rely on the spatial and temporal “presence” that is considered as a fundamental aspect of the production and reception of traditional, and even some avant-garde, performance. In radio, clearly the audience cannot see the performers directly and they rely instead on radio drama’s primary means
of conveyance: sounds. The transmission between the broadcast and the audience may occur through sound, but can it be said that the performance and reception of radio drama is limited to sound? As I discussed in the previous section on perception, the experience of radio drama is sensorially rich due to the power of the imagination.

The dramatic frame of any radio drama can be said to involve multi-sensorial fictions. As Erving Goffman writes, “A protagonist in a radio drama will be in a realm in which things are presumably seen, and in which things that are heard, felt, and smelled can be located by sight” (“The Radio Drama Frame” 164). Yet, as I will discuss in Chapter Five, the audience is often asked to identify closely with that protagonist. The radio play evokes the protagonist’s point of view and the audience’s subjective imagination personalizes that experience. In reception, “obviously the audience can only hear” and can not actually experience material and tactile representations of the fictional world as they may (although they do not necessarily do so) in a traditional theatre (Goffman, “The Radio Drama Frame” 164). Rather than seeing Oedipus’ blood-soaked face (or mask), in the moments after his self-mutilation, the audience of radio hears reports of his act and uses their imagination to complete the dramatic frame. However, imaginative space is not limited to sound, and the audience can be said to receive radio drama through sound but to experience it multi-sensorially. While the audience cannot “actually” experience the diegetic world of the play, they do “virtually” experience that world.

Further, the audience is not limited to the acoustic space of the radio and to the function of the invoked space of the imagination. Audiences listen to radio while simultaneously experiencing their immediate surroundings, without limitations to their
senses and often without the ability to limit incursions of the “real”. And so, while the point of direct connection between the production and reception of radio occurs through the transmission of sound, it seems unnecessary and limiting to suggest that the performance event is restricted to sound.

Tim Crook rejects the idea of radio’s “blindness” in his chapter, “Radio drama is not a blind medium” (in Theory and Practice of Radio Drama). Crook begins by dismissing the argument for the assumed hierarchy of the senses where vision is primary, instead promoting Walter Murch’s argument for the primacy of hearing. Murch “remind[s] us that humans hear before they see” when the sense of sound is developed in the womb (at 4 ½ months) while vision is experienced only after birth (Crook 53-54). From this point of audio-development, “we develop in a continuous and luxurious bath of sounds: the song of our mother’s voice, the swash of her breathing, the trumpeting of her intestines, the timpani of her heart” (Murch qtd. in Crook 53). Crook’s interpretation of human perceptual capacities is one that limits the difference between physical sight and psychological insight. Crook asks “what is the philosophical difference between seeing physically with the eye and seeing with the mind?” (54).

Early expectations of radio audiences and of the radio play itself, involved an attempted imitation of a “blind” environment with broadcasters recommending that those listening to the radio close their eyes in order to recede into the “mind’s eye”. Crook refers to the framework promoted by the BBC in 1924, during the broadcast of the first

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61 While I find this compelling, employing biological development to overturn social beliefs is an uphill battle. One of the first lessons in a first-year university Biology course involves the development of a fetus’s sex. All fetuses initially develop female sex characteristics, with the sex organs of the male descending at a later stage. I wonder what would have occurred had this knowledge been available to Freud. Would twentieth-century conceptions of gender have been radically different? Would Freud have been able to develop theories based on the female’s “lack” when the origins of the organs are, biologically, much closer than Freud could ever have conceived?
purpose-written radio play, *The Comedy of Danger*, where the audience was invited to “turn out the lights” (62). Indeed, I have not dismissed such listening conditions, although my suggestion is not to imitate a “blind” environment, but simply to limit incursions of the real.

Crook reminds us that Andrew Crisell had raised the issues of “the mind’s eye” in terms of the expectation, fuelled by an assumption of visual supremacy in the sensorial hierarchy, that the imagination functions as a means to recreate images which are not immediately present. The “mental picture” (the “image generated by the mind”) is, in Crook’s estimation, an insufficient descriptor for the experience of drama which must include “emotion” and “feeling” (61). Crook references a 1993 study (by the UK Radio Advertising Bureau) that concluded that radio audiences “had difficulty describing what they ‘saw’ when listening” (61). Rather than being a “theatre of the mind” radio drama was, as a result of the study, recast as a “theatre of the gut”, an “emotional theatre, where feelings are the primary currency, mixed with mood, memories and imagination” (63). The radio is then not “handicapped by some kind of limited or disabled method of communication” but rather it is a rich, multi-dimensional and multi-sensorial space of performance (62). It is this multi-sensorial experience that occupies both the physical and the psychological space of reception that defines the “theatre of the mind”, not its “blindness.”

As this chapter has demonstrated, the radio drama frame offers the audience an intimate experience of the radio play and demands significant collaboration through the stimulation of the imagination. The audience’s activity is a subjective experience of the play where memories and recollections of the individual’s experiences complete the
dramatic frame. The commonly employed descriptors of the radio play playing out in the “mind’s eye” and of radio being a “blind” medium have more to do with cultural sensorial hierarchies than they do with the phenomenological experience of radio drama. In experiencing radio, the modern audience is thrust into an oral environment where a more complex sensorial event is experienced. Thus, radio plays effectively adjust the receiver to interact with the drama in a manner not experienced before the early twentieth century.
PART TWO

Radiophonic Dramaturgy and Representation
CHAPTER THREE

Invisible Presence: Adapting and Broadcasting Tragedy

While adaptation is often thought of as a postmodern cultural practice, the borrowing of works for production in new forms is at least as old as the origins of theatre. The stage plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides draw on mythological stories as narrative sources and, as variations on the myths represented in that oral tradition, are already adaptations. As Dudley Andrew writes (in relation to film adaptations): “Every representational [work] adapts a prior conception. Indeed the very term ‘representation’ suggests the existence of a model” (Concepts in Film Theory 97). While some critics would strictly apply the term “adaptation” to works that are adapted in a different medium\(^6\) in theatre I believe it makes more sense to expand this definition and to consider all subsequent stage productions as kinds of adaptations. While adaptations between media (intermedial adaptations) are a more obvious kind of transposition, anyone familiar with the process of creating theatre would know that plays vary greatly from production to production and, sometimes, even from night to night. We might consider these adaptations to be intramedial. Another example of intramedial adaptation is to be found in the oral and literary genres of children’s fables. Here, the same fable receives different treatments without being transposed to a different medium. Simply put, these iterations can all be categorized under the wide umbrella of “adaptation.” While the broad movement in this dissertation is in the shift from stage to sound wave (and intermedial adaptation) there will also be comparisons of iterations of individual

\(^6\) See Cardwell on traditional comparative models, 19.
productions (intramedial adaptations) as radio productions were often restaged with different casts.

Twentieth and twenty-first century CBC and BBC radio productions of Greek tragedies have been adapted in a number of ways. First, they have been translated from Ancient Greek to English (linguistic adaptation). Second, they are being presented to a new audience in a time period and culture significantly removed from their original context (cultural and historical adaptation). Thirdly, they have been transposed to a new medium (intermedial adaptation) further using practices in casting, rehearsal, and staging that are also far removed from the practices of fifth-century Attic drama. Issues of linguistic adaptation are beyond the scope of this dissertation. In this chapter I will focus on cultural, historical, and intermedial adaptation by considering the process, effects, and critical status of these adaptations.

In adaptation, the product of the adaptive process and the act of adaptation itself are subject to criticism that is quite different from the criticism applied to new works. First, their very status as adaptations places them in a precarious position as cultural products. The status of the adaptation is questioned by some due to its designation as the “translation” (Robert Stam), “transformation” (Phyllis Frus and Christy Williams), “imitation” (James Griffith), “analogy” (Kamilla Elliot), “paraphrase” (Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan), or “ghost” (Marvin Carlson) of another work. Other tropes of adaptation include: reading, copy, parasite, cannibalization, recreation, transposition, interpretation, regeneration, transfiguration, and addition or subtraction. The criticism of

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63 For discussions of linguistic adaptation, see Staging and Performing Translation (Eds. Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti, Manuela Perteghella), John Milton’s “Translation Studies and Adaptation Studies”, Carole-Anne Upton’s Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation, and Susan Bassnett’s Translation Studies.
adaptation is often, as Stam writes, “profoundly moralistic” using language charged with “outraged negativity” such as terms like “infidelity, betrayal, deformation, violation, vulgarization, and desecration” (Stam 54). These derogatory terms often manifest in critiques of adaptation that, as James Naremore finds, are “narrow in range, inherently respectful of the 'precursor text,' and constitutive of a series of binary oppositions that poststructuralist theory has taught us to deconstruct: literature versus cinema, high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy” (“Introduction” 2). The fact that these oppositions are maintained is evidence of the intensity of animosity amongst some critics in adaptation studies.

The politics of adaptation stem from rivalries between modes of creative expression. For example, in Aristotle’s Poetics, a hierarchy is established between the elements of drama, also creating a hierarchy of the senses. Subsequent critics have continued to maintain such hierarchies. These “ancient representational rivalries” manifest most significantly in the extensive criticism of the novel to film adaptation (Elliot 14). In discourse regarding film adaptation, the discussion often “quietly reinscribes the axiomatic superiority of literary art to film, an assumption derived from a number of superimposed prejudices” (Stam 58). The most frequently discussed prejudice is the assignment of “words” to novels and “images” to film (Elliot 14), creating a reductive view of the scope and capacity of each medium’s operative tools. By introducing radio adaptations to the discourse of adaptation criticism, I hope to move beyond such oppositions and reductions.

It is interesting that the term “adaptation” has come to carry such negative weight. In its anthropological use, the term “adaptation” offers evolutionary connotations that
indicate the achievement of a useful and necessary progression and improvement. While in this use the links between the current being and its ancestral heritage are significant, the adaptation is what is privileged. In the artistic realm, the discussion of adaptation seems to have begun with quite the opposite sentiment. Instead of seeing adaptations as developments where artistic products are transformed into something “better” (or at least better suited to their new environments) adaptations are often seen as being derivative, derogatory, and debased. This view is central to the fidelity debate which I will outline shortly.

As is evident, the relationship between the source text and the adaptation is the subject of a great deal of criticism and this chapter will begin with a discussion of the problems inherent in adaptations (The Problem of Adaptation). One aspect of these problems that will receive special attention is the effect of the audience’s awareness of the source work in the reception of a directly or indirectly familiar narrative (The Pleasure of Adaptation). Another key issue is the act of selection for programming on air. In this section (The Project of Adaptation), I will ask how these plays are selected for adaptation and production and what ideologies their programming promotes. The product of these adaptations and the process of adapting do not occur in a vacuum, and so the cultural context of their generation and reception is also significant here. Finally, the act of adapting tragedies to radio involves a translation of dramaturgies. I will ask how these dramaturgies can be compared based on the similarity of their medial narrative languages (The Principles of Adaptation) and finally in the second section of this dissertation I will look at the process of adaptation and consider how tragedies adapt to radio and where
intervention is desired or required in order to mediate perceived irreconcilable differences of narrative language.

**The Problem of Adaptation: The Status of the Cultural Product**

The status of an adaptation, as a cultural product, has been questioned by numerous critics even though the use of sources external to a work’s creator in the production of new artistic works is a common occurrence. While Plato believed that the inspiration of the artist was drawn from the realm of ideas (*Republic*, Book X), and other critics maintain that muses or divine interventions affect artists in the creation of their works, I will operate on the assumption that artists draw their material from the perceived world. This material, being part of the artist’s experience of the world yet otherwise external to him or her, will necessarily resemble its sources, be they from the natural world or from representations of that world. However, when those sources are creative works, and when the resulting works either closely resemble their sources or announce themselves to be adaptations, their narrative/aesthetic/formal proximity invites comparison. This comparison is made by audiences and by critics who have different investments in the outcome of the assessment. For example, audiences may experience pleasure in the recognition of a story they have heard before, or in the intermedial adaptation of a beloved book to film (as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, The Pleasure of Adaptation). Similarly there may be disappointment in the adaptation as audiences arrive at the point of contact with the artistic product with preconceived notions and expectations based on their experience of the source work. And so, the act of comparison also creates the potential for disappointment when the adaptation does not “measure up”
to the “original” work. For critics, the act of comparison reveals a range of attitudes about the status of the adaptation as a cultural product and (for some critics) as a didactic tool. It is important for this study that I contend with these comparative assessments of adaptations in order to situate radio adaptations within the broader cultural context of radio play production. The primary issues in the theory of adaptation are here organized around three critical approaches to adaptation, as put forth in Robert Stam’s article “The Dialogics of Adaptation”: fidelity, intertextuality, and translation.

While Dudley Andrew calls “fidelity and transformation” the most “tiresome” mode of adaptation, it is also the most frequently discussed (Concepts in Film Theory 100). If we use the judgment of fidelity as a critical methodology, we are privileging the so-called “original” work by assessing the adaptation’s degree of faithfulness. Here, I will consider criticism of “fidelity” as a measure of an adaptation’s status and also some criticism of the very notion of an “original” work. I will classify issues of fidelity into two categories: narrative fidelity, a fidelity to the basic components of narration (plot, character, setting, text), and essential fidelity, a fidelity to the essence of a work when realizing it in a new medium.64

My definition of narrative fidelity is roughly equivalent to Dudley Andrew’s notion of fidelity to the “letter” of the text (versus the “spirit”). The “letter” of the text refers to mechanical and narrational elements of fiction including “characters, geographical, sociological, and cultural information for context, basic narrational aspects (POV, narrational style)...” (Andrew Concepts in Film Theory 100). The evaluation of narrative fidelity is relatively simple. Does the adaptation maintain character names, the number of characters, their relationships to one another, and their basic nature? Does the adaptation

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64 See also George Bluestone’s Novels into Film.
maintain the original setting (in geography and period)? Does the adaptation maintain the same cultural context as the original? Does the adaptation maintain the text of the original? Are the central thematic ideas consistent? Is the plot and story the same in its scope and structure? The adaptation’s degree of narrative fidelity can then be judged based on the degree to which it fulfills these requirements.

There is one exception to this evaluation. With regards to scope and structure, there appears to generally be some forgiveness for an adaptation’s compression of action or omission of plot elements. Adaptations often have to cut text and episodes as the adapted product is in a medium with varying time constraints (e.g., a film’s duration is typically two hours, a radio play one to two hours). In contrast with this, when adapting a story to a novel, one has room to expand the narration. In adapting a myth to any other form, one also has room to expand the narration. (While this categorization of fidelity would normally be considered an issue of intermedial adaptation, I am positioning it here as it directly affects how much of the mechanical and narrational elements of the source can be maintained.) While it is often accepted that the scope of a story will be adjusted based on the medium of its adaptation, the selection of elements for editing is still scrutinized.

If a work maintains a high degree of narrative fidelity, it is likely an adaptation that utilizes “borrowing” as its main mode of adaptation. Dudley Andrew explains that when “borrowing,” “the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text” (Concepts in Film Theory 98). Andrew suggests that by maintaining this level of fidelity, in some cases, the adaptation hopes to win an audience by the prestige of its borrowed title or subject. But at the same time it seeks to gain a certain respectability, if not aesthetic
value, as a dividend in the transaction. [...] the audience is expected to enjoy basking in a certain pre-established presence and to call up new or especially powerful aspects of a cherished work. (Concepts in Film Theory 98)

This high degree of fidelity is meant to satisfy the consumer of the product by reproducing a work and “cherishing” its source. Unlike parody where that which is parodied is cherished through a play on similarities and differences with the source, here the similarities are emphasized and required to generate a positive audience response.

One theory of the efficacy of such adaptations is that the source work exists “as a continuing form or archetype in culture” (Concepts in Film Theory 98). Its archetypal status may be what allows it to transcend cultural and historical infidelities. There may be some narrative fidelities that are more important than others but the judgment of this is a subjective process.

In contrast with this, there is the example of the retelling of classic fairy tales. Here, audiences may take pleasure in both the repetition and variation of the source story. Narrative fidelity, when respected, results in what Jack Zipes calls a “duplication”. A duplication “reproduces and reinforces the ideology, patterns, and images of the classical tale, creating a 'look-alike’” (Fairy Tale as Myth 9). Alternately, Zipes posits the “revision” which “transforms the classical tale and 'alters' its traditional values, patterns, and images” (9). The example of the fairy tale as a myth is particularly relevant to this study of Greek tragedies as the fifth-century treatments of myths result in plays which act as revisions of myths.

The popularity of the source and the degree of separation (temporally and culturally) also affect our perception of a work’s narrative fidelity. The more popular the
work, the more likely its fans are to experience the adaptation with heightened
expectations and even demands for greater narrative fidelity (as I will discuss in a
moment). The greater the temporal and cultural distance between the source work and the
adaptation, the greater the likelihood of the adaptation offering “less reverence toward the
source text” and a “reinterpretation through the values of the present” (Stam 57). While
the degree of narrative fidelity is lower in this instance, there may be greater emphasis on
another kind of fidelity: essential fidelity.

What I am calling essential fidelity is the mode of adaptation where mechanical
faithfulness to the source work’s narrative is not a concern, while faithfulness to “the
essence of the medium of expression” is paramount (Stam 58). André Bazin promotes
this kind of fidelity, finding that “faithfulness to a form, literary or otherwise, is illusory:
what matters is the equivalence in meaning of the forms” (Bazin 20). This emphasis on
adapting to the new medium’s aesthetic and formal properties to create an equivalent
meaning corresponds to what Dudley Andrew calls adapting to the “spirit” of the text.
Fidelity to essential qualities, or to the “spirit” of the source work, involves matching the
original’s “tone, values, imagery, and rhythm” in the style of the new medium (Andrew
Concepts in Film Theory 100). Andrew posits this process of “finding stylistic
equivalents […] for these intangible aspects” as a non-mechanical process (100). Here,
adaptation is

a matter of searching two systems of communication for elements of equivalent
position in the systems capable of eliciting a signified at a given level of pertinence
[……] The analysis of adaptation then must point to the achievement of equivalent
narrative units in the absolutely different semiotic systems of film and language.

(Concepts in Film Theory 102, 103)

Elliot provides a similar view of essential fidelity, viewing adaptation through the trope of analogy. The adaptation’s faithfulness is here assessed by “its ability to find analogous rhetorical techniques in the new medium” (Elliot 184). The difference between Andrew’s and Elliot’s models is that Andrew is critical of the resulting dichotomies that come into play, restricting novels to words and film to images. Elliot, who also writes on film adaptations of literary works, reinforces this “unbridgeable divide between words and images” (Elliot 184).

If we extend this reduction of the qualities of each medium to radio, we would restrict radio to sound. However, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the perception of a radio play encompasses more than this, it involves the imagination and the evocation of other sensorial experiences. However, Elliot notes that the view of novels and films as being restricted to words and images, respectively, is widespread: “the analogical model dominates most screenwriting guides to adaptation, influencing aesthetic practice as well as academic theory and criticism” (184).

Stam points out that “this ‘medium-specificity’ approach assumes that every medium is inherently ‘good at’ certain things and ‘bad at’ others” (Stam 58). In his view, A more satisfying formulation would emphasize not ontological essence, but rather diacritical specificity. Each medium has its own specificity deriving from its respective materials of expression. The novel has a single material of expression, the written word, whereas the film has at least five tracks: moving photographic image, phonetic sound music, noises, and written materials. (Stam 59)

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65 Elsewhere, Elliot writes on the “spirit” of the text.
Stam finds that film has a greater “complexity of resources” but does not equate this with any kind of superiority (59).

In an attempt to circumvent the debate of medial potency, Andrew suggests that we think of adaptations as “intersecting” which preserves “the uniqueness of the original text” while leaving it “unassimilated in adaptation” (Concepts in Film Theory 99). This can be accomplished because “intersecting insists that the analyst attend to the specificity of the original within the specificity of the cinema. An original is allowed its life, its own life, in the cinema” (Andrew Concepts in Film Theory 100). Or, as André Bazin claims, in the adaptation to film, “we are presented not with an adaptation so much as a refraction of the original” because “the film is the novel as seen by cinema” (qtd. in Andrew Concepts in Film Theory 99).

The most problematic issue in measuring fidelity is the very notion of an “original” work being a coherent and complete whole. Can a work be a closed unit, self-contained and unrelated to works that came before it? If we are to judge narrative fidelity, are we basing it on that professed complete “original” work and no others? Also, if we are to judge essential fidelity, is it true that the “original” work “contains’ an extractable ‘essence’” (Stam 57). Stam questions whether what I call “essential fidelity” is even possible due to the ontologically different nature of all adaptations (although Stam is focusing on intermedial adaptations) (55). He refutes the idea that a work can “[contain] an extractable ‘essence’,” claiming that there is “no such transferable core” (57). Stam further suggests that all adaptations should be considered as “original” works due to their difference, but I am more inclined to think of these adaptations as iterations since this
“difference” is only noted in reference to the source work. Audiences can not erase their  
memories or retract their experience of that source.

The dismissal of a coherent and complete “original” work leads to Stam’s proposal for examining adaptations in their “ongoing dialogical process” (64) as an intertextual process and product. Here, every work is comprised of a variety of other works, forming an intersection of those works. All works are therefore “tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts” (64). If we see adaptation as part of a “broader intertextual dialogism” (64) then we place it within “the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated” (64). This critique of artistic works is unlikely to be appreciated by those who are concerned with issues of appropriations of history, or of origins and authorship. Rather, the use of an intertextual model for the critique of adaptations would appeal to structuralists.

We must also remember that there are sites of intertextual intersection that do not depend on the text. Moving beyond the text, Stam considers the performer as the embodiment of “a thespian intertext” (60) where the memory of previous performances results in another site of intertextual dialogism. Marvin Carlson similarly finds that

The recycled body of an actor, already a complex bearer of semiotic messages, will almost inevitably in a new role evoke the ghost or ghosts of previous roles if they have made any impression whatever on the audience, a phenomenon that often colors and indeed may dominate the reception process. (Carlson, The Haunted Stage, 8)
This dialogism will vary between audience members since there may be greater or lesser familiarity with the performer’s work or even the performer on a personal level. Variation will also occur with each subsequent performance of a work; for example, a scandal in a film actor’s public life may result in an intractable change in how audiences respond to his or her previous films. Similarly, the director, cinematographer, or designer has a style that carries with it the signs of their complete body of work. Memories of other productions and of public personas are thus carried by the current work. However on radio, the thespian intertext is minimized in that many actors are known only for their voices; radio actors are rarely part of the cult of celebrity that causes extensive and even oppressive intertextualities. While there are obvious exceptions (Orson Welles, for example, is perhaps the most famous radio personality in history) radio typically neutralizes thespian intertextualities.

Stam views the dialogic process as an “activist” position for adaptations in relation to their sources. By changing the context and broadening the points of reference, adaptation is “less an attempted resuscitation of an originary word than a turn in an ongoing dialogical process” (64). Our experience of the work then takes place “not only through recognizable influences, but also through a subtle process of dissemination (Stam 64).

All of these processes act upon the work and affect the audience’s experience of the work’s “transtextuality” (Stam 65). Transtextuality is defined by Gérard Genette as “all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts” (qtd. in Stam 65). As Bakhtin would argue, every text “is an intertext that incorporates, refracts, refutes, and alludes to many other texts, whether literary, cinematic, or more broadly
cultural” (Leitch 30, 2007). Thomas M. Leitch also supports the view of adaptation as an intertextual product and goes so far as to suggest that adaptation studies become known as intertextual studies. He does so partly in order to dislodge the privileging of the text in all adaptations (Leitch 20, 2007).

Another trope of adaptation is the adaptation as “translation.” If we view adaptations as translations, then we are privileging the process and not the final product. The process of translation seems to include greater forgiveness for imperfections. It accepts that there are a range of possible translations, with some being more effective at creating a relative equivalence between languages. Translation can, of course, also occur between forms, cultures, and histories, among other things. Stam finds this to be a good alternative to the trope of fidelity: “The trope of adaptation as translation suggests a principled effort of intersemiotic transposition, with the inevitable losses and gains typical of any translation” (Stam 62).

In Beyond Adaptation: Essays on Radical Transformations of Original Works, Phyllis Frus and Christy Williams attempt to redefine certain adaptations as “transformations”. These works are also considered adaptations, but they are, more specifically, “a text that reworks an older story or stories” (3). The difference between a transformation and an adaptation is that a transformation “move[s] beyond mere adaptation and transform[s] the source text into something new that works independently of its source” (Frus and Williams 3). But this distinction, being based on dependency seems to assume that the impact of the source work can be contained or erased in the reception of the new work. For Frus and Williams, a transformation “may not be recognizable as a cousin” of the new work given the significant difference of the change
and the work’s newfound independence (3). Yet the example they use is quite superficial. They use the example of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, which is a metamorphosis that produces “an entirely new form that is based on the earlier form” (Frus and Williams 3). But only the appearance of the butterfly is “new” and the DNA remains shared by both forms. Also, most people know where butterflies come from, so while its appearance is radically different, the relationship to its source is one of common knowledge. How then is the butterfly independent of the caterpillar, particularly when it depends on its caterpillar phase completely as a source of genesis. Frus and Williams also use the example of the film Clueless (1995) as a transformation of Jane Austen’s Emma, but the film version starring Gwyneth Paltrow (1996) version as an adaptation because it “announces itself as an adaptation […] tells Austen’s story, uses her characters, and even keeps the title, though like all film adaptations it selects and compresses the action and adds other elements to meet the needs of today’s audiences” (Frus and Williams 3-4). But anyone who knows Emma will recognize its essence in Clueless. Frus and Williams seem to put too much weight on intention (the self-proclamation of the work’s adaptive status) and narrative fidelity. If we evaluate the work based on essential fidelity, it is clearly an adaptation. Frus and Williams also try to have it both ways by saying that they do not want to perpetuate only two types (adaptation and transformation) but that many texts do both. So, essentially, they have simply produced a new dichotomy and tried to present it as two points on a graduated scale.

More useful than the trope of transformation is the trope of “reading” that Stam puts forth. This emphasizes that a work “can generate any number of adaptations” and even “an infinity of readings”, defeating the assumption that one adaptation “has said
everything that needs to be said” about the source work (Stam 62-3). The drawback of employing this trope is that its connotations seem to privilege literary activity where all works are “texts” that can be “read.”

Also of use here is Leitch’s reminder that the privileging of the “original” or “source” work can be eclipsed when the adaptation’s quality is better than the original: “Fidelity makes sense as a criterion of value only when we can be certain that the model is more valuable than the copy” (Leitch 19, 2007).

Leitch also reminds us that the source text, when posited as such, only has to be faithful to itself and, therefore, operates at an advantage so immense that all adaptations are burdened by this imbalance of expectations (Leitch 30, 2007). Leitch, who focuses on film adaptations, complains that teaching a work as an adaptation is like using it as “a window on the source text” and that this is reductive (30).

Although it is certainly true that adaptations are intertexts that depend in a special way on their source texts, thinking of them exclusively in these terms inevitably impoverishes them because it reduces them to the single function of replicating (or, worse, failing to replicate) the details of that single source text. (Leitch 30, 2007)

Clearly the “exclusive” assessment of the adapted work in relation to its fidelity to the source text is problematic and unhelpful, as we have previously discussed. However, I do not think that we can dismiss the merits of comparative analysis between source works and their adaptations. In comparing two works, we learn about the effects of representation in different media and the effects of different cultural and historical conditions on the interpretation of the work. As Linda Hutcheon finds, “we often come to see the prior adapted work very differently as we compare it to the result of the adapter’s
creative and interpretive act” (*A Theory of Adaptation* 121). Stam also suggests that the adaptation has the potential to demystify and critique the source work (63). The very act of adaptation invites comparative analysis from its audiences who are often aware (to varying degrees) of the adapted work.

**The Pleasure of Adaptation: Receiving Familiar Narratives**

Aristotle wrote that pleasure is derived from acts of mimesis because the person experiencing the mimetic object recognizes it as a representation of an object/thing. This cognitive act of recognition is an exercise of a natural human capacity and this is inherently pleasurable. Malcolm Heath further explains Aristotle’s view of why we seem to be inclined towards mimesis:

[To] take part in the activity of making and responding to likenesses we must recognise the relationship between the likeness and its object. This engages and satisfies the desire to exercise our distinctively human power of understanding, and is therefore pleasurable. (xiii-xiv)

However mimesis does not need to produce a copy of the object (their similarities “may reside in a more oblique and abstract correspondence” (Heath xiv). Aristotle seems to be less concerned with fidelity than with verisimilitude (that there be a resemblance but not a copy). This resemblance relies on recognition which in turn relies on one’s knowledge of that which is being imitated. And, as I previously discussed, the degree and kind of knowledge the audience has of the source work affects their reception of the adaptation.

Since Aristotle, there have been others critics who support theories of the pleasure in adaptation. Linda Hutcheon suggests that the appeal of “experiencing adaptations as
adaptations […] lies in their mixture of repetition and difference, of familiarity and novelty” (A Theory of Adaptation 114). While Aristotle would identify the recognition of repetition as the source of pleasure, Hutcheon sees it as “the simple act of almost but not quite repeating”, or, in the variations rather than the repetition (115).

It is evident that the act of recognition elicits the audience’s participation and engagement with the artistic product. While Aristotle sees this as an aspect of all mimetic acts, I want to focus on how recognition affects the audience of adaptations. The question of how the audience’s awareness of the source text affects their reception of the adaptation can be answered through several avenues of inquiry. The primary issues here are: types of audiences (fans, demanding audiences, “knowing” vs. “unknowing” audiences), and types of responses to adaptation (whether the adaptation offers accessibility, enrichment, or the experience of elitism or nostalgia).

The first type of audience under consideration here is the “fan.” Cartmell and Whelehan, drawing on the work of Henry Jenkins (on fandom) and Michel de Certeau (on the fan as poacher), describe the fan as a “willful appropriator of meanings for ends which could not be anticipated by a film's or television serial's producers” (15). Unlike the typical audience member, this “extreme version of the average cultural consumer” (15) participates in the work of art by creating new opportunities for re-experiencing the work (by reproducing the narrative in other forms, essentially adapting it) as well as extending the experience of the work (through fan fiction, blogs, tribute websites, and live performative recreations and role-play). Cartmell and Whelehan describe the extension of the experience of the work as an opportunity to complete the narrative

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66 Of course, in the case of what one might perceive as a poor adaptation, familiarity with the source text could certainly result in displeasure.
“gaps” left by the original work’s narrative (16). It is “as if what they find in the original text frustrates a quest for wholeness and completeness which can only be satisfied by the creation and dispersal of narratives which somehow fill in the ‘gaps’” (16). Similarly, Linda Hutcheon describes these fan activities as acts that bring to completion the “unfinished cultural business” of the work (A Theory of Adaptation 122). However, far from indicating a flaw in the original work, these re-workings and additions are pursued out of reverence and esteem for the source work. This audience member is then both a consumer of adaptations and, often, a producer of adaptations.

The second type of audience under consideration here is the “demanding audience.” Audiences who are familiar with the source work, whether they are average cultural consumers or self-proclaimed fans, are likely to have expectations of any subsequent adaptation of that work. In many cases, the existence of favourite characters or passages, which may or may not survive the process of adaptation, creates a demand for a transposition with high narrative fidelity. These expectations and a resistance to change stem from audiences who “cherish” the source work (Hutcheon A Theory of Adaptation 122). The audiences’ interpretation of a work is filtered through their previous experience of the work (as with the intertextual approach to adaptation). To adapt a work is to engage with a set of expectations established by the source work’s form and style. In contrast with this demand for narrative fidelity, some changes to the work are made because of the audience’s expectations of a medium. In adapting to film, for example, Hutcheon suggests that audiences would be more disappointed without the full use of the medium’s capacities than with a strict lack of narrative fidelity. For example, in an adaptation of a stage play to television, the use of a single-fixed camera (in an effort to
mimic a static audience member) is incongruous with expected televisual dynamics. Maintaining the fourth wall and a perspective of the action from a single side of the action seems unreasonable when television allows for 360 degrees of viewing as well as shot-reverse-shot editing. While this affects the audience’s point-of-view, the employment of the medium’s capacities is here less intrusive than strict fidelity to theatrical spatial arrangements.

The third type of audience under consideration is the “knowing” or “unknowing” audience. Hutcheon notes that whether we experience a work as an adaptation or not depends on whether we are a “knowing” or “unknowing” audience member. When we are “knowing” audience members, we can recognize the adaptation as an adaptation, knowing its source and allowing the source “to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing” (A Theory of Adaptation 121). But adaptations can and must also stand on their own for “unknowing” audiences, allowing access to the work’s fictional world without prior knowledge of it. Another possibility is the audience member who has indirect knowledge of the source work. John Ellis discusses this possibility of instances where the adapted work is canonical and the audience has indirect knowledge of it through “a generally circulated cultural memory” (3). We must also remember that knowing audiences, being diverse in their degree and kind of “knowing”, may respond to different intertextual references. Their experience of the work is not homogenous or unified.

Of the range of responses that may be generated in an audience, the first we will consider is the response of nostalgia. The desire to experience an adaptation of a work with which one has a historic relationship also seems symptomatic of a general nostalgia.
If this nostalgia is particularly strong, the reception of an adaptation may operate in competition with nostalgia for the source text (or any other previous iteration of the work’s experience that the audience member cherishes). Susan Bennett suggests that there is a kind of competition between the source text and the adaptation when she writes that “To reproduce a classical text of the European imperial archive is always to risk its willing and wistfully nostalgic assent to (re)claim its own authority” (*Performing Nostalgia* 5). Certainly the impact of a longing for the work (creating an intimate relationship between the audience and the work) may be significant, and this desire to recreate and revisit previous experiences creates expectations of the adaptation and influences our reception of the adaptation.

We must also consider whether the adaptation is accessible to its audiences. Hutcheon also identifies the “pleasure of accessibility” (*A Theory of Adaptation* 117) noting that children are often inducted into the world of canonical literature through children’s versions of classics (in comics and cartoon versions). Clearly, one can see how this extends to teenagers with filmic adaptations of Shakespeare such as Baz Luhrman’s *Romeo + Juliet*. Hutcheon notes that novelizations of films (and I can add, television series) are popular with young viewers and are seen as having “a kind of educational – or perhaps simply curiosity – value” (118). These novelizations are often judged to be commercially driven things, an extension of cinema’s franchising of the “brand” of the film. However, this once more raises tensions between “high” and “low” cultural products and these criticisms unnecessarily degrade novelizations based on their popularity.
The use of adaptations as a means of making canonical works accessible is not restricted to young audiences. The issue of accessibility is central to the next section of this chapter where I will discuss the use of radio adaptations in national educational projects. Also, in the last part of this chapter I will discuss some of the interventions made in radio adaptations when it is anticipated that the audience is not knowledgeable of the source works.

In addition to making the works accessible, some audiences may find adaptations to be an “enriching” experience. Hutcheon describes the “doubled pleasure” of knowingly experiencing more than one text (A Theory of Adaptation 116). However, there is also criticism of the adaptation as an “elitist” entity, privileging high cultural products and their consumers. While Hutcheon only considers high-culture elitism, I think that the sense of being privileged in the knowledge of and reception of a work can equally apply to consumers of other cultural products (i.e. non-canonised, low-culture works).

Issues of accessibility, enrichment and elitism come into play when I consider how national broadcasters determine their programming. The underlying ideologies that inform these decisions will be discussed in the next section.

The Project of Adaptation: Programming “A National Theatre of the Air”

In the early years of radio, in selecting programs to air, the mandates of the CBC and BBC reveal an interest in providing “high culture” for their audiences as part of national projects to promote the development of culture and cultural literacy. John Reith was responsible for leading this charge almost single-handedly for the BBC while the convergence of several proximate forces resulted in the development of CBC
programming choices. In subsequent years, while programming became more diverse with the expansion of both networks to additional channels, and as radio’s dominance and relevance was threatened by the emergence of television and new media, the early goals of both broadcasters were maintained. In this section, I will demonstrate how these mandates developed, what programming decisions they influenced, and how adaptations of tragedies fit into each institution’s ideology.

The BBC and its artistic programming emerged from a culture already enamoured with the audio transmission of performance. Tim Crook describes the pre-radio years as full of audio experiments, including Clement Ader’s theatrophone (also known as the electrophone), patented in 1881. This invention “involved telephonic transmission of live performances from theatres and music halls into domestic households and amplification of the sound through phonograph speakers” (Crook 15). Funded by telephone companies, the theatrophone would transmit audio (in dual channels) from the Paris Opera House and the Comédie Française to private telephones (by subscription) and, by 1890, to public telephones (with the public phones operating on a “pay per listen” basis) (Crook 16). Tim Crook describes the demand for such programming as being “so strong that it was possible to present several different programmes from various theatres” and that this service was so popular in France that it continued until 1932 (Crook 16). The theatrophone/electrophone arrived in England in 1895 and was used to connect subscribers to cultural programming (primarily of music, but also of short plays) and to the broadcast of religious services. And so, when wireless radio emerged in 1908, an audience of listeners had already been cultivated.

67 While Thomas Edison’s invention of the phonograph (1877) allowed for sounds to be recorded and played back, the predominant mode of production relied on live performances until the mid-twentieth century.
Broadcasting was regulated by the General Post Office (GPO) which was a Department of State.\textsuperscript{68} While the GPO licensed the Marconi Company to begin broadcasts in 1920, there were ongoing concerns about “congestion on the airwaves” (Crisell \textit{Understanding Radio} 18). In 1922, with growing concern over Marconi’s monopoly of the airwaves, the GPO licensed the British Broadcasting Company as an umbrella organization for all broadcasters. The British Broadcasting Company was funded from “the original stock, royalties on the receivers which its member companies sold, and a portion of the revenue from broadcast receiving licenses” (Crisell 18). In 1927, by Royal Charter, the commercial British Broadcasting Company became a public company: The British Broadcasting Corporation.

The BBC’s reach spread quickly: by 1925 “reception was available to 85 percent of the population” and by 1928 “radio audiences were never less than 1 million and often as high as 15 million” (Crisell 19). Crisell credits the 1928 general strike with establishing radio as the predominant source for the nation’s news. During the strike, competing media shut down and radio was the only source of information.\textsuperscript{69}

The earliest radio plays broadcast on the BBC include classics and original works. In 1923 the BBC broadcast portions of popular Shakespearean plays with an abridged version of \textit{Twelfth Night} broadcast on 28 May 1923 (Crook 32). Alan Beck’s research on early BBC radio has yielded a consensus that Richard Hughes’ \textit{A Comedy of Danger} (15 January 1924) was the first radio play written expressly for radio. It was not long after that \textit{Antigone} was produced (on 15 April 1924). Greek plays were frequently adapted to

\textsuperscript{68} Until 1969 when it became known simply as The Post Office.
\textsuperscript{69} One negative effect of this strike is that it placed pressure on the BBC to become the mouthpiece for the government (and indeed, many criticised it for being just that). Reith resisted this and insisted that a public broadcaster’s duty was to report independently. It is widely thought that the demand for Reith’s resignation stemmed from the tensions that arose during the 1928 general strike.
radio during the decades to follow. According to my findings, after three productions in the 1920s and five in the 1930s, the number of adaptations of tragedies swelled in the 1940s and 1950s with thirty-one and thirty-two new productions, respectively (see Appendix B). It seems that radio had discovered classical tragedy. As Godfrey Turton noted, in 1937, “their lack of action is then an advantage, and the power of the words is left to recreate the original atmosphere without the intrusion of a modern stage setting” (6). This belief would be echoed by Canadian practitioners. Yet in practice, there were very few “straight” adaptations (that allowed the works to “speak for themselves”) as I will demonstrate in Chapters Four and Five.

The most influential figure in the programming of the early BBC (Company and Corporation) is undoubtedly John Reith. As the Director General of the BBC (from 1923 until 1938), Reith

saw [his position] as a high moral responsibility, and he sought, through its programmes, to provide a comprehensive public service and quickly turned the company from a commercial enterprise into a respected national institution. (Crisell

*Understanding Radio* 19)

Reith’s programming style is described as “mixed-programming” which included a range of programs on each network, “embracing music, drama and comedy, a children’s hour, as well as religious and school broadcasts” (Crisell 19). The Reithian ethos was to educate and entertain, in addition to informing the public. This philosophy (that would later be adopted by the CBC) was frequently challenged domestically and there was further tension with the competition of radio stations broadcasting from the continent. These stations, Radio Normandie and Radio Luxembourg, “offered soap operas and light
music” in stark contrast to Reith’s Sunday program which, for example, transmitted “religious services, talks, and classical music” (Crisell 22). There remains to this day criticism about Reith’s elitism. As Amanda Wrigley finds,

> Under [Reith’s] management the BBC strove towards the establishment of a national culture, an exercise not without critics then, and viewed historically as having the character of an educational and improving Christian mission, imposing the narrowly defined culture of the educated south-east on a wide public, ostensibly for their social advantage but without any real shift in the balance of power within society. (Wrigley “Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*” 217).

Yet Reith managed the BBC with a firm hand and it was not until 1938 that Reith retired. Reith’s influence, however, continued and his mandate is echoed in the BBC’s current mandate, “To enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain” (*BBC Mission and Values*). BBC radio became the location of a “National Theatre of the Air,” as J.C.Trewin stated, if not an “International Theatre of the Air,” as David Wade credits it, given its “devot[ion] to the classics of world theatre” (Wade 219).

Following Reith’s departure, the BBC responded to popular demand by creating networks that specialized in different kinds of programs.

For cultural programs, the BBC divided operations between the Forces Programme (for troops at war, which later became the Light Programme) and the Third Programme, an unashamedly “highbrow” network devoted to the arts, serious discussion and experiment (from 1946 onwards). (Crisell *Understanding Radio* 24)

The Third Programme had a specific mandate to broadcast works of high culture which naturally included Greek tragedies.
Val Gielgud became the Head of Drama at the BBC in 1934 and served during a time when the demand for radio drama was high (he served until 1963). For example, during the Second World War, Britain suspended television broadcasting as signals could potentially be used to locate broadcast centres which, being in highly populated urban areas could be used to guide enemy bombers to their targets. Television was suspended on 1 September 1939 and did not resume until 7 June 1946. Much like the general strike of 1928, this disruption in service allowed radio, and radio drama specifically, to entrench itself as the nation’s source of entertainment and news. Following the Second World War, radio drama production increased. Amanda Wrigley notes that several dozen Greek tragic productions “fall within the fifteen years following the end of Second World War, with a surge of activity in the immediate post-war period, and a steady peak being maintained throughout the 1950s” (Wrigley 2005). Wrigley also attributes the increased popularity of Greek drama on radio to the introduction of the 1944 Butler Education Act (Wrigley 2005). One of the Act’s aims was to improve the education of women and the working class. The Act also recognized that children had the right to free education. The BBC’s mission to educate was now in line with the nation’s mission and classics on radio played a role in achieving this end.

From its inception until the 1950s, the Drama department of the BBC focused on plays from the classical canon and “resisted somewhat the production of innovative and experimental works by contemporary playwrights” (Wrigley 2005). According to Amanda Wrigley, “until as late as the 1950s, the Department produced more adaptations from the established canons of literature than newly written ‘radiogenic’ plays” (Wrigley “Aeschylus’ Agamemnon” 217). Gielgud attracted a large audience by focusing on “the

See H.C. Dent’s The Education Act, 1944.
traditional repertoire of the stage: the Saturday Night Theatre slot regularly attracted an audience of twelve million in 1948, and seven million in 1955 after the introduction of commercial television (30% and 17% respectively of the total adult population)” (Wrigley 2005). Gielgud writes that, well into the 1960s, the “classic drama of Hellas has found a regular place in the output of BBC plays” (“The Electra of Sophocles” 44).

However, while Greek tragedies on radio enjoyed their height of popularity in the 1940s and 1950s, the following decade would see the start of their decline. Twenty-seven adaptations were broadcast in the 1960s, fifteen in the 1970s, and only eleven in the 1980s (see Appendix B). Clearly the impact of television had caught up to radio and affected its audience base. Having enjoyed a period of almost exclusive dominance over other forms of media since television broadcasts had ceased during the war, the return of television transmission in 1946 drew audiences away from radio. Where the Second World War radio broadcasts of Churchill’s speeches to his nation demonstrate the dominance of BBC radio, the televised 1953 coronation of Elizabeth II is said to have “brought the golden age of British radio to an end” (Crisell Understanding Radio 26) by promoting a trend towards private television ownership.

“The end” in this instance must not be overemphasized. The BBC maintained control over television and radio broadcasting and to this day it continues to fund public radio generously, particularly when compared to other national models. Further, at the same time that television was introduced, the first transistor radio was marketed (in 1947) allowing for greater opportunities for the consumption of radio due to its newfound portability. In particular, radios were being incorporated into the design of the

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automobile. By 1978 “68% of Britain’s radio sets were either portable or mobile” and “by 1990 85% of British cars had radios” (Crisell Understanding Radio 29).

When Martin Esslin succeeded Val Gielgud as head of Radio Drama in 1963, he, like Gielgud, demonstrated “a preference in favour of the traditional dramatic forms” (Rodger 142). Ian Rodger outlines how social factors limited the experiments in radio form and delayed the development of more abstract forms. He points to the close relationship between London theatres and radio studios and finds there to be a “bias towards the theatre” that was reinforced by the output of 200 to 300 plays per year (Rodger 144). Rodger suggests that that “this output created a standard consensus which the new writer imitates to some extent, whether he or she wishes to or not. There is therefore an acceptance of the established forms which renders it more difficult to break into new ones” (Rodger 144). This is generally reflected in the radio adaptations of Greek tragedies with some notable exceptions, including the work of Gabriel Josipovici (whose adaptation of Agamemnon is discussed here in Chapter Five). Esslin’s commitment to the traditions of theatre was aligned with the BBC’s mission. In 1971, Esslin wrote that “it is the stated policy of the BBC’s radio drama department to enable each generation growing up to hear the bulk of classical drama, from the Greek tragedians and Aristophanes to the Elizabethans” (174). This means that “standard masterpieces are regularly revived in a recurring cycle of about ten years’ duration” (174). Subsequent to this, however, at least part of this cultural mandate was refocused on adapting classics for television.\footnote{For example, the BBC launched its television Shakespeare project in 1978 and over the course of the next seven years, all 37 plays from Shakespeare’s repertoire were adapted for television audiences.} Nonetheless, the adaptation of tragedies remained part of Esslin’s programme through the 1970s (until he retired from the BBC in 1977).
Through 1980s and 1990s, while the broadcast of tragedies had declined, the broadcast of radio drama continued to attract large audiences. In the early 1990s, the BBC Drama Department was producing over 600 plays per year, introducing 50 new writers annually (Imison 291). Yet while drama production continued, there was a sharp decline in the number of Greek tragedies produced on BBC radio. Even so, Reith’s influence is still felt to this day as subsequent programming mandates have sustained his interest in the didactic function of radio. The Royal Charter that governs the BBC’s operating mandates is renewed regularly and of the broadcaster’s six aims, the promotion of education and learning is the second, while the stimulation of creativity and cultural excellence is third (Public Purposes).

The construction of a history of classics on CBC radio is significantly more difficult than the construction of a BBC history. Any researcher attempting to work in this general field is hindered by the limited research on English-Canadian radio drama history. While my purpose is not to write such a history, with the help of Howard Fink and Malcolm Page’s pioneering articles in the field, I will trace the development of English-language radio drama on Canadian radio to provide some context for the production of tragedies on radio.

The development of radio drama and of the culturally driven programming mandates of CBC radio begins with the establishment of the first commercial North American station in Montreal (XWA) in 1919. Radio stations proliferated and by 1923

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73 Howard Fink is also responsible for developing the Concordia University Radio Drama Project at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies where, since 1975, CBC scripts and recordings have been collected. In 2011-2012, the project began developing an online archive and search tool for researchers.
roughly forty private stations existed in Canada (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 227). The Canadian National Railways Broadcast network (CNRB) was established in 1924 by CN as a means of providing entertainment to its customers and to advertise CN services. This constituted the first national network of radio stations in the country. Unlike the American networks that had been established to the south, the CNRB network was not technically commercial in that it did not cultivate sponsors for programmes or sell time for advertisements (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 227). The public nature of broadcasting in Canada (and in Britain) is said to have resulted in the most successful experiments in early radio (Cantril and Alport 233). On the CNRB, there were both local and national (network) programs on the air, and these included programming that was “distinctly Canadian, both in style and artists” (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 228).

Canadian radio was subject to the same conditions of early Canadian theatre: a market dominated by American influences, products, and control.

When the American networks were created in 1926 and 1927, they considered the Canadian “market” to be a natural extension of the American one, and proceeded to make affiliation arrangements with Canadian stations, especially in the cities of larger population, Montreal and Toronto. (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 227)

Within a few years of the establishment of the American networks, concern over the influence of American programs resulted in discussion and debate over the regulation of broadcasting and the possibility of greater exertion of governmental control. Ultimately the American model of commercial broadcasting was rejected in favour of a single national, publicly-controlled broadcaster. The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission

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74 For a more detailed history of Radio in Canada see Page and Fink, whose works are sources for this section.
(CRBC) was created in 1932 as a result of the first Royal Commission on Broadcasting and with the purchase of the CNRB, including its facilities and staff (Fink 228). As both a broadcaster and a regulatory body, the CRBC held a monopoly on Canadian broadcasting that would last until the Fowler Commission’s recommended dismantling of its successor’s (the CBC’s) regulatory authority, which was implemented in 1958 (CRTC Origins). The CRBC licensed private stations, so the comparison with the British model of broadcasting diverges here. However, the CRBC “established a policy of no commercial sponsorship and extended the CNRB policy of sustaining cultural and entertainment programming” (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 228). The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act was amended in 1936 to create the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as a Crown corporation replacing the CRBC and taking control of the 8 public and 14 private stations that were managed by the CRBC (CRTC origins). Within this short, inter-war decade the CBC had emerged and its policies were defined.

Howard Fink calls the creation of the Canadian broadcasting system “artificial” and “ultimately political, like the border itself” (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 227).

Canadian broadcasting institutions were created to defend Canadians from the powerful cultural and commercial influences carried on American programmes which, even in the first few years of broadcasting and especially after the creation of the American networks, were providing broadcasts so numerous as to swamp the Canadian airwaves and so entertaining as to provide a large proportion of Canadians’ radio listening. (Fink 227)

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75 Indeed, the CRBC was the first incarnation of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (the CRTC, established in 1968).
The programming of Canadian radio in its earliest days is a reflection of that competition and while there were a number of original Canadian works produced in this period, the airwaves were also filled with “adaptations of popular stage plays of hardly post-Victorian vintage, transposed to radio without any attempt at adaptation for the new medium” (Fink 232). The CNRB’s Vancouver station (CNRV) had the only continuing drama series on the CNRB schedules in the 1920s, a weekly programme called by the name of the repertory company that created the productions: CNRV Players. Directed by Jack Gilmour, they were active from 1926 until 1932, producing more than a hundred radio dramas between 1927 and 1932 alone. They included adaptations from Shakespeare and the classical theatre and fiction, as well as some original Canadian radio dramas. (Fink 232-233)

Heard locally at first, the CNRV Players were broadcast on the new national network beginning in 1929. This radio drama series preceded the American establishment of the NBC Radio Guild by three years (Fink 233).

The establishment of CN radio’s anthology series, The Romance of Canada, is a key development in the promotion of both nationalized broadcasting and a national identity. The series, produced for two years, was written by Merrill Denison and was first broadcast in 1931. The subject matter was drawn from episodes in Canadian history and, as its title suggests, was intended to romanticize the nation’s origins and development. The producer of the series was Tyrone Guthrie, imported from England for his experience in producing radio drama with the BBC.76 Along with Guthrie, CN radio

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76 Guthrie would later be invited to Canada once more, this time to establish the Stratford Festival. In both instances he helped shape the content (style of writing, choice in subject matter, programming decisions), materiality (recording studios and stage space), and production (technical and creative production) of each institution.
acquired […] the latest plans of the BBC’s studios, and they constructed in
Montreal the most advanced radio-drama production facilities in North America.

(Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 233)

For this anthology series, Guthrie also established a repertory troupe that he trained
specifically for radio performance. According to Fink, it would be this group that would
“form the nucleus of talent for the CRBC and later the CBC Drama Departments” and
The Romance of Canada would “(inform) subsequent radio-drama production in Canada”
(Fink 232). The Romance of Canada also spawned a radio series called Radio Theatre
Guild, produced by Rupert Caplan from 1933-35. Caplan, who had directed the second
season of The Romance of Canada series, primarily programmed original Canadian
works (Fink 234). From 1933 to 1936, the weekly output of national-network radio-
drama series broadcast in English increased to 17 programs broadcast on a weekly basis
(Fink, “Radio Drama, English-Language”). During the Second World War, “the CBC
Drama Department series became important instruments of war education and
propaganda, and the project of centralizing prestige radio drama was begun (Fink “Radio
Drama, English-Language”).

In addition to Rupert Caplan, producers such as Andrew Allan, Esse W. Ljungh,
and J. Frank Willis were central to the production of CBC radio drama in this period.
Allan became the national drama supervisor in 1943 and developed the highly influential
weekly anthology series called Stage which attracted significant national audiences (Fink
“Radio Drama, English-Language”). The Stage series (known as Stage 44, Stage 45, etc.,
based on the season of production) initially focused on Canadian playwrights and
produced programs in half-hour formats, but soon came to focus on providing
opportunities for Canadian actors, creating a kind of repertory company for one-hour programs (Frick 28-29, Allan 106-107). This shift allowed Allan to program adaptations of classical works of theatre and by Stage 47 and Stage 48 the division between original works and adaptations of classics was roughly equal (Frick 81). Allan describes his efforts in producing Stage as being motivated by nationalistic sentiments: “Canada, being so thinly populated, and widespread, never had a theatre, so when I came to Toronto to be Supervisor of Drama, I believed that what I had to do was a special series, a series that showed the intention of this job” (Self Portrait 3-4). Allan saw the country as being “connected by two railroads and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation” (1). Allan and Ljungh are responsible for most of the adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio having produced at least six productions each (from 1946 to 1966) with these appearing almost exclusively as part of the Stage series (see Appendix A).

While war-time radio drama was dominated by “patriotic, information and propaganda series, sponsored by various government departments” (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 236) the period emerging in subsequent peace-time was known as the Golden Age of Canadian radio drama. The CBC’s networks, the Trans-Canada for serious programming and the Dominion for light programmes, continued to broadcast American programs such as Amos ‘n’ Andy (1928-43) but the 1940s would bring a surge of new programming. By the 1940s, the two anthology series that had developed, CBC Stage

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77 One significant addition to the developments of public radio must be made. This exception is to be found in Edmonton’s CKUA. This private station, affiliated with the University of Alberta, was a non-commercial station that began broadcasting in the 1920s. Howard Fink credits CKUA and its producers with developing prairie radio drama when the national network focused instead on Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and the East (CKUA 225). From 1928 to 1939 CKUA broadcast original Canadian plays. The CBC contracted CKUA for the delivery of its drama programmes on its regional network (Fink CKUA 225).

78 Andrew Allan, the producer of the Stage series, wrote on the popularity of the series: “At one point they were said to be second in popularity only to the Saturday-night hockey broadcasts.” (Self Portrait 111).
and CBC Wednesday Night (a program influenced by the BBC Third Programme/Radio 3 [Frick 56]) were programs that supported the majority of Canada’s radio plays throughout the golden age of radio. The style of these Canadian productions was characterized by BBC producer Val Gielgud as having “precision and bite” (Allan 120). In 1948, Vincent Tovell wrote that the Stage series

has now become what is in fact our only approximation to a National Theatre in Canada, where the classics of ancient and modern literature are performed along with new plays. (“Letters in Canada: Drama.” 279)

Tovell’s attitude that CBC radio constituted a national theatre echoes J.C. Trewin’s assessment of early British radio. Yet in Canada, this was probably more true since the development of the legitimate stage had not yet reached fruition. As these early radio plays were extensively rehearsed and then performed live (though not before a live audience), they also had more in common with live theatre. Tovell’s comment also reveals that canonical works were considered as important as new works. The impetus to program Greek tragedies came not only from their status in the canon, but from their apparent inherent orality which was thought to translate well to radio. Lister Sinclair, a writer, adaptor, and actor for the CBC, addressed the Canadian Society for Aesthetics in 2006 in a talk called “Why Sophocles Wrote Well for Radio.” In his talk, he confirmed that the desire to adapt tragedies for radio came primarily from the belief that the texts required little adaptation.79 But the adaptation of classics on radio was also driven by cultural mandates.

79 At the same event, Sinclair also revealed the secret for creating the sound of a large crowd. Half of the acting company would be asked to say “rhubarb” repeatedly while the other half said “broken biscuits.” At his lecture, he asked those attendance to reproduce this effect to great success.
The development of a national cultural mandate which began with the CNRV’s programming choices, continued on CNRB and then CBC radio. These mandates effectively protected Canadians from becoming dominated by American cultural products. Howard Fink compares the late twentieth-century saturation of American television on Canadian airwaves with the period from 1930-1960 when Canadian radio maintained a national identity. The mandates that protected early radio from American domination were first formally articulated by the protectionist move to nationalize Canadian radio. Fink writes that

the CRBC and the CBC were created with the specific and declared purposes of serving as instruments of Canadian culture and as major tools to weld the widely dispersed Canadian population into a single nation. (Fink 231)

Radio, essentially, was a mechanism of national defense, protecting Canadian identity from the onslaught of American programming competing for the attention of each Canadian.

What is interesting is that the programming of Canadian radio did not attempt to directly emulate commercial American programming styles. In competing for the market’s attention, Canadian media carved out a niche for themselves by offering alternatives to the American airwaves. These alternatives primarily involved educational programming that, like the BBC model, enlightened and entertained audiences at the same time. As Fink writes, “there has always been a didactic motivation in Canadian radio drama” (“Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 231). This didactic motivation is evident in the programming of classic plays.
As the new medium of radio was emerging in a young country, the didactic motivation was complemented by the nation’s need for programming that represented its growing identity. For some, such as Robertson Davies and Mavor Moore, this identity required homegrown art but could also be built by appropriating the classics. For example, in Davies’ report to the Massey Commission in 1951, there is a clear desire to promote the production of classics as a means of educating Canadians and elevating the nation’s culture. Davies wrote his report in the form of a dialogue between two characters, Lovewit and Trueman. In the dialogue, Lovewit laments that Canadian schoolteachers who are responsible for teaching great dramatic literature have no experience of seeing such works on stage. Lovewit asks “What can they know about Shakespearean drama if they have never experienced in it its proper form? […] As far as the classics of the theatre are concerned, we are a nation of ignoramuses” (Davies 157). Davies calls for Canadians to embrace the “example and the tradition” of England (157). Borrowing works from established literary canons was an attempt to elevate Canadian culture and reveals a kind of elitism that was certainly driving the nationalistic and culture-building efforts of Davies, Moore, and others. However Davies and Moore diverge on their opinions of radio. Davies did not approve of Canadian actors relying on radio work, and as a traditionalist he seemed wary of the medium as a whole (Davies 158). Moore, on the other hand, having contributed to radio plays as a writer and actor, has a much more positive view of the medium. As Mavor Moore stated in his comment on the state of radio: “This was the first time in any medium and at any time in our history where one was aware that a majority of the intelligent, thinking people of the country were sitting down listening to their radios at the same time” (qtd. in Page 102).
Mavor Moore wrote over 100 radio plays before becoming Professor of Theatre at York University (Page 112). However, it must be said that CBC radio production did not emphasise the classics to the degree that they were embraced on the BBC. Howard Fink finds that radio drama, in the golden age, “was in its time a most powerful support for Canadian nationalism when professional theatre in Canada generally was mainly colonized” (“Canadian Radio Drama and the Radio Drama Project” 20). By comparison with the stage, radio was indeed producing vast quantities of original Canadian work.

Another factor that helped CBC radio promote Canadian culture in the 1940s was the “lack of such cultural institutions as an indigenous national theatre or a national funding council for the arts” (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 229).

With no indigenous institution comparable to the American or British legitimate theatre, Canadian radio drama took on responsibilities to express a Canadian dramatic culture […]. (Fink 231)

While there remained competition with the publishing and film industries’ American and British domination the broadcast of national and regional dramatic programmes reached more audiences than local live theatre. Indeed, most, if not “virtually all” (Fink 229) Canadian theatre artists were employed by the CBC, providing a foundation of financial support to cultivate the nation’s creative talent. CBC radio continued to be a major source of financial support for artists well into the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1961, Herbert Whittaker said that “No other country has had to rely so heavily on one single source of its theatrical knowledge, experience and expression … In short, the CBC has subsidized a whole theatre for us for a quarter century” (Fink 229).
However, Canadian radio was affected by changes in national cultural policies. In 1952, television programming was introduced in Canada, and in the 1952-53 season Canadian radio lost its near-monopoly of funds, audiences and talent, to television, to the Canada Council for the arts, and to the live theatre which had itself spawned, especially in Toronto and in Stratford, Ontario. (Fink “Sponsor’s vs. Nation’s” 239) The attention of audiences was divided at the same moment when more experimental methods of producing radio plays were introduced in the 1950s. It was in the late 1950s when radio drama producers John Reeves and Gerald Newman began to employ taping and editing methods, preferring them over the live broadcasting conventions of their predecessors.

However subsequent changes in the CBC’s broadcasting policy have slowly led to a shift towards an emphasis on news and documentaries. In 1970, the Ward-Meggs Report recommended that the CBC focus on “information radio” (Page 104). Cuts lead to the discontinuation of the weekly CBC Times, leaving audiences in the dark as to when their programs would be broadcast (save for announcements made on radio). By 1976, the CBC had only five full-time radio drama producers on staff (Page 105). In 1977, there were only two weekly drama series on CBC radio (Playhouse, a 25 minute program, and CBC Stage, at 55 minutes) and three arts programs that presented plays approximately once per month (Special Occasion, Monday Evening, and Radio International, for plays up to two hours in duration) (Page 107). In that year, the CBC only produced 135 plays (107). However, through audience research in was realized that radio plays could not compete with evening television programs, and so programs were scheduled for daytime, including weekend afternoons (Page 116).
In 1976, the “Report on the Study on the Radio Arts, Music and Drama” was published, encouraging the further development of popular radio drama and discouraging “elitist self-indulgence” (Corbeil 43). In response to this, the CBC appointed Susan Rubes to head radio drama in 1980 in order to develop this mandate. John Douglas, one of the authors of the 1976 report, said that “Until you have a situation where you can generate the kind of excitement that Dallas does, where ‘who shot J.R.? ’ is the topic of every cocktail conversation, you have not succeeded” (qtd. in Corbeil 44). The level of excitement in adaptations of stage productions was perceived by some as being low. Bill Howell, a CBC producer in the 1980s and 1990s, “contends that radio adaptations of ‘classic’ stage plays, by Shakespeare or Chekhov, for example, on BBC World Theatre and CBC’s Festival Theatre are a form of ‘museum theatre,’ a way of preserving and disseminating mummified art” (Nothof 61). It is perhaps not surprising then that only one Greek tragedy was produced in the 1980s – Charles Tidler’s adaptation of Antigone (1987). While Rubes is credited by some with a resurgence in radio (Benson and Conolly 62), the interest in tragedy exhibited by Ljungh and Allan would never be recaptured on the CBC.

In 1990, Damiano Pietropaolo became head of CBC radio drama. CBC Radio began to work in co-operation with broadcasters from other English-language nations (Fink “Radio Drama, English-Language”). Pietropaolo was involved in the development of the Worldplay Group, a consortium of international English-language radio drama broadcasters and initiated collaborations such as the 1998 CBC-BBC co-production of The Trojan Women (discussed here in Chapter Four). Canadian radio drama was “written off as a dying art form countless times” and it appears that this had occurred somewhere
again in the late 1980s as Damiano Pietropaolo is credited with being “one of the forces behind the revival” of radio drama (C. Harris C7). Of course, as Christopher Harris writes, “resurrections are a way of life in broadcasting” (C. Harris C7). As of the mid-1990s the CBC was “the second biggest producer in the English-speaking world, after the BBC” with up to 90 per cent of CBC dramas being produced “in-house” (C. Harris C7).

In Canada, programs like Morningside attracted 500,000 listeners a week while Monday Night Playhouse (formerly Stereodrama) attracted 40,000 to 60,000 people (C. Harris C7). Given the low cost of creating radio programs, the return on investment is significant. Yet the mandate of the CBC had become focused on providing news and documentaries, with not a single one of the items in its revised mandate (from 1991) specifying the production of new drama as a goal (CBC Mandate). Instead, while the CBC intends to develop programming that “informs, enlightens and entertains”, maintaining its original mandate and echoing the BBC’s Reithian mandate, it will do so in programs that “actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression” which is not specifically targeted at the arts, but can include other aspects of culture and heritage (CBC Mandate).

In comparing the two broadcasters, it is important to note that BBC adaptations were free from “the tyranny of the stopwatch” (Gielgud British Radio Drama 135) and are generally much longer than their CBC counterparts, which were scheduled into 60 minute slots during radio’s golden age and only found longer formats in the 1960s. BBC productions were only limited to 105 minutes, until the Third Programme was initiated at which point “the time-factor limitation ceased for all intents and purposes to operate”

80 “Generally speaking, one hour of television drama will run you $1-million. One hour of radio drama will cost about $12,000” (Pietropaolo qtd. in Harris C7).
(Gielgud 184). However, both broadcasters were free from “the tyranny of the sponsor” (Gielgud 135) and so programs ran uninterrupted within those time constraints.

It does appear that the role of classical Greek tragedy on radio is more pronounced on BBC radio than on CBC radio, given that the British output is roughly six times the Canadian output. The question remains whether, if we take Greek tragedies as a percentage of total output, the representation of classics on radio is really more significant in British radio. If so, this is perhaps due to the BBC’s greater emphasis on radio as a means of social education while the CBC was more preoccupied with advancing nationalism through the development of original works. But to firmly answer this question a much more thorough study of the full programming of each broadcaster would need to be conducted. Further, I suspect that there are additional CBC productions that have yet to be discovered (as Canadian records have not been as well kept as British records). What can be said is that both broadcasters viewed these adaptations as an opportunity to educate their audiences (to varying degrees) and that classics on radio fits within each broadcaster’s mandate, particularly in the golden age of radio.

The adaptation of Greek tragedies as radio plays on the BBC and CBC provides the most significant dissemination of classical works since those same works had been translated into English (Wrigley 2005). Yet those translations still relied on literacy while radio offers no such barriers to participation. Adaptation here works as a tool for the promotion of cultural literacy. These adaptations are “to be consumed under the sign of literature” (Leitch 22, 2007). Leitch is, of course, critical of the treatment of, for example, “Shakespearean adaptation as the spoonful of sugar that helps the Bard's medicine go down” (Leitch 22, 2007). However,
radio magnified the potential for inclusion, and increased the potential both for cultural enlightenment and political participation because it was a general-service medium. It was a class leveler, and this, too, had moral dimensions. Culture heretofore had been in the hands of the elite – their theatres and galleries and orchestra halls were unlikely places for the well-heeled to find themselves mingling with the masses. […] radio brought the symphony, drama, Chautauqua, and religion into the home.” (Fortner 3)

Finally, the efficacy of this delivery method is not to be dismissed. Since radio is free and its broadcasting reach is enormous, its capacity for reaching audiences is substantial.

Given that these adaptations have been charged with promoting both enrichment and elitism, how then did producers adapt these works for broadcast? In the following sections I will consider first, the principles of tragedy and radio drama, and then in the second part of this dissertation, the actual practice of adapting.

The Principles of Adaptation: Radio Form and the Form of Tragedy

In adapting tragedies to radio there is a necessary translation of dramaturgies. A comparison of the form of radio and the form of tragedy reveals a number of commonalities that make tragedy inherently suitable for radio, yet also reveals some critical differences. Here I will ask what “laws” govern radio and tragedy and then, in Chapters Four and Five, consider how these laws are respected or broken in practice. While I may, at times, discuss how effects are produced, the significant aspect of this investigation is the end product as it is experienced by the audience. First, I will discuss the formal properties of radio and of tragedy, creating a vocabulary for the description of
radio in particular. Then I will discuss aspects of the unusually strong link between Ancient Greek principles of stage economics and principles of radio production.

The formal properties of radio drama have not been definitively constructed by critics although there is some agreement as to the basic elements that constitute radio’s operations. In some ways, the radio simply operates with sounds and silences. It is either producing sound or it is notable for the absence of that sound. However radio plays use sounds in specific ways. Sound transmits the human voice (in speech or song), establishes locale, creates atmosphere and mood, directs the audience’s emotions, reveals character, and advances the plot. I find Andrew Crisell’s categorization of elements to be most useful here. Crisell finds that radio communicates using certain types of sound: speech (words and other vocalizations), music, sounds, and silence (Understanding Radio 42-63). I would also add that radio’s noise is a component that must be included, however unintentional its production may be. Further, I would sub-divide each category into diegetic and non-diegetic sounds (that is, sounds that occur within the fictional world of the play and sounds that operate outside of that fictional world).

Speech includes words and other closely-related vocalizations that are identified as being produced by a human. While human utterances may also be categorized as sounds

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81 Diane Ackerman’s study on the history of the senses outlines what sound is and how hearing operates: “What we call ‘sound’ is really an onrushing, cresting, and withdrawing wave of air molecules that begins with the movement of any object, however large or small, and ripples out in all directions. First something has to move – a tractor, a cricket’s wings – that shakes the air molecules all around it, then the molecules next to them begin trembling, too, and so on. Waves of sound roll like tides to our ears, where they make the eardrum vibrate; this in turn moves three colorfully named bones (the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup), the tiniest bones in the body. […] The three bones press fluid in the inner ear against membranes, which brush tiny hairs that trigger nearby nerve cells, which telegraph message to the brain: We hear. […] Sound is transmitted in three stages. The outer ear acts as a funnel to catch and direct it, though many people lacking outer ears hear just fine (as one usually can even wearing a hat or helmet). When the sound waves hit the fanlike eardrum, it moves the first tiny bone, whose head fits in the cuplike socket on the second, which then moves the third, which presses like a piston against the soft, fluid-filled inner ear, in which there is a snail-shaped tube called the cochlea, containing hairs whose purpose is to signal the auditory nerve cells. When the fluid vibrates, the hairs move, exciting the nerve cells, and they send their information to the brain.” (177-178)
(see below), speech is that which the work intends to signify as a human-produced
utterance. Typically this manifests as dialogue or monologue.

*MUSIC* can operate with or without lyrics and song. In radio plays it can be non-
diegetic, providing “mood music” or “atmosphere” for the audience and directing their
reception by setting the tone of the piece or indicating shifts within the work. Music can
also be diegetic, as in the use of a singing chorus in Greek tragedy.

*SOUNDS* are all non-musical and non-speech sound elements. For example, sound
effects that reproduce and signify the mise-en-scène may be non-musical and non-speech
sound elements. This definition becomes more difficult to sustain when sounds take on a
musical quality (e.g., the sound of wind changes pitch; a grouping of footsteps develops a
particular rhythm) or when the sounds are perceived to have been created vocally (e.g.,
when Antigone’s cries are mistaken for the cries of birds, if this sound is represented in
the radio play, is the sound effect produced using human or animal sounds?).

*Silence* is the absence of speech, music, or other sounds. Typically in radio drama it
is used as punctuation. Martin Esslin noted that this form of punctuation is one of the
most powerful elements of radio drama, particularly when there is a character who is
about to speak or who is asked to speak, yet what follows is only silence. Esslin observes
that “we need to have an interruption in a continuum of sound for the interruption to be
significant” (181). Andrew Crisell notes that such gaps allow the imagination room to
function. Crisell finds this form of punctuation to be a function of silence where it can
“signify that something is happening which for one reason or another can not be
expressed in [sound]” (Crisell 53). The absence of sound can not be sustained for a long
period, however, as it will be read as a technological failure rather than as an intentional
dramaturgical device. Further, the silence of any individual character can not be sustained for a long period as it effectively erases them from the scene (as I will show in Chapter Five). It is important to note that phenomenologically, there is no such thing as pure silence. The subject is always able to hear themselves, even in space that is “dead” (space that lacks “action” or “reverberation” as I will explain here, below, in my discussion of resonance).

*Noise*, by my definition, is fundamentally non-diegetic. In fact, it operates even outside of non-diegetic elements as it is unintentional, a product of changes in the atmosphere that result in static affecting the radio signal. This interference is unpredictable for the radio drama producer as it occurs at the point of transmission, yet it undoubtedly affects an audience’s reception of the work. Noise announces the radio broadcast as a material thing, potentially breaking the audience’s suspension of disbelief and disrupting the process of imaginative completion. Unlike ironic, self-conscious, metatheatrical moments, noise is unpredictable and is generally an unwanted reminder that the world of the drama is fiction, being transmitted electronically.  

In addition to these basic elements that can be employed, we can consider how they are employed. Each element can be utilized through the employment of different expressive qualities. To categorize these qualities, I am drawing primarily on my accumulated knowledge of film theory and music theory. My defined set of expressive qualities include *pitch, repetition, duration, volume*, and *resonance*.

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82 It is important to note that some radio theorists use *noise* to indicate all radio sounds (see Jacques Attali’s *Noise*). I also used *noise* metaphorically in Chapter Two to explain a model of communications (as originally posited by Shannon and Weaver). Here, *noise* is a formal property of radio.
Pitch refers to a sound’s frequency and vibration. High pitch (as in soprano notes) is caused by a faster oscillation of sound waves while low pitch (as in bass notes) is caused by a slower oscillation of sound waves. To feel the difference, place your hands on your cheeks and hum a low-pitched note. Then feel how the vibration increases in frequency when you hum a high-pitched note. Frequency is what “distinguishes pitch sensation from the loudness sensation” (Hartmann 283). A series of sounds that are connected and that change in pitch constitute a melody.

Repetition refers to the reoccurrence of particular sounds or combinations of sounds. The scale of repetition is wide, and so repetition can be described in terms of a word that is repeated, or an entire scene that is repeated. The repetition of certain sounds, over the course of a radio play can form a motif. A motif signals to the audience that a connection is being made between the different points in time where the motif has occurred, asking the audience to consider the implications of the resulting theme.

Duration refers to the length of time a particular sound or combination of sounds is sustained. Just as duration measures active sound, it also measures time between sounds. As such, duration can also be discussed in terms of intervals of time. Repetition and duration are closely tied. A pattern of repeated sounds with repeated durations can present the play’s rhythm (the texture of sound’s movement) and its tempo (the perceived speed of that movement).

Volume refers to the relative loudness of sound. In music, the extremes of this scale range from pianissimo (as quiet as possible) to fortissimo (as loud as possible). Music theory actually describes quiet sounds as being “soft” yet I would resist that with regards to radio drama as the sound’s texture can be determined in manners beyond its volume.

83 Scientists dispute the measure of pitch as “frequency” and I concede that the two are not synonymous.
(for example, by its timbre). The change of volume, in conjunction with the repetition and duration of sound (meaning that it is a change over time), creates a dynamic.

*Resonance*, like pitch, refers to a sound’s frequency. Yet instead of measuring vibrations within the source of the sound (within the instrument of production), resonance refers to the sound’s life within the space in which it is produced. In other words, resonance is a measure of the effect of sound on its environment. In radio plays, an echo or reverberation (or even a lack of response) defines the space in which the sound occurs. An echo and a reverberation are not synonymous. Theatre sound theorist Ross Brown defines reverberation as a “reflection” of sound:

Reverberation is the diffuse effect of spatial and temporal extension, as reflected sound waves bounce back and forth between the walls or surfaces of a room or a containing space. Each reflection diminishes in power as an amount of the original energy is absorbed, and the multiple arrivals of these reflections at the ear ‘blur’ into one diminishing prolongation. (Brown 145)

So the more time that the reverberation occurs, “the larger the room is psychoacoustically inferred to be” (146) Echo, on the other hand, does not continue the original sound. Rather, an echo “is separated from its originary sound and appears as one or more discreet ‘repeats’” (146). Brown likens the affect to be a kind of “auditory mirror”(146).

Resonance is then more of a description of how sound reverberates. For example, “if reverberation is the diffuse effect of sound bouncing back and forth, then resonance is a sound bouncing back and forth at one particular pitch more than others. […] It is most noticeable in rectilinear, hard-surftaced rooms (try singing a scale in your bathroom – you will find that some notes ring more loudly than others)” (Brown 146). Resonance changes
the feel of the sound. Limited resonance creates a cool, flat feeling, while increased resonance creates a warm, round feeling. However, too much resonance can “hinder speech intelligibility” (Brown 147).

Put together, these types of resonance contribute to whether a space is experienced as a “live” or “dead” space. The term “dead space” seems apt as this kind of space makes one aware only of the subject – there is no reverberation, resonance, or echo to be produced in such a space. However this is generally avoided on radio.

On radio, sound technicians find that they cannot simply present purely recorded sound. The absence of echo (of a sound recorded in a “dead space” for example) is distressing for the human ear. And so technicians often add “white noise” – that sound which most permeates our lives yet which we are mostly unaware of.

(Brown 145)

Without white noise, the lack of resonance in space makes one feel isolated and alone, able to hear oneself but nothing of one’s surroundings, almost as if one were “dead.”

In terms of the radio drama, the types of sounds (speech, music, sound, and silence) in conjunction with the qualities of sound (its rhythm, pitch, duration, volume, and resonance) carry the play’s mise-en-scène, form the play’s dramatic figures, and direct the play’s action. In Chapters Four and Five, I will provide a formal analysis of Greek tragedies in action on radio and apply this typology.

The dynamics of radio drama must operate by employing the types and qualities of sounds presented here. It is in the combination of these elements that radio drama comes to life. Further, radio drama is governed by its medial constrictions. That is to say, in
order for the radio play to be effective, it must also be constructed in a manner which reflects the limitations and opportunities provided by radio as a medium.

In Chapters One and Two I explored aspects of radio reception as it pertained to modern orality and the audience’s activity, respectively. In particular I noted that radio plays (more than novels, stage plays, and films) tap in to the audience’s imagination, making them active collaborators in the construction of the radio play. Yet in order to activate that imagination effectively, the radio play’s invitational qualities must be effectively deployed. Here I am speaking specifically about narrative drama (to which Greek tragedies belong). To create an effective narrative, the radio producer must remember that the listener requires assistance in constructing the fictional world of the play in his or her imagination. The radio play operates by suggesting things to the listener and guiding his or her imagination, but the drama can not complete the dramatic frame since it primarily operates as a stimulus to the audience. The radio producer can direct the audience in particular ways, but must also avoid confusing the audience with unnecessary things. Radio’s aesthetic is, in many ways, minimalistic in that radio can not carry the weight of excess. Excess becomes incoherent garbles.

To make the play comprehensible, the play must be constructed to act invitationaly towards its audience. Radio drama theorists have observed a number of laws which govern the construction of narrative drama on radio and support the audience’s comprehension of narrative drama. As these core laws align with the principles that govern the tragedies, I will consider them here, comparatively.

The first principle that has been observed in both radio’s and tragedy’s dramaturgies involves demands regarding the plot's complexity, order, and structure. Both Greek plays
and radio plays are sensitive to action that becomes too complex but for different reasons. On radio, complicated plots and actions tax the mind’s capacity to remember details. While hearing is a sense that can trigger rich and evocative responses in the listener, an overly detailed plot is difficult to receive through a singular sense. In the Greek theatre, plots were similarly limited not in the complexity of the play’s issues, but in the complexity of its action. In *Poetics*, Aristotle defines tragedy and observes that the Greek tragic form involves “an action which is complete, whole, and of magnitude” (VIII 55). Something is “whole” when it has “a beginning, middle, and end” (VIII 55). By this he means that (for a “well-constructed plot”) we must not begin a play *in medias res* but rather the play begins with something that initiates the action and leads to a cause and effect chain, logically, to completion. Aristotle finds that the proper magnitude is one that can be perceived easily by the audience. Therefore, much like with radio plots, the plots of tragedy “require length, but length that can be coherently remembered” (VIII 57).

Aristotle’s sense of unity involves the restriction of plot elements to that which is essential and the exclusion of extraneous information. He writes that “the component events should be so structured that if any is displaced or removed, the sense of the whole is disturbed or dislocated” (*Poetics* VIII 59). Therefore, the plot’s action must create a cause and effect chain where the parts are logically structured and unified. This does not allow for sub-plots or excessively complicated action. Aristotle divides plots into “simple” and “complex” plots, where the complex plot includes a transformation including recognition (anagnorisis) or reversal (peripeteia) or both elements (X 65). Recognition “is the change from ignorance to knowledge” (X 65). While this aspect of tragedy is not universal in radio dramas, there is one particular genre of radio play that
seems to bear a close relationship to Greek tragedy. While discussing the programming of popular works, Howard Fink draws a parallel between tragedies and mystery dramas:

[…] mystery radio dramas follow a fairly routine formula of introduction, complication and resolution, a kind of popularisation of the plot of traditional tragedy. *Oedipus Rex*, for example, is on one level a mystery with a similar plot and resolution; the deterministic universe invoked is not essentially different.

(Fink “Nation’s vs. Sponsor’s” 195)

The Aristotelian structure of mystery dramas and of noir detective dramas is a subject beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the popularity of these forms, and their success on radio, is a testament to how the form of tragedy, and its plot construction in particular, adapts well to radio.84

The second principle common to both dramaturgies demonstrates how complicated action is best reported rather than being represented onstage. This means that action is often narrated rather than being dramatized. As Andrew Crisell writes, in relation to radio, “no elaborate stage business is possible since its prerequisite is space, and our sense of space – of proxemics, or the physical position of the characters relative to one another, and kinesics, their moves and actions – is primarily visual” (Crisell 144). In the Greek theatre, the vast size of the auditorium means that stage business also must be simple so that the members of the audience seated at the back can comprehend the play’s action just as well as those seated at the front. Indeed, the front row of a theatre like the

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84 The structure of mystery or noir drama, however, does not follow each component of tragic drama’s plot, merely the arc of its action. These components include the prologue, episode, exodos, and choral unit (parados and stasimon), as outlined by Aristotle (XII 67). The prologue precedes the chorus’ parados (entry), the episode is “the whole portion of a tragedy between complete choral songs” (the stasimon), and the exodus is what follows after the last choral song (Aristotle XIII 69). There is also the kommos, “a dirge shared between chorus and actors” (XIII 69).
Theatre of Dionysos is actually quite a distance from the main stage, impeding the visual sense. According to T.B.L. Webster (who follows Arthur Wallace Pickard-Cambridge’s example), the distance from the front of the stage (the skene) to the front row (across the orchestra) was “60 ft. in the fifth century and over 70 ft. in the fourth century” while “the back rows of the theatre of Dionysos were about 300 ft. from the stage. This means that an actor 6 ft. high would look about 3 ½ n. high to the spectator in front and ¾ in. high to spectators at the back” (Webster 4). Clearly, at such a distance it would be difficult to appreciate fine gestures or stage business. That is not to say that nothing happens onstage, rather it is that action directed by detailed gestures and complex physical movement does not happen onstage. Instead, action driven by speech is what primarily occurs both in Greek drama and in radio drama. Greek tragedies and radio plays do offer some stage business, but it is always anchored in speech.

The third principle observed is an emphasis on the conflicts of and within dramatic figures as the chosen subject matter of the play. The minimisation of complex stage action in Greek tragedies leads to an emphasis on character development and the representation of conflicts that are either internal or that are represented in speech. This is evident in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides where plots generally center on the consequences of actions taken prior to the plays’ beginning or the plotting of actions that will occur offstage during the play. In most plays, it is the rationalization for action that is highlighted rather than the details of the actions themselves. In tragedy, audiences are often asked to consider the position of a particular dramatic figure. Since on radio it is possible to be transported into the mind of each figure, soliloquies and asides create a particularly intimate moment that is shared with the audience, creating a
closer relationship between the audience and the tragic figure than could be achieved in the Athenian theatre. On radio, each audience member is effectively placed in a position to identify directly with the dramatic figure. This identification can heighten and amplify the original intentions of the Greek tragedians, as I will demonstrate in my case studies of *Medea* and *Oedipus Tyrannos* in Chapter Five. Further, radio adaptations must contend with an absence of tragedy’s primary means of conveying basic character information: mask, costume, and visible gesture. In Chapter Four I will explore this further.

The fourth observed principle deals with the population of dramatic figures, character types, and character complexity. Both radio plays and Greek tragedies limit the number of identifiable and individual dramatic figures “onstage” (or within the field of perception) at any given time and limit the total number of dramatic figures in the fictional world of the play. On radio, as Crisell finds, “Large cast dramas are next to impossible: in any one scene the listener can accommodate at best only four or five major speaking characters with distinctive voices” (Crisell 144). Perloff agrees that “radio has to limit itself to a small number of actors so that the dramatic situation does not become impossibly complicated” (Perloff 296). While Athenian tragedies made use of masks and costume as one way to distinguish between figures, radio plays must instead ensure that “each character’s language is highly specific, so that the audience will be able to tell who is talking at any given moment” (Perloff 296). To do so, the adaptor must craft each character to “possess a unique vocal rhythm and pattern of speech” (Perloff 296). Milton Kaplan draws the comparison between radio and Athenian theatre:

> The ancient Greek actor had to wear a sounding mask, high stilted boots, and flowing robes to make himself visible to an audience of thousands. With an
audience of millions, the radio dramatist has the same problem, and he solves it in much the same way: he creates characters who are inclined to be stereotyped, stilted figures, comprehensible and palpable to all the listeners, he limits his scripts to as few characters as possible; even these are sharply differentiated so that one can be easily distinguished from the other. (24)

As Kaplan notes, while dramatic figures are unique individuals, radio plays and Greek tragedies make use of character “types” in order to allow the audience to quickly and readily identify them. The stereotyping of figures is not necessarily a reductive action. Rather, on radio, like on the Greek stage, the variety of dramatic figures allows a quick distinction to occur between the different voices being heard. Information about each dramatic figure is conveyed on radio and in tragedy primarily through the narrative rather than through costume or staging. This is because language “does not require seeing an actor’s smile or tears in order to communicate” (Perloff 296). There are, however, some notable exceptions to this that I will discuss in Chapters Four and Five. Lastly, the tendency to create “types” of characters does not mean that dramatic figures do not display depth. In fact, as I have noted, the radio amplifies tragedy’s extensive use of soliloquies. Radio is particularly adept at representing interior monologues and the soliloquies of Greek tragedy, in spite of the presence of the chorus, often sound like interior monologues.

The fifth observed principle is that radio, like tragedy, is known for speech and musicality, lending the form of radio well to tragedy’s use of choral odes (sung or chanted) and speech. In Chapter I of the Poetics, Aristotle describes how the poetic arts “produce mimesis in rhythm, language, and melody, whether separately or in
combinations” (29-31). Tragedy, as Aristotle writes, involves the combination of all three elements. Most radio adaptations make use of all three although not all adaptations combine melody and rhythm in the form of music. But as I noted previously, distinguishing dramatic figures from one another often includes the use of “embellished” language, “language with rhythm and melody” (VI 49).

The sixth and final principle is the one in greatest contention in this dissertation. Radio operates without providing visual elements. These must be conjured in the audience’s mind, along with other sensorial evocations, through the stimulation of the imagination. In scholarly discussions of tragedy, there is an ongoing debate about whether visual elements, or elements of spectacle, are required for tragedy’s operation. According to Aristotle, spectacle “is emotionally potent but falls quite outside the art and is not integral to poetry” (Poetics VII 55). While, to a degree, the impetus of this dissertation was the evaluation of Aristotle’s claim that spectacle is not necessary for tragedy, it is clear that Aristotle is not completely dismissing the function of spectacle. It is, after all, listed as one of the six components of tragedy, even if it is listed as the least important. It appears that in his definition of what mimetic poetry is, Aristotle is focusing on words. This is why “tragedy’s capacity is independent of performance and actors” (Poetics VII 55). Clearly Aristotle is not suggesting that drama can be performed without performers. But what then is the status of the visual in Aristotle’s estimation?

Stephen Halliwell denies that Aristotle was not interested in theatrical production. Halliwell seeks to investigate the meaning of opsis for Aristotle.

85 Aristotle prioritises action in his categorization of tragedy’s six component parts which are, in order of importance, are plot-structure (muthos), characterization (ethos), thought / rhetoric (dianoia), style / diction (lexis), lyric poetry / melody (melos), and spectacle (opsis).
Is it, as Thomas Twining thought, ‘the whole visible apparatus of the theatre’, the ‘Mise en scène’ of [L.J.] Potts’ translation? Or does it more narrowly denote the appearance of the actors (mask, costumes, and the players’ physical contribution) and perhaps the chorus too? (Halliwell *Aristotle’s Poetics* 337).

Through subsequent references, Halliwell finds that Aristotle “is thinking principally of the various visual aspects of the actors, rather than the stage setting as a whole” (*Aristotle’s Poetics* 338-339). However, while Aristotle includes spectacle as a component of tragedy, and a necessary one, in his categorization of tragedy’s parts, performance (on a visual level) is not accounted for in his list of media used in tragedy (language, rhythm, and music). Halliwell calls this “the basis for a theoretical divorce between dramatic poetry and the theatre” (339). Yet Aristotle also “urges the composing dramatist to visualize his scene as vividly as possible, and in particular to imagine the gestures which will accompany his text, in Ch. 17 (340). In Ch.6, Aristotle distinguishes between the poet’s art and the art of the mask-maker, who is “more effective in the creation of visual effects than the [poet]” (*Poetics* VI 55). Halliwell reminds us that when Aristotle suggests that reading tragedy (an act that would have been performed aloud) offers as much pleasure as tragedy in performance, he does so “under pressure of combating the charge of theatrical vulgarity” (*Aristotle’s Poetics* 341). So if the visual effects are not the poet’s true art, then radio should, theoretically, allow the poet’s true art to manifest in much the same way as an oral recitation would.

And yet there was a visual element to Greek tragedies that cannot be fully accounted for in the text. As I will demonstrate in Chapters Four and Five, there are instances where seeing the arrangement of figures on stage (their *proxemetics*) and their
gestures (their *kinesics*) as well as the impact of their costume and mask, adds important information for the audience. While such arrangements and gestures are often anchored in the text through words (for example the impact of seeing blood dripping from the eyes of Oedipus’ mask is not left to mask alone, but is commented upon by the chorus) there are other times when such anchoring is not adequate. Was Aristotle denying the significance of such visual effects?

It is possible that, as Halliwell finds, Aristotle did not “have in mind the general visual aspect of performance, but the specific exploitation of it for emotional effect” (*Poetics* 1989: 66). Rather than exploit the visual, Halliwell believes that “we can probably infer that the correct use of *opsis* would be regarded simply as visual reinforcement of the intrinsic dramatic effect” (66). This “intrinsic” effect would be derived from the text. Again, this reinforcement works when the text supports what occurs visually onstage, but there are instances where proxemics, in particular, are lost when merely listening to the tragedies (See my discussion of Cassandra, Jocasta, and Astyanax in Chapter Five). What is clear is that Aristotle does not want pity and fear to be evoked purely from spectacle as this would be sensationalistic (*Poetics* XIV). He writes that

> Now, what is fearful and pitiable can result from spectacle, but also from the actual structure of events, which is the higher priority and the aim of a superior poet. For the plot should be so structured that, even without seeing it performed, the person who hears the events that occur experiences horror and pity at what comes about… (XIV 73-75).

And further
Those who use spectacle to create an effect not of the fearful but only of the sensational have nothing at all in common with tragedy, as it is not every pleasure one should seek from tragedy, but the appropriate kind. (XIV 75).

As Halliwell finds, spectacle “can be properly made to heighten the intrinsic properties of the dramatic action, rather than offering an independent, and consequently distracting, pleasure” (Halliwell 1989 167). Elsewhere, Halliwell writes that “the pleasure accruing from the [opsis] should therefore be categorized as a secondary manifestation of the true and proper pleasure of tragedy” (Poetics 1989: 66). This pleasure is the cognitive pleasure one experiences from the play rather than its sensual pleasure. Clearly Aristotle would prefer that the audience be moved by the characterization and rhetorical style of the tragedy rather than by visual effects. On radio, while no visual aspect is provided, sounds do operate to reinforce that which is presented in the language. While not technically spectacle, this auricular dimension of the radio play seems to operate as the opsis would in the original Greek tragedies. And yet there are some aspects of opsis that cannot be translated into sound. Further, there are some aspects of opsis that when translated into sound, overly emphasise aspects of Greek dramaturgy (see my discussion of entrances and exits with regards to productions of The Trojan Women in Chapter Four).

While the principles of radio drama and Greek tragic drama are generally well aligned, there are some significant differences as well. The most significant difference is that the original audience of Greek tragedy had the ability to selectively focus on different parts of the stage space. Because the radio listener cannot be selective in what sounds are attended to, “broadcasters must prioritize sounds for him, foregrounding the
most important ones and eliminating the irrelevant ones, or if this is not possible reducing them to the level of the less important ones” (Crisell 44).

Another key difference is that the original audience of Athenian tragedy is assumed to have been familiar with the myths that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides used to construct their plays. However, that is not to say that they knew every detail. As Oliver Taplin emphasises, the audience knew the story but did not know the plot in advance “for they did not know what version, what variations and innovations the playwright would use” (Greek Tragedy in Action 164). The playwright’s shaping of the story is what creates dramatic suspense and surprise. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, audiences are exceedingly diverse and we can not say that audiences are universally “knowing” or “unknowing.” Radio adaptations produced by the CBC and BBC seem to expect that their audiences are “unknowing” (or at least they err on the side of caution) as they often use paratheatrical documents (in the form of articles printed in broadcast magazines) and narration (in the form of an announcer’s introduction and even lectures broadcast in conjunction with the radio play). I will offer further analysis of both instances in Chapter Four.

Another incongruent aspect of Ancient Greek and modern radio dramaturgies is that, as Mary Jane Miller finds, radio drama “demands no unities of time, place or plot” as it can easily change location and survive ambivalence (Radio’s Children 32). Aristotle outlines tragedy’s dramaturgy as requiring unity of time and action. In terms of time, Aristotle describes how tragedies attempt to “stay within a single revolution of the sun, or close to it” (Poetics V 47). While Aristotle does not specify a required unity of place (although he is often credited with this) from the surviving Greek tragedies it is clear that
action does not change scenic location. Rather, action from other locations is reported onstage. However, radio’s dramaturgy involves an impressive ability to transport audiences to different times (employing flashback and flash forward, for example) and to different places. On radio, there is no need to worry about the mechanics of a scene change because all that is required is the suggestion of a new space and the imagination works to complete the dramatic frame. Audiences can be transported from the earth to the moon and back in mere seconds. While this aspect of radio’s dramaturgy is not a required element, and plays on radio can certainly abide by the unity of time and action that is respected in most tragedies, it is a significant difference in radio’s formal abilities and producers at times take advantage of this in their adaptations of tragedies to radio (see my discussion of flashback in the place of reported offstage action in Antigone in Chapter Four). Also, while it is true that radio plays often have to fill pre-set time slots (particularly in early radio where productions under an hour were standard) this is a broadcasting convention rather than a property of radio. In practice, the distillation of play to as little as 57 minutes of air time requires some careful adaptation in order to maintain the structural integrity of the tragedian’s play.

Finally, the dramaturgy of tragedy, according to Aristotle, involves the need for plot to be plausible, constructed “on the basis of probability” (Poetics VIII 61). Yet on radio, the fantastical is easily achieved (as was made evident above in my example of the properties of time and place on radio). Of course, we must not take Aristotle’s categorization too seriously here as his law is not followed strictly in the surviving Greek tragedies. For example, while Aristotle prescribes that “the denouements of plots should issue from the plot as such, and not from a deus ex machine as in Medea…” (XV 81) the
use of deus ex machina in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* and in Euripides’ *Alcestis*, in addition to the *Medea*, demonstrates that this was not a law that went unbroken in Greek tragedy.

In practice, the principles outlined here are not always employed in production. The process of adaptation, as evidenced in CBC and BBC adaptations of Greek tragedies, yields a variety of dramaturgical approaches to the works. While for the most part these plays were selected for their suitability for adaptation to radio, and seen as being “radio ready”, producers often adjusted their approach and initiated a variety of dramaturgical interventions, some to greater effect than others.

In the next two chapters of this dissertation, I will demonstrate how several productions employ the principles of radiophonic and tragic form to their fullest extent, and how others fail to translate the dramaturgy of tragedy into radio effectively. These adaptive failures are primarily caused by the intermediality of these adaptations although some intervention is common in order to bridge the cultural and temporal divide between the play’s original performance and the time of broadcast.

It must also not be forgotten that the production of theatre is a practical process. Practitioners are not always able to address, and at times not even interested in, the issues I raise in this chapter. Further, productions are impacted by the practical need to utilise available resources. For example, it is evident that the BBC’s well developed music department (including a full-time chamber choir, employed since 1927, and the BBC Theatre Orchestra, formed in 193186) is likely what led to the extensive use of choral music in their productions rather than an interest in replicating the musicality of the original Greek tragedies in performance. (The CBC also had an established orchestra for

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86 It would later become the BBC Opera Orchestra and finally the BBC Concert Orchestra. The Concert Orchestra is one of five currently employed by the BBC.
radio, but no chorus.) So we must keep in mind that production choices may be impacted by what is practical, by what production conventions had been established, and that producers may not have been able to accommodate what was “ideal” to them. Even so, all we have are the final products of their labours and we can not guess at intentions. In the case studies presented in this dissertation, I will look at the final product and consider the aesthetic results of producers' labours. In the next two chapters, I will outline some common issues of intermedial dramaturgical translation and intervention in the adaptation of Greek tragedies to radio. Addressing issues of fidelity, how to best serve “knowing” and “unknowing” audiences, and how to make productions of classical tragedies accessible, the following chapters provide examples from a variety of adaptations as well as in-depth analysis of select CBC and BBC productions to show how the principles of adaptation are employed in practice.
CHAPTER FOUR

Narrative Orchestrations

In the representation of Greek tragedies on radio, producers use a variety of techniques to fully employ the formal properties of radio and to orchestrate the tragic narratives in their new form. In adapting the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, early radio producers frequently attempted to let the words speak for themselves. These straight adaptations are marked by minimal sound effects yet often employ orchestral music to create atmosphere, at times (in the case of BBC adaptations in particular) even composing sung music for tragedy’s choruses. As radio drama matured, and as recording technologies emerged in the 1950s (as I discussed in Chapter Three), producers further exploited the formal properties of the medium and used sound to reproduce more elements of the mise-en-scène. Here, spatial relations are further defined and performance gestures are indicated through sound effects. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, contemporary producers also began to experiment by taking greater liberties with their adaptations, shifting reports of offstage activity to be represented as flashbacks, re-ordering episodes, experimenting with the use of narrative voice, and in rare instances, adapting the plays to more contemporary settings. In this chapter, I will show how the narrative dynamics of adaptations are at times marked by the producer’s evident distrust of the text’s ability to carry the play’s action effectively without dramaturgical intervention. In such instances, producers employ adaptive strategies to compensate for aspects of the play that are not expected to adapt well to their new cultural context and their new medium. Here, in particular, we see the heavy use of
narration, including diegetic and non-diegetic narration, the utilization of paratheatrical materials, and even the excessive use of anchoring devices.

The most critical requirement of adapting stage plays to radio involves clarifying the source of sound. When one can both see and hear a play on stage, sound sources are generally evident while on radio, stray sounds can be disorienting. In radio plays, identifying sound sources is emphasized in order to direct the audience’s understanding of the action. Theorists call this “anchoring” (Erving Goffman), “textual pointing” (Andrew Crisell), “posting” (Rudolph Arnheim), or “signposting” (Tim Crook). While “textual pointing” is clearly limited to the function of speech, we can extend the other terms to encompass physical gestures that are rooted in sound. As I discussed in Chapter Three, while the formal properties of Greek tragedies and of radio plays are in many ways complementary, there are some aspects of the adaptation from stage to sound wave that require dramaturgical intervention. While a great deal of action in Greek tragedy is indicated through speech, reinforcing the stage action that took place in those vast auditoriums of Ancient Greece through “textual pointing”, there are aspects of staging that do not receive such textual support. Here, the radio producer must find ways to suggest inventively these aspects of staging in order to facilitate the audience’s imagining of the scene. This “signposting” is sometimes accomplished by adapting the text to include “textual pointing” while at other times the use of sound effects is what conjures people, places, and things. Experimentation with sign-posting occurred on the BBC well before it became established on the CBC in and around 1946 (Frick 33), when the earliest known adaptations of tragedy were produced in Canada. One problem with the imaginative completion of the theatrical world, and this is particularly true of some early
radio adaptations, is that not enough textual pointing is provided. This results in “the terror of uncertain signs” where there is a “floating chain of signifieds” that goes unfixed, unanchored (Barthes 37). Conversely, as will be made evident, too much textual pointing becomes intrusive.

In addition to the anchoring required on radio, we know that how sounds are actually produced is less important than what is suggested by the resulting effect. For example, on radio “cornstarch crunched in a box means snow. Two voices on one mike can place the characters in bed together. A whisper becomes an ocean” (Perloff 296). Yet it is the suggestion of what we are listening to that is significant since the radio listener can not discern the source of the sound. Further, the resemblance of sound sources with what they suggest is of as little consequence as the resemblance of words to the things they represent. As Andrew Crisell reminds us, words are symbolic as they are “signs that do not resemble what they represent” (42).87 However, audiences have access to the sign system produced by language while they are unlikely to have access to the source of sounds produced on radio. This is because the listener is spatially dislocated from the broadcast’s source (given the vast distances that signals can carry the drama) and possibly temporally dislocated from the broadcast’s source (given the increased use of recorded sound, moving from live-to-air, live-to-tape, and finally to fully engineered productions that edit together separately recorded tracks). On radio, sounds, like words, act symbolically, but sounds only need to bear resemblance to their source of production (not actually be faithful to that source).

What does matter is how sound is orchestrated to produce the resulting play. John Drakakis compares the orchestration of the radio play to the careful construction required

87 Similarly, facial expressions are part of a of non-verbal sign system of communication.
by music and poetry (“Introduction” 25). He writes that on radio, “the voices of the actors have to blend together as though it were a musical composition” (25). In this chapter I will conduct a formal analysis of radio play narratives and consider, through examples from a variety of productions, how the narratives of Greek tragedies are adapted to the dramaturgy of radio. This will be accomplished through a categorical analysis of paratheatrical materials, how action is represented through speech and sound effects, the temporal and spatial dimensions of these productions, the use of music and song in adaptation, and the construction of dramatic figures in sound. The examples for this formal analysis are drawn from surviving CBC and BBC recordings as indicated in the Radio Plays Consulted list and as detailed in Appendix A (CBC productions) and Appendix B (BBC productions).

**Paratheatrical Framing**

Paratheatrical\(^{88}\) features are commonly used in stage productions in the form of lectures, talk-back sessions, and printed programmes with plot synopses and perhaps additional articles on the production (its history of performance, the rehearsal process of the current production, etc.). Radio productions also make use of paratheatrical features with the use of lectures that accompany the radio plays being common, along with articles like those produced in playbills. While lectures at times accompanied Greek tragedies on CBC and BBC radio, few of these recordings have survived. I will discuss one of these surviving lectures, E.F. Watling’s introductory lecture to the 1965 CBC

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\(^{88}\) I am using “paratheatrical” features to indicate those materials and events which surround the theatrical event, much like paratextual materials are additional textual materials that support a work of fiction (e.g. the author’s biography). This is clearly not the same as Jerzy Grotowski’s paratheatre of the 1970s (an attempt at restructuring the relationship between the performer and the audience).
production of *Oedipus the King*. In this case, the lecture functions much like the printed paratheatrical materials (that are discussed here in greater length as they have been well preserved due to the fact that they were produced in popular and widely distributed periodicals. The lectures were often not preserved, being produced live-to-air). Unlike the materials used for stage productions, the distribution of radio publications is not targeted to the specific audience of one particular production (as the playbill of a stage production is distributed to the audience at the same time and place of the performance) but rather these materials are disseminated through national broadcast magazines aimed at all radio listeners. English-language radio periodicals in Canada include *CBC Times* (weekly from 1948 to 1970), and CBC’s *Select* (1970-1975) and *Radio Guide* (monthly from 1981 to 1997). In the United Kingdom, also circulating throughout Europe, the *BBC Radio Times* (weekly from 1923 to the present) addresses BBC programming and, like its Canadian counterpart, includes program listings and articles. In this context, paratheatrical articles are also, in some ways, advertisements aimed at attracting audiences to the program (whereas the theatre audience receives such programmes after they have committed themselves to the production). These radio periodicals typically aim their articles at “unknowing” audiences, providing plot summaries and also advertising the actors involved in production, especially when the actors are well known.\(^\text{89}\) For example, in a short *CBC Times* article from 1955 on a production of Sophocles’ *Electra*, a complete plot summary of the play is provided. Further, the cast list gives details of the relationship between the dramatic figures and their actions within the play. For example, the article’s

\(^{89}\) In my research, I observed that the BBC *Radio Times* would often include a note about which current stage productions the radio players were starring in, in case audiences wanted to see them in the flesh. For audiences far removed from London’s stages, such notes would also serve as a claim of quality, where star-studded casts were recruited for the radio production. See, for example, the notes accompanying the advertisement for *The Trojan Women* in Appendix J.
cast list states that “Frank Peddie will play the old man who protected Orestes during his exile” (“Comedy and Tragedy from Ljungh’s Studio” 6). These periodicals sometimes also aimed their articles at “knowing” audiences, to offer additional criticism as food for thought.

A notable difference between the Canadian and British periodicals is that the former focuses more on plot review and on persuading audiences to give classical tragedies a chance. While the BBC’s mandate is more defined in its didactic purposes, as I outlined in Chapter Three, British paratheatrical materials seem to assume that there is an interested audience for their productions. In contrast to this, Canadian paratheatrical materials reveal a need to win the attention of a potentially reluctant audience.

The possible reluctance of the audience is in evidence in a 1954 CBC Times article on John Drainie’s starring turn as Oedipus, where Sophocles’ play is described as “a gripping study of man caught in the web of fate” (11). In this article there is a description of the translation chosen which invites an “unknowing” audience to listen, telling them of the production’s accessibility. The producer, Esse W. Ljungh, is quoted as having selected a “readable and actable” translation that is “easily understandable, not a maze of language in which the radio listener might lose the thread of the plot” (11). Here, Ljungh reassures the audience that this classic play is digestible, perhaps anticipating resistance in his audience. It is clear that this article is aimed at the “unknowing” audience rather than “knowing” audiences, or even “fans”, because not only are the actions in the story that precede the plot’s start outlined but the entire plot is outlined in full. The article culminates in revealing the play’s climax where Oedipus “accepts his guilt, and after finding that Jacosta [sic] has hung herself, stabs his eyes so that they may
never see his sin again” (11). The article further indicates that the function of the chorus is to “heighten [the] feeling of doom” and to “express the feelings of the audience” (11). Again, this instruction is aimed at an “unknowing” audience, guiding their reception by, in this instance, managing their expectations of the chorus and training them in classical dramaturgy.

In a CBC Times article on the CBC’s 1959 Prometheus Bound\textsuperscript{90} I find a similar strategy of audience management being employed. The plot is outlined in detail (see Appendix D) and the audience is reassured that the current production is an accessible adaptation:

If you are not a mythology fan, don’t get the idea that this is just a grim, dry tale in archaic language about creatures with ideas too far removed from our philosophy to be credible. On the contrary [Len] Peterson has modernized the language, put considerable punch into the story, re-arranged the sequences but retained most of the plot, and the result is a meaty, entertaining drama… (“He Taught Us to Survive” 9).

But the article goes further and describes the adaptor’s views on the capacities of radio plays. Peterson is said to find Prometheus Bound “especially good for radio because it hasn’t much physical action” (9). He is also quoted in explaining how he worked with composer Morris Surdin to “make up for visual aids with some rather eloquent music” (9). It is true that the stage proxemics and kinesics are more limited in this play than in many other classical tragedies, given that the protagonist is literally bound in place for the duration of the piece, but the suggestion that “eloquent music” is required to compensate

\begin{footnote}{\textsuperscript{90} While there is debate over the date and authorship of the original Prometheus Bound I am attributing the play to Aeschylus in this study. For further discussion of these issues, see Herrington, M. Griffith, Sutton, and Goetsch.}\end{footnote}
for the lack of “visual aids” will need to be further assessed (here below, in my discussion of music and song).

In a 1966 CBC broadcast of a subsequent production of *Prometheus Bound* I find that the mode of advertisement has shifted from textual assurances to an iconic representation of the play that graces the back cover of *CBC Times* (see Appendix E). The image displays a title, “Prometheus”, in pseudo-Greek characters (with a sigma as an “e”) and illustrates the eagle that ravages Prometheus’ liver. The accompanying text is an extract recycled from the 1959 *CBC Times* article on *Prometheus Bound*, and offers a brief contextualizing summary of how Prometheus came to be bound. It is unapologetic and straightforward, attempting to attract an audience based on the conflict represented through its iconography more than through a textual justification for the play’s production.

Advertisements were also common in the BBC’s periodical though they were often blended in with the listings schedule. The 1946 *BBC Radio Times* listing for *The Trojan Women* represents a common advertisement for Greek tragedies on British radio from this period and into the 1950s (See Appendix I). The quarter-page, framed advertisement highlights the listing by using an iconic image that illustrates the play’s main action. In the image, two soldiers restrain a woman who is lunging towards the city which burns before her. Here, the image is one that would both intrigue “unknowing” audiences but also speak to “knowing” audiences (who would presumably identify the woman in the image as Hecuba) in that it succinctly expresses the main action of Euripides’ play; the latter audience would be able to immediately identify the significance of the image. Beneath the image, the cast list offers some relational
information (e.g., “Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta; carried off by Paris, Prince of Troy”), and is followed by an extremely brief description of the setting (“The action takes place outside the walls of Troy immediately after its capture by the Greeks”) and its original context (“The play was first acted in the year 415 B.C.”) (“World Theatre at 9.15” 8). The lack of plot summary is not due to a perceived lack of need, but rather due to the fact that a three-quarter page article on the production appears within the first few pages of that issue of BBC Radio Times.

In this article, “A Post-war Drama of 415 B.C.”, Gibert Murray demonstrates how paratheatrical materials can both support and attempt to add directorial notes to the production (see Appendix J). First, Murray draws a parallel between the context in which Euripides wrote his play (“about the middle of the Thirty Years War that ruined ancient Greece”) and the Second World War which had concluded only six months before the broadcast with Japan’s surrender in September of 1945. More specifically, Murray finds the Athenian attack on neutral Melos (in 416 B.C.), which is assumed to be Euripides’ inspiration for his anti-war play, to be comparable to the German attack on neutral Holland. But Murray’s purpose is not to draw out the comparison through this article, but to raise the issue as a way of explaining the dramaturgical impetus for the current production. The remainder of the article produces a detailed summary of the events preceding the play as well as a plot summary for “unknowing” audiences. This also includes an explanation for the naming of Greek gods and heroes (“Trojans are also Phrygians, Troy is also Ilion”, etc.). The summary of the plot is interesting in that Murray includes some description of mise-en-scène elements. Helen is not just “the root of all evil, as beautiful as ever” but also “cool and carefully dressed amid all the carnage that
surrounds her” (Murray 3). Yet the broadcast production of Murray’s script includes no mention of Helen’s appearance. Here, the paratheatrical material offers more than textual support; it seems to try to compensate for a perceived “lack” on the part of radio and to provide directorial instructions to guide the audience’s reception.

In a 1968 *BBC Radio Times* article by John Tydeman, the author comments on his production of Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* by addressing the issue of whether paratheatrical materials should provide plot summaries at all. He writes, “It is always a temptation to give away the plot of a play – and ninety-nine times out of a hundred it must be resisted. With a detective play it could prove fatal” (36). But he dismisses Oedipus’ detective-like qualities as the play is, in his estimation, “more a ‘whodunnit’ than a ‘whydidit’” and claiming that it is “essential for a full appreciation of its ironies that the audience know the story in advance” (36). He reasons that “Sophocles’ audience of nearly 2,500 years ago would certainly know it well – and so should we” (36). Tydeman proceeds to offer a detailed plot summary, concluding that “the play is Oedipus’s slow realization of the dreadful truth and his reaction to it” (36). I question Tydeman’s claim of authenticity as justification for revealing plot details since elsewhere even he admits “the producer has taken licence” although he qualifies this by stating that he does so with “hopes for truth” (36). It appears to be the case that radio producers do not want to experiment with allowing “unknowing” audiences the opportunity to discover the narrative on their own because they do not trust that the audience will be able to follow along. This is akin to when a stage production offers a similarly detailed plot summary in the distributed programme. Even contemporary television programs do not reveal as much information in their promotional materials as theatrical programs tend to
do. This deep-seated belief of audiences’ limited capacity for attention and comprehension seems to have been translated into radio production, but it is something that should be questioned. While the Athenian audience of the fifth century BCE may have been “in the know,” is this really essential for twentieth- and twenty-first century audiences? Would it be so wrong to allow an “unknowing” audience to identify with Oedipus and to then share his shock in the discovery of his true identity? Certainly the function of tragic irony would be greatly diminished or even extinguished in a play such as *Oedipus*, but few other tragedies rely on dramatic irony to this degree. While one may be able to justify extensive plot review for *Oedipus* as a necessity for the success of this dramatic device, the use of plot review in other paratheatrical materials simply reveals the producer’s and adaptor’s concern that the audience will not be able to follow the story.

The *BBC Radio Times* 1976 listing for Gabriel Josipovici’s *Ag*, a “re-texturing” of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, includes a very brief summary of *Agamemnon* before describing the Josipovici adaptation as one that presents Aeschylus’ play “from the inside out”: “it is broken down into fragments of sounds and words, in order to explore the tragic image of Man advancing towards an inevitable death” (“Drama Now: Ag” 33). There is no summary of this actual adaptation beyond this note. Given the thoroughly experimental nature of this work, and its significant departure from Aeschylus’ text, it is interesting that the production also departs from the paratheatrical conventions established in the broadcast materials of other classics on radio. Of course, any description of the production would surely be found wanting for it would require a level of complexity not normally found in radio periodicals (that are aimed at a general readership). This avant-
garde production is simply not describable in conventional terms and, as such, no attempt was made to make the program listing conform to such conventions.

Louis MacNeice’s 1945 article, “The ‘Hippolytus’ of Euripides” is exceptional in that it offers little plot review and demonstrates that the author trusts that his audience will easily comprehend the production without paratheatrical supplements. MacNeice articulates this in his opening, suggesting that *Hippolytus*, “unlike some ancient Greek plays, is immediately intelligible to a modern audience” (4). But what is remarkable about this early *BBC Radio Times* article is that MacNeice also writes as if his audience is already familiar with the play. Instead of educating the audience on the play’s contents, the article provides some context of the conditions of the play’s original production in order to advance MacNeice’s thesis that *Hippolytus* is a “Sex Triangle” play (where the denial of sex is the cause of the tragedy). MacNeice draws comparisons with the *Bacchae* and *Medea* (calling the three “dialectical” plays “in the sense that it shows the clashing and cancelling out of opposite extremes”), Shakespearean archetypes (in the figure of the Nurse), and the tale of Potiphar’s wife from the Book of Genesis. He evokes Aristotle’s claim of what constitutes the best theme for tragedy (the change from prosperity to adversity due to a flaw or error of character) and illustrates how this contributes to the tragic irony that functions in the play. These comparisons, along with references to Freudian psychology, show that this article offers interpretation rather than summation, and that the author expects his audience to be “knowing” of his references to texts from antiquity, biblical times, the English Renaissance, and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. MacNeice evidently had high expectations of his audience and this is particularly important because the *Hippolytus* marked the launch of a monthly program
called “World Theatre” where classical Greek tragedies would find a welcome home during the subsequent two decades. However MacNeice’s expectations of his audience could also be read as elitist, and indeed his article is not particularly accessible unless one is familiar with its intertextual references.

Accessibility and didacticism are the primary concerns of the introductory lectures produced on CBC and BBC radio (of those that have survived). In particular, the introduction to the CBC’s 1954 *Oedipus the King*, produced in the same year but independent of the Stratford Festival’s legendary production, demonstrates a specific interest in addressing relatively “unknowing” audiences. The lecturer, also the translator, E. F. Watling, goes so far as to apologize to those who already know the play, begging their forgiveness should they be listening, as he assumes he is speaking “to those who know little of it” although he believes that “everyone knows something of the play” (Watling, Introductory Lecture to *Oedipus Rex*). Watling takes on a conversational tone, even (rhetorically) asking the audience “may I for a moment speak of that [original] production?” before he discusses the historical staging conditions. Watling’s history lesson covers the physical space of the “large, open-air theatre,” the duration of the event where tragedies and comedies “played in succession throughout the day,” and the context as a “religious and competitive festival” that was also a “civic occasion and an occasion of which the city took great pride.” Watling then focuses further on the nature of the plays, noting that the performance conditions “gave the dramatic productions a stereotyped form” where the audience “always knew what to expect”:

91 Watling (1899-1990) was an Oxford-educated classicist who taught at King Edward VII School in Sheffield. He was known for his translations of Sophocles, Plautus, and Seneca.
You always saw a few actors, representing the characters in some legendary or mythological story, already to a great extent known to the audience (rather like our stories of the Bible). The scenes were acted in dialogue in the presence of a chorus. They are halfway between actors and audience. The chorus are the people before whom the action is presented (although they may also be mixed up in the action).

Watling addresses the chorus at some length in order to mediate the contemporary reception of this dramatic convention. He notes that by contemporary expectations, the chorus is the most difficult to assimilate but reinforces that it played a significant central role and has an important bearing on the structure and effect of drama. Watling is essentially imploring his audience to accept this convention, anticipating the potential for friction in the reception of a play that, as he assumes, his audience is unfamiliar with, and of conventions that are equally strange to his unknowing audience. Part of his rhetorical strategy involves the comparison of Sophoclean and Shakespearean dramaturgy. Watling notes that Sophocles was the original master and “the inventor of playwriting (in the sense that we understand it)” because he added the third actor so that dramatic figures would talk together as they would in real life. Watling follows Aristotle’s lead by crediting Sophocles with creating “one of the most perfect plays” in *Oedipus the King*. The audience is encouraged to revere the play and Sophocles’ work, and Watling goes so far as to suggest that “directors, translators, and actors must always humbly bow their heads” to Sophocles’ greatest work.

Watling continues by training his audience in radio reception and in methods of adaptation. Here, the representation of the play “in sound, on the air” is described as a
production that is “not concerned with questions of dress or mask, or in the visual sense, of acting” but is concerned with “the use of language,” and with “conveying the essence and spirit of tragedy by spoken words without visible action.” Watling paraphrases Aristotle, introducing his concept of katharsis as one that is preferably caused by “the presentation of the story itself” rather than “the decoration, the mere spectacle of the play.” Since radio lacks spectacle, Watling concludes that while “Aristotle lived before the days of broadcasting […] it is clear that he is with us in spirit today.” Watling raises an interesting point about the original staging conditions, suggesting that “many an old man of Athens listened to the plays in the theatre after his eyesight had become too weak to see the stage.” So, in addition to difficulties in seeing detail due to the audience’s distance from the stage, near-sightedness likely compounded the problem of some audience members’ reception of the plays in their original context. Watling also acknowledges the convention of reading aloud that would have been common in Aristotle’s time, reminding us that the original audience was highly attuned to the aural reception of works.

Watling concludes by addressing the play’s subject matter and plot construction in detail. In addition to reviewing the details of the plot (that Oedipus “has killed his father and married his mother”) Watling guides his audience, asking them to suspend disbelief because it is “besides the point to object that the probability of this happening seems exceedingly remote.” Watling also asks the audience to dismiss a psychological interpretation of the play, saying that “you know, all that psychological jargon about the ‘Oedipus Complex’ has really nothing to do with this drama, because the story is not that Oedipus wanted to do either of those things, they just happen to him.” Instead, the point
of the play, he suggests, is that Oedipus condemns himself but that he also learns humility, and in that humility “is the seed of redemption.” Redemption, of course, is Watling’s modern interpretation of the work as I believe this concept is not one that preoccupied the Greeks.

Watling attributes the perfection of the play to its representation, within a mere two hours of playing time, of a story where “a whole lifetime, and more than one lifetime, is revealed probed, and turned inside out. And we’re never conscious of any strain or wrench in timing – the whole thing moves as smoothly and precisely as the clock.”

Sophocles’ verisimilitude in its construction is further compared to Shakespeare’s work (and later shown to influence Ibsen as well) but the Ancient tragedian’s craft is offered as superior. Where Shakespeare “starts at the beginning, and follows an action through days, months, to its conclusion” Sophocles “starts at the end, or very near it, and as the dialogue proceeds, layer after layer of the past is uncovered, until at last the whole truth stands revealed. And from that moment, events move swiftly to their inevitable end.” Of course, Watling’s description only applies to Oedipus, but he uses some light hyperbole to extend his assessment of the play to Sophocles’ entire repertoire. In addition to informing his audience, Watling aims to convert them. He extends an invitation to his audience to become elitists and to develop an appreciation for Sophocles as the premiere playwright of the Western world. The reverence Watling explicitly invoked earlier in his lecture is once more reinforced here. The CBC production’s aim then, is clearly not just to entertain, but to educate (as I demonstrated in Chapter Three) and even to convert “unknowing” audiences into both “knowing” and “elitist” audiences through the use of accessible paratheatrical lectures.
Collectively, these paratheatrical materials demonstrate that broadcasters either believed that the majority of their audience was an “unknowing” audience, or simply pitched their materials to attract such an audience (perhaps assuming that a “knowing” audience would not require any persuasion to tune in). When comparing the paratheatrical materials of Greek tragedies to the materials of other play adaptations, I found detailed plot summary only in other classical productions. The CBC’s reassurances of comprehensible translations are not pronounced in other paratheatrical materials. While the sample of paratheatrical materials studied is small, and more work remains to be done in this sub-field of study, my preliminary work reveals trends that appear to be unique to classical tragedy.

**Representing Action through Speech: Choruses, Messengers, Narrators**

In the representation of action, Greek tragedies offer some internally crafted devices for this purpose. As Oliver Taplin illustrated in his work *Greek Tragedy in Action* (9-21), stage directions are not explicitly represented in the surviving texts, rather they are incorporated implicitly in the speech of the primary dramatic figures, the chorus, and secondary figures (such as messengers). With few exceptions, “people say what they are doing, or they are described doing it, or in one way or another the context makes it clear what is happening” (Taplin *Greek Tragedy in Action* 17). This would seem to make the task of the adaptor quite easy in that most significant action is represented through speech through textual pointing. Further, dramatic figures often act as narrators, recounting action that is not represented onstage, what I would call “diegetic narration.” This kind of narration is provided by choruses and secondary dramatic figures as they comment on
what has occurred in the story prior to the initiation of the play’s plot, while messengers report off-stage action.

There is a significant amount of textual pointing in the 1950 BBC *Agamemnon*, where at the play’s opening, the Watchman grows excited as he sees, “high in the mountain! The light of the beacon!” which indicates that Agamemnon’s army has returned and sends the Watchman to report on the developments to his queen. By comparison, in the 1962 BBC *Agamemnon*, the vision of the torch which is anchored in similar textual pointing is further signposted by the non-diegetic sound of a flute’s ascending scale. In the 1950 production, after the chorus has recounted the events which led to the present moment, they comment on the entrance of the play’s antagonist (“See in the palace now, our Queen Clytemnestra”) and on her retreat in avoidance of answering the chorus’ questions (“Alas, the queen has entered her palace again. Not yet shall we know her news”). The arrival of King Agamemnon is signified through the sound of his chariot’s wheels (their rumbling as they navigate what sounds like hardened earth covered by loose rocks) but anchored in speech as the chorus comments on his arrival in the chariot.\(^{92}\) In this translation, by Louis MacNeice, Agamemnon then indicates his intended action (“but now, I prepare to descend from my chariot”) yet is interrupted by the sound of the palace’s heavy doors creaking open (their pitch increasing as the doors are in motion, but their volume is muted given the distance between the audience’s point of perspective – which is the space near the chariot – and the palace). This sound is further anchored by an individual chorus member who proclaims “The

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\(^{92}\) Announced entrances are used the majority of the time in radio adaptations of Greek tragedies. In the texts of the extant tragedies, however, entrances are announced only half of the time. Richard Hamilton finds that there are 136 unannounced and 136 announced entrances. He further notes that some figures are not announced on their first entrance but on their second (or later) appearance onstage (64). Also see Joe Park Poe’s work on entrance announcements and speeches.
doors of the palace open. See my lord, where stands your wife to greet you!” After Agamemnon has been lured inside, and following Cassandra’s entry to the palace, we hear Agamemnon’s off-stage voice – soft in volume, but still clear in its panic – narrating Clytemnestra’s murderous actions (“I’m struck… A second blow… I’m struck again!”). What is curious is that the play abandons part of its signification system shortly thereafter. The chorus is heard banging on the door, calling out for the doors to be opened. But the moment where Clytemnestra is revealed with the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra does not follow any sound effects. Rather, Clytemnestra’s voice is heard (she says that she stands above her victims, Cassandra and Agamemnon) and the Chorus gasps in response to the gruesome scene. How the bodies are revealed is a staging issue that is easily glossed over on radio. There is no equivalent to the *ekkyklema*, but there is also no need to produce such specific gestures. The gasp of the chorus suggests the scene to the audience whose imagination provides the details of what is witnessed and the precise method of Clytemnestra’s entrance, the opening of the palace doors, is unimportant. Indeed, providing specific sound effects here in an effort to bear fidelity to what might be considered realistic would slow down the discovery scene and act as a distraction. Stripping away unnecessary sounds allows the imagination to fill in details and creates the potential for a subjective verisimilitude from the perspective of each audience member, rather than having the production provide every aspect of the diegetic world.

In *The Trojan Women* we also find several entrances and exits that are marked by speech. In the 1946 BBC production, when Talthybius enters, not only are his entrances marked by a musical motif (alternately timpani and trumpets) but his first entrance is
marked by Hecuba who anticipates the bad news: “But lo, who cometh: and his lips grave
with the weight of dooms unknown – a Herald from the Grecian ships. Swift comes he,
hot-foot to be done and finished. Ah what bringeth he of news or judgement?” Hecuba
further comments on Cassandra’s entrance, characterizing her state of mind (“’Tis my
child, Cassandra, by the breath of God made wild”) while the chorus comments on
Andromache and her child’s entrance (“Lo, yonder on the heaped crest of a Greek wain,
Andromache, as one that o’er an unknown sea tosseth; and on her wave-borne breast her
loved one clingeth, Hector’s child, Astyanax”93) and on the child’s return, carried by
Greek soldiers (“Unhappy wives of Troy, behold, They bear the dead Astyanax”). This
textual pointing efficiently and effectively provides information about the stage
proxemics and kinesics of important dramatic figures.

Euripides’ Alcestis poses an interesting problem in terms of diegetic narration.
When Admetus’ revived wife is brought to him by Heracles, there is the question of
whether she is veiled or not. It is logical that Admetus’ delayed recognition of her is due
to her being veiled over the course of the lines which lead up to his taking her hand. Yet
on radio, this aspect of the mise-en-scène goes unnoticed. Indeed, Alcestis’ presence is
initially unregistered since Heracles does not immediately address the woman he has
brought to Admetus. The Chorus notes that Heracles is arriving, but makes no mention of
the woman with him. On radio, her presence would materialise only when Heracles tells
Admetus to “take this woman. Keep her.” The 1966 CBC Alcestis and the 1972 BBC
Alcestis (both using the same translation by Irish poet Darryl Hines) make no effort to
develop the audience’s awareness of her presence until Heracles notes her. Her silence is

93 While my focus is not on the style of the translation, it should be noted that the use of Elizabethan
English conjugations in this adaptation create an unusual link between the classics of the Greek and English
stages. This is a feature that was noted in several BBC productions from this era.
not problematic from that point on since she is the subject of the conversation and so she remains within the audience’s field of perception and within the dramatic frame. More importantly, there is also no indication of her costuming. Rather, in the 1966 CBC production for example, we know from what is spoken that Admetus will not gaze upon the woman. When Heracles finally hands Alcestis to Admetus, there is some additional text (Heracles: “There”, “You have her?” Admetus: “I have” Heracles: “Then keep her…” that makes it clear that Admetus has reached his hand out but will not look upon the woman. When Heracles says “But look at her. Tell me if she seems at all like your wife” we get the sense that Admetus has only now raised his eyes to her. And as he gasps, we then hear the sound of the chorus (a large crowd) murmuring in surprise. On radio, this moment is awkward. Since no sense of the veil has been given, the moment reads as a recognition scene based on Admetus refocusing his gaze. But why would the chorus respond in surprise? Are they shocked to see Admetus react to the woman? This is how the moment is likely to be interpreted and it creates some problems for the reception of the moment where there are no indications on radio, and no changes in the text, to compensate for what would be a purely visual gesture. In the 1988 BBC Alcestis, a dramaturgical intervention occurs to solve the problem by conjuring the veil in the minds of listeners. The chorus comments on Heracles’ entrance, specifies that he has a companion, and describes her appearance, telling Admetus to look where “Heracles returns with a lady darkly veiled.” While the moment of unveiling is not specifically anchored in speech, the existence of the veil in the audience’s imagination allows the completion of the action merely through suggestion.
On radio there are two notable divergences from the examples cited above, which
are also typical features of Greek tragedies. First, there are instances where actions –
specifically broad proxemics and kinesics, but also finer individual performance gestures
– are not evidenced in implicit stage directions or diegetic narration. The need for support
beyond speech in such instances is evident. For example, the presence of silent figures
does not register on radio (as silent figures are quickly forgotten by listeners). In Greek
tragedy, there are some key dynamics where the presence of a silent dramatic figure
changes the nature of the scene. These instances include Jocasta’s silent presence during
the discussion of evidence that points to Oedipus being her son, Cassandra’s silent
presence during Clytemnestra and Agamemnon’s extended discussion, and Astyanax’s
silent presence as his fate is discussed onstage. I will discuss some of these moments in
Chapter Five in my discussion of dramaturgical erasure. Taplin also concedes that “we
cannot know for certain that there was not all sorts of extra unsignalled stage business
which would have completely altered the meaning of tragedy” (17). Of course, while it
seems unlikely that such radical alteration would be the case, the adaptations of tragedies
to radio reveals key moments where stage business not represented in speech is likely
required to fully comprehend the meaning of the work. While the bold strokes of the play
would be comprehensible without such details, I will show in my case studies how the
audience’s awareness of proxemics in particular can change the reception of specific
scenes. This is something that Taplin overlooks when he says that “an action which has
attention drawn to it will be significant; and an action which receives no attention is
insignificant” (18). As Martin Revermann argues, the flaw in the logic of what he calls
the “significant action” hypothesis is that it explicitly denies the potential significance of
action not anchored in speech (*Comic Business* 50). Indeed, as Revermann argues, this assumes that “there is such a thing as insignificant action in theatrical communication” (50). Yet audiences do not discount aspects of the theatre experience and make decisions about what is meaningful and what is not. All of the components of the play’s action, to say nothing of the impact of the theatre space and the other audience members, offer signs to be decoded. While I make use of Taplin’s premise to identify actions that would not otherwise be known to an audience far removed from original staging conditions, I acknowledge that there is likely a degree of significant action that is lost to us. While Greek tragedy does appear to be heavily based in text (as opposed to Noh or Kabuki theatre, for example) and we may hope that most significant action is embedded in the text, it seems unlikely that all significant action would be coded in speech. Indeed, one of the most important findings of this dissertation involves the failure of the significant action hypothesis. For example, on stage, the mere presence of certain figures, even if they are silent, adds to the meaning of the scene. On radio, their silence effectively extinguishes the dramatic figure and we lose “sight” of their presence, altering the meaning and nature of the resulting scene (and I will return to this problem, which I term “dramaturgical erasure,” in Chapter Five).

The second divergence of radio from the convention of using implicit stage directions and diegetic narration is the addition of a non-diegetic narrator to further aid the listener. In the adaptations studied here, this narration often occurs during introductory music (often an overture) and is a feature more prominent in earlier adaptations (pre-1970). For example, in the 1948 BBC *Prometheus Bound*, a non-diegetic narrator reviews the details of Prometheus’ gifts to mankind, including fire, for which
Zeus punishes him by binding him in fetters on a mountainside. The narrator then sets the scene: “A savage scene in a mountain range. Hephistos, the God of Fire, approaches with two deities called Power and Violence, who are leading Prometheus.” This seems justifiable since the deities are not immediately called by name and, further, Violence is a silent figure. Without textual anchoring, this figure would simply not exist because silent figures do not register in the audience’s perceptual field. In the 1946 BBC production of *The Trojan Women* the announcer’s opening that contextualizes the production then becomes more specific narration that supplements and supplants implicit stage directions.

The male announcer begins by framing the drama:

Produced originally in Athens in the year 415 B.C. this play stands forever as the noblest expression in words of the brutality and the beastliness of war. It tells the universal story of the defeated, the captured, the helpless, at their enemies’ mercy – the story of all persons displaced.

This speech is then punctuated by rolling timpani that increases and decreases volume (from pianissimo to fortissimo and back), with the dynamic extending over several seconds, indicating a shift. This motif is used throughout the production to indicate scene change and entrances or exits. After the context is provided, the announcer becomes a narrator, setting the stage with precision:

Troy, after ten years’ siege, has fallen to the Greeks and they have wreaked their fury on the great city, the walls of which, partially ruined, glimmer through the mists of early dawn. Before them are some low huts – dark, silent – containing those of the captive women who have been specially set apart for the chief Greek warriors. Among them is Helen, waiting to face the wrath of her husband, King
Menelaus. But the noblest of them all – Hecuba, the old white-haired Queen of Troy – is lying on the ground asleep, by the dead bodies of armed men. It is just before dawn, and a hush is over everything, over the seas and the land, and as the day breaks the lost colour ebbs back to the sails of the Greek ships by the beaches. …Suddenly the figure of the God Poseidon is dimly seen beneath the walls, to be followed by another divine presence, the Goddess Pallas Athene…

The narration is then followed by another rolling line of timpani with the same dynamics as before as the scene changes into the diegetic exchange between Poseidon and Pallas Athene. The narrator takes the listener on a journey through the complete landscape of Troy, from the sea to the city’s ruined walls, and further populates the play, conjuring figures such as Menelaus and Helen who do not arrive onstage until the latter half of the play. This creates anticipation of their arrival and further anchors the audience’s identification of these figures when they finally do enter the field of perception.

The 1960 CBC production of *The Trojan Women* also begins with non-diegetic narration. The narrator establishes the play’s geographic boundaries and focuses on Hecuba and all that she has lost:

> The action takes place shortly after the Greeks have captured Troy. All Trojan men have been killed or have fled. All the women and children are captives, condemned to slavery. The scene is an open space before the city, *which is visible in the background*, partially demolished and smouldering. Here on the ground, prostrated with grief, lies Hecuba, widow of Priam, King of Troy. Mother of Paris, who abducted Helen to Troy. Mother of Cassandra, the prophetess, now made mad. Mother of Hector, hero of Troy, dead. Mother of many girls, now
doomed. Mother of many sons, now fallen. She raises her head, and speaks…

(italics added)

The narration here is somewhat rough, and calling attention to what is visible, reminding
the audience that they can not see and disrupting the process of imaginative completion,
seems counterproductive. What is interesting is that this production also continues the use
of non-diegetic narration within the main body of action. For example, when
Andromache yields and allows the soldiers to take her son, Astyanax, the non-diegetic
narrative voice tells the audience that “Talthybius gently lifts the child out of the wagon,
which leaves, carrying Andromache away.” Following this, Talthybius speaks to the
guards, proclaiming that he is unable to carry the boy and the non-diegetic narrative voice
once more fills in the action: “Talthybius leaves, handing Astyanax to the guards, who
carry him away.” This example is typical of each entrance and exit in the production.
Finally, this production returns to this narration at its conclusion: “Talthybius leads
Hecuba away, and all depart, leaving the city to its dead.” What is unusual about his
narration is that the narrative voices change. The opening speech is shared by at least two
distinct women, while the following lines are spoken by the same actor who plays
Talthybius. This is not particularly confusing as the narration is clearly non-diegetic, but
it is a curious directorial choice. Ultimately this production indicates that it has not been
fully adapted for the dramaturgy of radio, employing the female narrators to provide
context, but using the male narrator to denote stage directions.

The 1956 BBC *Agamemnon* involves the use of both non-diegetic and diegetic
narrative voices. This production is particularly interesting because the non-diegetic
narrator’s role is not restricted to the opening of the play, but it continues further into the
play. Beginning with an orchestral prelude, the narrator’s voice is then heard and he sets the scene: “A palace in Argos… It is night… On the roof of the palace, a Watchman.” When the chorus finally enters, the non-diegetic narrator returns: “In the city of Argos, the Elders assemble. They have not heard the news from the palace.” This narrative voice (Voice 1) is actually labeled “the voice of Aeschylus at the age of sixty-six” in the playscript of this production. One of the other voices in this script (Voice 2) is labeled “the Historian” as this figure recounts all past events, taking these specific lines out of those attributed to the chorus in general and associating a specific voice with the diegetic narration of earlier story events. The chorus speaks as individuals, alternating lines. In addition to diegetic narration, textual pointing is also present in this production, but the translation and adaptation offers greater specificity in its words. For example, when Agamemnon yields to Clytemnestra, just before he enters the palace, he draws attention to Cassandra. In many translations she is referred to as a stranger or a girl, and Agamemnon asks Clytemnestra to take her into the palace and to treat her well. In this production, Agamemnon is much more specific. “Queen Clytemnestra, here in this second chariot I bring from Troy a royal prisoner, Cassandra daughter of Priam.” While this may seem like excessive textual pointing, the specificity is needed as it is the very utterance of the phrase that conjures both the second chariot and Cassandra out of thin air. She has been silent and unnoted until this moment. Ambiguity about who the girl is and where she stands in space, in relation to the other dramatic figures, must be avoided here.

In the 1962 BBC Medea, the non-diegetic narrative voice that initiates the dramatic action, prepares the audience for the play’s horrific outcome by characterizing
Medea, informing the audience (or reminding, in the case of “knowing” audiences) that Medea has killed before and that she is a sorceress. Spoken to the sound of dark, foreboding orchestral music, where notes of considerable duration are held by the strings underneath frantic trumpet calls, the narrator speaks:

Many things are brought to pass unexpectedly by the gods. The things we think will happen do not happen. And the unforeseen, a god makes possible. Such is the beginning of this story. The story of a Barbarian princess, descended from the sun god. A sorceress skilled in the arts of magic [SFX: trumpet punctuation.] A princess of Colchis, on the far eastern shores of the Black Sea. Her name, Medea [SFX: orchestral punctuation.] To Colchis came the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece and with them, their leader Jason, Prince of Iolchos. Medea fell in love with Jason, helping him with her magic arts, to gain possession of the fleece. Then she and her brother went on board the Argo with Jason, but when the King, her father, pursued them, Medea killed her brother and threw his body into the sea, and the King delayed so long to recover his son’s body that the Argo escaped… Jason returned with Medea to his kingdom of Iolchos where his uncle Peleas had cheated him of his inheritance. There Medea persuaded the daughters of Peleas to attempt a magical rejuvenation of their father and in the process, as Medea had intended, Peleas was killed. For this crime, Medea and Jason with their sons were exiled and came to Corinth. [SFX: trumpets fanfare plus timpani.] And here, in Corinth, the action of this play is laid. We are before the house of Jason, here in exile with his foreign wife, Medea and their children. It is an old
nurse, Medea’s privileged and confidential slave, who is anxiously mumbling to herself…

The non-diegetic commentary braces the audience for unexpected and unforeseen things. The emphasis is also on how Medea helped Jason, providing details that will be repeated later but also paraphrasing how this support came in the form of extremely violent actions.

The 1974 BBC *Bacchae* also employs non-diegetic narration that is dramatic and poetic. The purpose of this non-diegetic narration seems to be to unite the space of the diegesis. The narrator describes the palace of Pentheus, locating the audience’s point of perspectival focus, but also describes the tomb of Semele near the palace, Thebes, and rivers and finally the slopes of Cithaeron beyond the palace. Following the orchestral prelude, the announcer speaks:

The action of this play begins in the last watch of the night. Moonlight falls on Doric columns, supporting an entablature of the royal palace at Thebes. This is the palace of Pentheus, that stands on the Cadmia, the Acropolis of Thebes, a cluster of buildings, outhouses, and stables. Close by we hear the flowing of the waters of the rivers Dirce and Ismenus. In the distance, faint lights of torches glimmer among the pines on Mount Cithaeron. For by a strange circumstance, a sort of madness has fallen upon the women of Thebes, that has compelled them to leave distaff and spindle, and headed by the three princesses to desert the town and run wild among the solitudes of Cithaeron, there to seek a primitive harmony and understanding of nature. There to experience the life of maenads. Here beside the palace, a flame still burns on the tomb of Semele, the mother of Dionysus. And in
the light of this flame, we see the vine leaves, trailing the sacred precinct. Did this Dionysus perish in his mother’s womb when she was herself killed in the flame of the lighting of Zeus, as her sisters believe? And was this only a judgment from the gods upon her impiety that shamed herself with a mortal love she threw the blame for her sin upon Zeus? The city of Thebes awaits a revelation. And tonight, it is the first of all cities of Greece to be troubled by this god.

In addition to expanding the geographical frame of the diegetic world, the narrator creates dramatic tension by raising several questions. This non-diegetic narration is not, however, as comprehensive as our other examples. For example, it does not explain why Semele was killed by Dionysus (for seeing Zeus in his divine form), or how Dionysus survived (gestating in Zeus’ thigh). The phrase which deals with Dionysus’ paternity does not offer great clarity in its syntax and is likely to pass too quickly, along with the phrases surrounding it, for an “unknowing” audience to be thoroughly informed of the plot’s antecedent events. But in this case this is not essential as Dionysus enters and reviews these details in his diegetic narration of the events which precede the start of the play. It appears that this repetition is the play’s strategy for creating clarity and greater narrative comprehension.

The strategy of extensive non-diegetic narration employed in the 1946 BBC and 1960 CBC Trojan Women, the 1948 BBC Prometheus Bound, the 1956 BBC Agamemnon, the 1962 BBC Medea, and the 1974 Bacchae is almost exclusive to the BBC and most notable in the work of Raymond Raikes, the producer of the latter four examples provided here and of an additional eight adaptations of Greek tragedies (from 1946 to 1975). This feature is carried out in most adaptations, although in the majority
(particularly adaptations post 1970) it is restricted to the announcer’s brief introduction and does not offer extensive commentary or directorial cues. In the BBC productions studied here, this voice is exclusively male yet there is no evident reason why this casting choice should be gendered. While this is likely not restricted to the adaptation of Greek tragedies on radio\textsuperscript{94}, there appears to be an assumption that a male voice is more appropriate in this role.

The strategy of non-diegetic narration reveals that the producers of those adaptations believe the audience requires additional context (in the form of an announcer’s introductory speech) with the assumption being that audiences are not adequately familiar with the play and that the text does not yield the information required to comprehend the drama. At the same time, audiences of radio drama are not homogeneous, and so while producers may treat their audiences as “unknowing,” it is possible and even likely that there are members of the audience who are “knowing,” and perhaps even “fans” (as I outlined in Chapter Three). This additional narration also helps “set the stage” and acts directorially to induct the audience into the diegetic world of the play.

In the 1950s, Milton Kaplan wrote of radio drama’s need for narration to make sense of the play’s action and likens the contemporary narrator to tragedy’s chorus leader:

The fragmentary nature of radio drama calls for a cohesive force to give it unity and focus. The announcer or narrator serves that purpose. He is not a new figure in the theater; he appeared a long time ago in the classical Greek plays. […] There he was the coryphæus, or leader of the chorus, and, like his ancient counterpart,

\textsuperscript{94} The link between male voices and authority was likely strong due to the dominance of male newscasters at the time.
the modern Greek chorus comments, repeats, describes, and explains. (Kaplan 24-25)

Kaplan’s description of radio’s fragmentation supports the rhetoric of radio’s “lacks.” While announcers are common to all radio programs, the use of non-diegetic narration is hardly essential to all radio drama. Further, equating the chorus leader with an announcer seems somewhat problematic. While many critics have described the Greek chorus as a mediator for the audience, often reviewing the plot or commenting on action in a manner that encourages comprehension of the narrative, the chorus remains a diegetic figure. In the extant tragedies, choruses are not impartial and passive or outside of the fictional world of the story. Rather, choruses “structure, support, interpret and reflect on the delineation of the plot” (Revermann “Competence of Theatre Audiences” 113). Choruses comment on the action immediately before them, offering support or disapproval of the primary dramatic figures, they comment on action that takes place prior to the play’s start, and they offer lyrics that temporarily pause the action of the play, allowing reflection on what has occurred. Providing diegetic narration does not make the chorus akin to an announcer. The audience registers non-diegetic narration as an omniscient narrator, providing an authoritative and objective perspective. This narrator’s voice is often similar in tone and style to the voices in the diegetic world, but it is clear that the speaker is a speaker outside of that world. The chorus and other diegetic narrators, on the other hand, have agency within the diegesis and vested interests in the outcome of events, offering what must be taken as a subjective point of view. Aristotle finds that the chorus is to be “treated as one of the actors” as they are “part of the whole”, participating in the
action (*Poetics* XIX 95). It is this participation in the action which distinguishes between the role of the diegetic and non-diegetic narrator.

**Representing Action through Sound Effects: Performance Gestures**

In addition to anchoring action in speech, the radio play can create performance gestures through the use of sound effects (non-verbal and non-musical sounds). These gestures can be initiated by a dramatic figure (e.g., the sound of their footsteps can be created as they approach or retreat) or they can be initiated by elements of the play’s mise-en-scène (e.g., the howl of wind indicating that the action takes place outdoors). However, many sounds are also further anchored in speech or enhanced through music in order to fix floating signifiers or to further characterize the nature of the performance gesture. There would appear to be very few sound effects in Greek tragedy that are non-verbal. Cassandra’s incomprehensible vocalizations from *Agamemnon* and the off-stage death cries of various murder victims are good examples of common vocal effects. Effects not produced by human voices include thunder and lightning which are evoked through the text and speech, but it is not clear if these are also implicit stage directions where an attempt was made in the fifth-century theatre to produce an audio or visual

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95 While it is not our intention to discuss how sound effects are produced, readers may be interested in the physical properties of a recording studio. This is a description of the CBC’s main studio space in Toronto (Studio 212): “The main drama studio is a large room fitted out with baffles and barriers for adjusting its acoustic qualities. The floor is covered with a variety of surfaces including hardwood, carpet, tile and marble to create different sounds underfoot. Stairs – covered half in wood, half in concrete – lead up to a mezzanine equipped with metal flooring to simulate the sound of footsteps on a ship or other metal-decked surface. In a long corridor nearby, trap doors hid squares containing sand, gravel, river rocks, leaves and other materials. Off the main studio is a functional kitchen/bathroom for recording the unique sound qualities of such a room (it doubles as a jail cell). There’s a ‘dead room’ designed to simulate outdoor acoustics and a “neutral booth” which acoustically mimics a room, the size of a living room or bedroom. There’s also a small room used to capture the sound of people talking in a car, and two other sound-effects booths” (Harris C7).
effect. For example, Oliver Taplin believes that in *The Bacchae* when Dionysus calls from off-stage, demanding the destruction of the palace, he is accompanied by thunder and lightning (*Greek Tragedy in Action* 120). However, Taplin does not clarify whether he means that this was done through the use of special effects or merely through textual suggestion. Elsewhere there is further evidence of textual pointing or implicit stage directions. At the end of *Oedipus at Colonus* the chorus comments on the sound of thunder repeatedly: At line 1654, “thunder, the sky – Oh god…”, and at 1661, “Listen, over and over, the skies are crashing” (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, Trans. Fagles, 370-371). In other examples, which I will consider shortly, the rumbling of earthquakes and the destruction of large, crumbling structures are evoked. While it is unclear whether these sound effects were produced\(^\text{96}\) or whether the effect was merely evoked through speech, we know that on radio such effects are easily produced and radio adaptations employ the use of sound effects extensively.

However, on radio, in addition to supporting the sound effects existing in the Greek tragedies (as denoted through implicit stage directions), effects are used to represent things which would normally only be seen. As Andrew Crisell notes, “anything which would signify itself in the theatre primarily by being seen (e.g. a clock) cannot occur on the radio except as a signified which is identified by a non-visual signifier – either verbal (‘That’s a nice-looking clock’) or acoustic (SFX: TICKING SOUND)” (149). Crisell finds that acoustic effects must sometimes be reinforced through speech because “sounds are often ambiguous or insufficiently expressive in themselves” (149).

\(^\text{96}\) For further discussion, particularly of the use of the bronteion instrument (a large bronze barrel filled with stones, used to imitate thunder) and the keraunoskopeion (a rotating stage machine that either reflected sunlight to produce a lighting effect or was designed to represent lightning), see Michaelides, Beare, Fisher, and Mullens. Note that most discussions focus on the fourth century BCE and the Hellenistic period rather than the fifth century.
In reception, “sounds have to be located in space, identified by type, intensity, and other features” (Ackerman 178) and must at times also be anchored in speech because “without accurate signposting the fictionalisation of the mind’s eye or imagination has full reign” (Crook 60). At times, such latitude is disorienting as the lack of guidance for the ear can lead to almost unlimited variations in interpretation. The imagination requires some parameters and so sounds that are ambiguous must be anchored with textual pointing.

A fairly straightforward example of how action is represented through sound effects is evidenced in productions of *Agamemnon*. First, there is Agamemnon’s entrance in the chariot. I previously described the sound effect of the chariot wheels rumbling across hard soil and loose rocks, in the 1950 BBC *Agamemnon*. The 1956 BBC *Agamemnon* uses the sound of dozens of footsteps, marching in unison, with Agamemnon’s voice increasing in volume since he speaks as he approaches. Agamemnon then uses textual-pointing to conjure the chariot (“I, Agamemnon, will speak now from my chariot”) and, while we hear no evidence of the chariot, this anchoring of the prop in speech is enough to aid the audience in imagining the scene (albeit a bit clumsily since the chariot is added to the picture as a bit of an afterthought).

What is less straightforward is how these productions of *Agamemnon* deal with the play’s props. The performance gesture of laying the tapestries on the ground is anchored in speech but on radio the properties of what should be elaborate and rich fabrics are lost on the listener. The 1976 adaptation by Gabriel Josipovici, *Ag*, is unique in that it provides a sound effect for the tapestries. As the tapestries are spread we hear what sounds like thin and light metal coins jingling against one another. Similarly, when Agamemnon yields and exits the chariot, we hear his footfalls as he approaches the palace, crossing the
tapestries. With each footfall we hear the crushing of the tapestries as Agamemnon’s foot strikes what sounds to be metal pieces. Agamemnon comments on his action, anchoring it in speech: “And as I crush these garments, stained from the rich sea, let no god’s eyes of hatred strike me from afar. Great extravagance and great the shame I feel to spoil such treasure and such silver’s worth of webs. My feet crush purple as I pass within the hall.” Josipovici’s production does not attempt to create verisimilitude in its sound effects, and clearly the sound effect associated with the spreading of the tapestries or of the contact of a human foot and fabric is not one that bears fidelity to the real world. Yet in the liberties taken, Josipovici effectively evokes the tapestries as a significant stage property and asks the listener to attend to them.

In the 1966 CBC adaptation of Aeschylus’ Prometheus Bound we see how actions are represented by sound effects, anchored in speech, and embellished with music. This production is the only one in my study that includes an ongoing sound effect: waves lapping onto rocks and receding repeat throughout the production, with the low howl of wind. This diegetic sound is at times overlaid by non-diegetic orchestral music used to punctuate action and to create dramatic tension. When Prometheus is bound to the rock, speech anchors the accompanying sound effect of metal hitting metal, a high-pitched, sharp and evenly rhythmic sound that indicates a hammering motion. We hear “now pin it” and “drive the wedge through his breast and into the rock,” followed by the sound effect of the action and Prometheus’ screams, creating an interplay between sound and words. In contrast with this use of diegetic sound effect, the 1948 BBC Prometheus Bound uses a musical motif to mimic the strike of the hammer (staccato notes played by the full orchestra) yet represents the chains in a realistic manner. In the CBC production,
following the binding of Prometheus, references to the chains that bind Prometheus are punctuated with the sound effect of chains clanging against one another, indicating Prometheus’ movement and apparent attempt to free himself. The chain motif is repeated frequently throughout this production to remind the listener that Prometheus remains bound in place and to punctuate lines such as Prometheus telling Hermes “I hate all gods. I help them and they help me, thus” (SFX of chains on “thus”). The lack of a visual element in radio drama is perhaps what best serves the arrival of Oceanus (and later Hermes) whose mode of arrival would otherwise need to be merely commented upon and not represented. Here, Prometheus sees his visitor arriving and tells the chorus of sea nymphs that it is “your father, Oceanus.” Oceanus’ actual entry is then marked by the sound effect of a massive wave that we assume has carried him onto shore. But Oceanus then further anchors his mode of arrival in speech, saying that he has arrived on a sea monster, The audience is left to imagine what this monster would look like, allowing the imagination to work. Io’s arrival is marked not by an indexical sound effect, but by the use of trumpets abruptly and furiously ascending a minor scale in thirds and in unison to create the musical motif that represents the harsh swarm of gadflies that pursue her. In the BBC’s 1948 production the sound of the flies is also represented musically but in the 1966 CBC production it is by the sound of string instruments bowing two strings at once (known as producing a “beat” in acoustic terms, or “Schwebung,” and best described as the droning sound produced when tuning an instrument). In the CBC production, the sound effect is also anchored in speech (“Ah! Ah! Another gadfly sting! Oh misery!”). The motif is repeated on Io’s exit as the flies pursue her still. The arrival of the winged-messenger, Hermes, is first grounded in speech (“Ah! Look! A messenger form the great
god Zeus! Flying down on dainty wings.”) and quickly followed by a musical motif. The gesture of his flight and landing, is represented through flutes and strings producing overlapping descending lines in a minor key, mirroring the physical action musically.

The conclusion of this production offers an impressive sound effect in the form of a mix of diegetic sound effects and non-diegetic orchestral accompaniment. The winds have grown stronger and the waves crash louder as Prometheus begins his speech.

The deed, no more the word, deep and loud the thunder roars, the earth is shaken. Lighting rips the sky in shreds, whirlwinds gather up the dust and fling it to the four winds, who call into a howling battle over it, the sky and sea topple into each other. And now the tempest, herded by Zeus, gathers round me. Oh holy mother earth, oh divine and radiant sky… Behold, how I am wronged!

Throughout the speech, the diegetic sounds continue while the orchestral music adds non-diegetic emphasis and mimics the shaken earth (through rumbling timpani). Finally, the sounds and music crescendo following Prometheus’ final line, are sustained and then cut out. This is the aural equivalent of a stage black-out at the very moment when Zeus strikes Prometheus down. This is more effective on radio than on stage as the imagination has more room to operate (in the absence of seeing stage actions that would contradict the speech, in the event that special effects were not used and the effects were merely evoked through speech). Similarly, in the BBC’s Bacchae of 1964, Pentheus’ palace is destroyed with sound effects of rumbling earth, thunder, and masonry crash, that is anchored in Dionysos’ speech (“Fire! Flames! Thunder! Burn, burn, house of Pentheus!). The textual pointing further reinforces what has occurred when Dionysos refers to himself in the third
person and says, “Yes, you saw the house of Pentheus split and sundered by the presence of Dionysos.”

There are many additional instances where sound effects must conjure complicated actions. One such example is another adaptation of tragedy’s deus ex machina. In Medea the final scene involves Medea’s escape via a chariot with dragon steeds or winged serpents that fly through the sky, out of Jason’s reach. In the 2001 CBC production, the chariot is referenced briefly when Medea refuses to allow Jason access to the bodies of his children (“They’re mine,” she says) and she indicates her imminent departure (“The chariot is at the gate”). After Medea’s final few words to Jason, telling him of how he will suffer without his children, Medea’s exit is not marked by any sound effect, musical effect, or textual pointing. Her method of escape, the specific kinesics of it, are glossed over and the production indicates that it is enough that the audience know she is leaving. Instead, the production offers a two-minute orchestral postlude followed by the sounds of the sea lapping onto shore for one full minute. In contrast with this, the 1962 BBC Medea uses a non-diegetic narrator to assist the audience with comprehension of this final scene. First, Jason is heard battering at the doors and a musical motif is introduced, representing the chariot’s entrance into the field of perception. Then a non-diegetic, male narrator speaks with some urgency: “Many things are brought to pass, unexpectedly, and the unforeseen a Good makes possible… Even while Jason batters at the doors of his house, the Chariot of Helios the Sun-God rises from the roof, And in that Chariot – Medea with the dead bodies of her sons.” Since the non-diegetic narration is spoken by the same actor as the diegetic messenger (or at least the sound of the voice is identical) there is clearly an attempt to blend this non-diegetic voice in with the diegesis,
however it stands out due to the expositional and detached nature of what is spoken and because it comes from a male voice rather than the female choral voices who elsewhere narrate action. For example, when Aegeus enters, the first chorus member provides diegetic narration by saying, “But now a traveler approaches – A stranger in Corinth, it seems, he comes this way voyaging to Troezen, and passing through our city.” This is curious. How can the chorus member know his intention to travel to Troezen? It is not the only city beyond Corinth in the northeastern Peloponnese. The traveler could easily be going to Argos. But as it is delivered by a chorus member’s recognizable female voice, it is accepted as part of the diegesis. But to return to Medea’s chariot, the musical motif that accompanies its entrance is a grand, sweeping gesture made by full orchestra, to suggest a magical chariot of great magnitude. Medea then speaks “from above” which is suggested by her distance from the microphone (suggesting that she is far away as Jason’s voice is at the centre of the perspectival field, and closest to the microphone). To suggest her vertical positioning, the production relies on speech. Medea calls to Jason:

    Jason! Why are you battering at those doors? [SFX of battering stops] Are you seeking the dead children and me who killed them? Looking up to where I stand here in this chariot, the dragon-chariot of my father’s father, the Sun. Speak to me; say what you wish. Touch me you cannot.

Jason pleads with Medea, still at a distance. Upon her exit, the musical motif introduced when the narrator invoked the chariot’s presence returns at full volume and fades to suggest Medea’s exit into the distance.

The 1991 BBC Medea also places Medea at some distance from Jason upon her final entrance with the children’s bodies. Her distance here is not indicated by a volume
change but by greater echo in her voice (upon her entrance, to indicate the specific location). She also speaks her lines by crying out, as if to bridge the distance between her position and Jason’s ears. We hear Medea refer to the chariot: “You will never touch me. I have a magic chariot. A pure, unpoisoned gift of the sun, my father’s father, to protect me against my enemies.” However there is no mention of the steeds which guide the chariot and it sounds as if Medea is initially on the same level as Jason as the entrance of the chariot is also marked by the high-pitched and sharp sound of hooves on a hard surface, presumably stone. This production then offers a specific sound effect to represent the performance gesture of the chariot’s flight. First we hear hooves on stone, rapidly increasing in pacing as if the creatures were taking a running start, simultaneously we hear the sound of wooden wheels on the ground, and then the high-pitched whistling sound of the air as the chariot rushes through it into the sky. But here, unless the audience knows the story, how are they to know that there are winged creatures leading the chariot? Some additional dramaturgical intervention would be required here in order to clarify how the chariot achieves flight.

In the 1946 BBC Trojan Women, the most significant sound effect involves another performance gesture that would be difficult to represent on stage: the destruction of Troy as it burns. This is grounded in speech, with Hecuba commenting, just before the city is destroyed, “The dust as smoke riseth; it spreadeth wide its wing; It maketh me as a shadow, and my city a vanished thing.” The sound effect of large stone walls crumbling is heard as fire rages. The event is bracketed by another textual anchor with Hecuba saying “Ha! Marked ye? Heard ye? The crash of the towers that fall!” (overlapping with the sound effect of crashing stone).
In the 1960 CBC *Trojan Women*, the same moment is interpreted quite differently. The Chorus speaks in unison, addressing the city in a resigned manner: “You will collapse to the dear ground and be nameless. Lost shall be the name on the land. All gone. Perished. Troy, city of sorrow, is there no longer.” Then, in more passionate voices: “Did you see? Did you hear? The crash of the citadel. The earth shook!” This is not accompanied by any sound effects. Since this moment passes quickly, the full impact of a city crumbling to the ground is not appreciated by the listener. In the 1991 CBC *Trojan Women*, we are offered an even more subdued climax. Talthybius evokes the city’s flames which slowly crescendos from pianissimo to mezzo-piano, underneath his speech, as he states that the soldiers were ordered to burn the city. This continues as Hecuba considers her future slavery and attempts to throw herself into the flames. We never hear the complete destruction of the city in this production, merely the smouldering of the fire.

In the same scene, the 1998 CBC-BBC co-production of *The Trojan Women* first layers the mournful dirge of the women with non-diegetic strings (a sustained note, bowed throughout the scene to maintain tension). Here the production’s adaptation provides additional lines to Talthybius, who is heard screaming at his soldiers, giving them instructions to burn the city:

Burn everything in sight. Burn everything until all this is a huge black ashen circle. Where a future man may stand and say “There was a city here once? People lived here? I don’t believe it!” Burn everything until there is no past. Think of this city as an evil woman. Set fire to her flesh, her hair, rip out her heart. Set fire to that. Stand back, enjoy the flames. This is the best work you’ve ever done.
By giving Talthybius these lines rather than allowing the chorus to initially respond to the flames, the play sets him up to destroy Hecuba’s hope. The flames crescendo and continue underneath the chorus’ final sung dirge (that also comments on the smoke rising from the city and drifting over the sea). By extending the scene, this production allows the audience to consider the burning city for a significant interval and the passion and mourning expressed by the dramatic figures is what provides the scene with intensity, rather than the specific and extensive use of sound effects.

Sound effects are not preferred by all radio producers. Martin Esslin suggests that sound effects are not particularly effective compared to the power of suggestion in poetic words. He describes how audiences often extrapolate to the point where they thought they heard sound effects when the only sound was that of words (Esslin 182). Indeed, the abuse of special effects can cause distraction. In adaptations of Greek tragedies, there are some clear instances where sound effects are not desired. For example, in the two productions of the *Trojan Women* by CBC producer John Reeves, (the 1960 and 1991 adaptations) entrances and exits are marked by the sound of soldiers’ footfalls on loose gravel as the men bring the enslaved women to Hecuba and then to the ships. Yet the excessive number of entrances and exits makes the repetition of this sound effect oppressive and, with its overuse, almost comical.

In the 1948 BBC *Prometheus Bound* we see an example of the excessive anchoring of sound effects. Extra narration is employed to anchor both musical and textual pointing when the daughters of Okeanos (the chorus) arrive. In this production we hear flittering flutes mimicking the sound of wings which are grounded in text when Prometheus says, “Oh what can it be that I hear close by me? The rustle of bird-wings?”
With light beat of feathers, all the air trembles, and all that comes near me is matter for fear.” The chorus then confirms their identity and that they have flown there. Yet this production precedes this with indexical non-diegetic narration: “A sound of wings is heard. It is the chorus of the daughters of Okeanos, who have come to comfort him.” This is repeated for the entrance of Okeanos who the narrator describes as arriving on “a winged monster.” The producer is using every radio technique possible to conjure the chorus, but the result is heavy-handed and perhaps more appropriate for a younger audience than for an audience of adults.

While Esslin’s promotion of the restrained use of sound effects (“as a refrain, a recurring ‘image,’ or as punctuation” [183]) is perhaps too restrictive, greater restraint in adaptations such as the examples of John Reeves’ two productions would likely have improved the production. Sound effects are most effective when they enhance our understanding of the work but can be distracting when used excessively, causing a heightened awareness of the work’s machinations and drawing the audience out of their imagination to confront these mechanics (self-consciously). Productions which use excessive textual pointing and non-diegetic narration similarly distract the audience and limit their imaginations’ ability to function.

**Temporal Relations: Ellipses, Contraction, and Expansion**

The very nature of sounds – which “exist in time and constantly evaporate” (Crisell 159) – makes them bound by temporality. In crafting the temporal relations of tragedies on air, sound is used to indicate the period of the production, to mark the passage of time, and to evoke events which have occurred in other temporal periods.
Plots of Greek tragedies typically progress in a chronological fashion without analepsis (flashbacks) or prolepsis (flash forwards), which I define as being representations or dramatizations of events rather than the expository narration of past or future events.\footnote{Most discussions of analepsis and prolepsis (which are terms often used synonymously with flashbacks and flash forwards, respectively) do not make this distinction between showing and telling but in my discussion this is a critical difference. The flashback and flash forward that dramatizes events, allowing the audience to experience them in the moment rather than as second-hand narration, appears to be an early twentieth-century invention of the cinema. Anachrony in prose and poetry is not unheard of prior to this, but to my knowledge a true flashback and flash forwards do not materialise until cinema employs them in the 1920s.}

Greek tragedies tend to begin in media res, with the action involving the narrated exposition of antecedent events. For example, in the 1946 BBC production of *The Trojan Women*. At the play’s opening, Poseidon speaks to Pallas Athena and laments that Troy’s “sanctuaries run red with blood” and its heroes lie dead. Poseidon tells of the war that has just ended, narrating action that has occurred earlier in the story. But this exchange also involves Poseidon and Pallas Athena plotting the action that will follow after the play’s conclusion. Together they plan “a bitter homecoming” for the Greek ships. Pallas Athena states that “When the last ship hath bared her sail for home, Zeus shall send rain, long rain and flaw of driven hail, and a whirling darkness blown from heaven.” Pallas Athena instructs Poseidon: “Do thou make wild the roads of the sea, and steep with war of waves and yawning of the deep, till dead men choke Euboea’s curling bay.” The two figures, through their diegetic narration, have extended the temporal frame of the drama to include the Trojan War (at its earliest point) and the Greeks’ disastrous journey home.

In addition to this expansion of temporal frames, stage time is not always equivalent to the time which passes in the diegetic world as the plots of some tragedies make use of temporal hyperboles and ellipses in the arrangement of story elements. In particular, the chorus and messengers are dramaturgical tools used to create a sense of
temporal continuity while allowing for the contraction or expansion of time (with
offstage action being sped up to maintain dramatic momentum onstage or onstage action
being extended to allow time for offstage action to transpire, for reflection, or to disrupt
the action). In the original tragedies, the manipulation of time is not overt and the
audience’s attention is not being drawn to the manipulation of the story in the plot’s
duration. However, on radio, two things occur. First, in productions with a playing time
of less than two hours, such as the majority of CBC productions which are restricted to
less than sixty minutes of air time, there are typically a number of textual cuts that are
made. Cuts are most often made to the choral odes and this makes the use of ellipses
more noticeable since the interval where offstage action is meant to occur is even further
compressed. Second, in productions that make use of music for the chorus, the extended
period required to deliver lines (as opposed to the length of time required when lines are
spoken or chanted) is distinctly noticeable. The stage duration of their part is thus
expanded.

The manipulation of temporal relations is generally not overt in radio adaptations
of Greek tragedies. For most of the verbal exchanges between primary dramatic figures,
stage time is equivalent to the time elapsed in the diegetic world. However, through the
use of messengers and the chorus, time can be compressed either through the
recollections of past events in the story (being narrated efficiently rather than
represented) or through the use of choral lyrics that can pause the action of the play
(allowing time for reflection or even disruption of the plot’s momentum) and create

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98 We do find one significant exception to this in Aeschylus’s *Eumenides* where there is a scene change
from Apollo’s temple in Delphi to Pallas’ temple near Athens, and as a result a more significant ellipsis.
However radio productions of the *Eumenides* are not included in this study and so there remains further
work to complete in this area.
temporal ellipses (allowing off-stage action to occur at an accelerated pace). The messenger’s narration, for example, allows audience members to imagine the evoked events and extends the story’s temporal frame while also participating in a temporal ellipses. A simple example is found in *Oedipus Tyrannos* where the Corinthian messenger reports the death of Polybus but also tells Oedipus of his origins, that he is not the son of Polybus but that he was found in the woods of Cithaeron and was said to have been the son of Laius. This diegetic narration extends the temporal frame of the play’s story to include the birth of Oedipus as its earliest episode. Another example from the same play involves the messenger who reports Jocasta’s suicide and Oedipus’ self-blinding. Jocasta exits at 1072 and Oedipus exits shortly thereafter at 1185. When the second messenger enters at 1223, we learn that during the intervening lamentation by the Chorus on the fall of Oedipus, where the revelation of events is repeated, Jocasta has committed suicide and Oedipus has struck out his eyes. Yet the messenger’s report (covering 72 lines, from 1223 to 1295) takes longer to recount than the time which has elapsed from Oedipus’ exit to the messenger’s entrance (43 lines, from 1185 to 1223). This means that telling the story takes more time than it took for the actual events to transpire. What occurs here is a compression of time, facilitated by the Chorus’ strophes and antistrophes which act as a kind of distraction from the temporal ellipses in operation. In radio productions (in the three Canadian and three British productions reviewed for this study), this ellipsis is preserved. However, had these productions employed a sung chorus, it is possible the diegetic time and stage time could be equalized (assuming that sung words take at least twice as long to produce as spoken or chanted words).
We find a similar example in Medea where two temporal ellipses occur, one glossed over with a choral interlude and the other by dialogue and onstage action. First, the children leave with Jason at line 975, bearing the poisoned gifts for Glauce. The children return with their Tutor at 1003, allowing for the passage of merely one or two minutes of stage time. Yet when the Tutor enters, he announces that the gifts were well received and that the children have been spared their exile. The journey to meet with Glauce alone would have taken more than the stage time that has elapsed, let alone the exchange of gifts and dialogue that would be required to pardon the children as well as their return journey to Medea’s location. This compression of time is maintained in the three productions in this study, with the chorus’ lines being maintained completely in order to create a sense of verisimilitude and to mask the temporal ellipses. Medea similarly uses onstage action and narration to further compress time. Following the delivery of the gifts, when the Tutor returns with the children, Medea’s long address to her children, her struggle with her remaining options, covers the temporal ellipses during which Glauce and Creon are poisoned by the gifts (from the Tutor’s entry at 1003 to the entry of the Messenger who reports Glauce and Creon’s deaths at 1120). The Messenger’s report takes 109 lines (from 1122 to 1231) which is roughly equivalent to the stage time that elapsed from the delivery of the gifts to the Messenger’s entrance. Yet the Messenger’s report is itself a compressed version of events, narrating complicated actions and summarizing the outcomes. In the 2001 CBC Medea, the chorus’ lines from 1081 to 1117, following the tutor’s evacuation of the children into the house, are cut to a single line (“If there is any mercy or forbearance in heaven, let it reach down and touch that dark mind, to save it from what it dreams”) and Medea’s next lines are further cut by
half. Yet the Messenger’s speech (which is spoken by the Nurse in this production) is delivered slowly. This creates a more significant temporal ellipsis in order to speed up the action of the play and then slows down the action in order to allow the reports of the onstage murders to be fully recounted in all their horror. This compression and subsequent expansion of time lend greater weight to the narrated events, allowing the action to race towards the climax of the reported deaths but then to allow the audience to relish the details of those deaths much in the same way that Medea indulges in the details of the story.  

Another example of temporal manipulation is found in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*. Here we find evidence of how Greek tragedies narrate past events in the present to create an opportunity for reflection on the impact of events taking place earlier in the story on the impending action. In fact, the vast majority of the play involves diegetic narration of past events and reflection on that past. By Jacqueline de Romilly’s count, of the play’s almost 1700 lines, only 300 deal with the present time (77-78). The play begins with a Watchman who evokes the Trojan War as he waits for a sign that the Greek fleet has returned. When the beacon is spotted, the Watchmen enters the palace to deliver the news. Then, over the course of the first 40 lines of the Chorus’ parados, the seeds of the Trojan War are once more addressed, with the departure of the Argive army’s thousand ships described, creating a narrative analepsis where the departure is recounted while simultaneously the arrival of the army occurs offstage. At this point, Clytemnestra enters and the Chorus addresses her, but she remains silent. Clytemnestra’s exact movements following this direct questioning and throughout the remainder of the parados are unclear.

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99 In the Stratford Festival of Canada’s 2000 stage version of this production, from which the radio play was adapted, Medea slowly places her head in the Nurse’s lap, hearing her report of the murders as if she were listening to a bedtime story.
Although radio adaptations typically add textual pointing to indicate her exit at this point, and the Chorus continues for another 170 lines until Clytemnestra speaks again. This is “the longest lyric passage in all of Greek tragedy” and its contents are “entirely devoted to the departure of the expedition” (de Romilly 78). The Chorus speaks to the god of justice, Zeus, and reviews the sacrifice of Iphigenia made by Agamemnon to the gods in order to create the wind required for the army’s ships to launch for Troy. The Chorus fears for Agamemnon, foreshadowing how the sacrifice of his daughter will lead to his punishment.

The Chorus once more addresses Clytemnestra directly in the first episode where she then announces that Troy has fallen. In the episode, we hear of the outcome of the voyage the Chorus evoked in the parados. Upon her exit, in the first stasimon, the chorus retreats further into history and tells of how Paris stole Helen. This allows time for Agamemnon’s fleet to reach shore and for a herald to reach the palace to announce both Agamemnon’s arrival and to recount the story of their journey home. The second choral stasimon then allows time for Agamemnon to arrive at the palace. These choral lyrics thus function to create some verisimilitude in the temporal duration of the play, creating time for offstage action to occur, while also slowing down onstage action and creating opportunities for further reflection of the past. Even Cassandra’s speech evokes the distant past, mixing present action (her prophesising and some fear for her fate) along with past action (her address of the conflict between Atreus and Thyestes where Atreus tricked his brother into eating his own children). Aeschylus effectively expands the temporal boundaries of the story by using diegetic narration of past events throughout
Radio adaptations extend these temporal manipulations through edits, most often cutting the lines of the Chorus.

While these temporal manipulations are often subtle, I will return to messenger speeches in particular in Chapter Five where I examine the temporal relations of the messenger in *Antigone* and consider a Canadian production that employs flashbacks to represent action rather than using diegetic narration to mask temporal ellipses.

Another issue in the establishment of temporal dimensions in Greek tragedies on radio is the setting or period in which the production takes place. The vast majority of adaptations to CBC and BBC radio employ the ancient Greek setting as their backdrop. This is primarily accomplished through the use of non-diegetic narrative voices that establish setting (as I previously discussed). There are, however, additional attempts to frame the time period through the use of incidental music, particularly through instruments thought to mimic what would have been available to the ancient Greeks: flute, harp, and drums (and I will discuss this further in one of the following sections of this chapter). However, unlike stage adaptations where modernizing or otherwise temporally relocating productions has been a popular contemporary directorial choice, on radio such modernizations are a rarity. While language is often simplified, temporal settings are generally maintained. I suspect that this is because markers of period are often thought of in visual terms (particularly in terms of costume and set). There is one significant example of a modernization of period: the modern blues adaptation of *The Trojan Women* (a CBC/BBC co-production that I will discuss in Chapter Five). Other productions may use contemporary instruments and arrangements but do not otherwise suggest a modern or contemporary setting.
Spatial Relations: Entrances, Exits, Asides, and Soliloquies

Establishing the relative positioning of dramatic figures in space (proxemics) and their movements through that space (kinesics), as well as defining the properties of that space (the “set” of the diegetic world) requires perhaps the most significant adaptation because these gestures and things on stage are typically transmitted to the audience through purely visual means. I previously presented a discussion of how action is represented through speech and sound effects. Here I will focus further on a) establishing the dimensions and characteristics of the diegetic space (including onstage and offstage spaces), b) the movements of dramatic figures through space, c) the positioning of those figures relative to the audience’s point of perspectival focus, d) the creation of intimate space shared by the audience and individual figures (during asides and soliloquies), and finally e) the stereophonic orientation of dramatic figures (in left/right arrangements rather than simply in near/far relationships).

Earlier in this chapter I outlined how non-diegetic narration can establish space by describing both the landscape beyond the “playing area” and the characteristics and dimensions of the “onstage” space. We must remember that, with the exception of this form of narration, there is no such things as a “wide” or “establishing” shot on radio as there would be in cinema. Sound can not accommodate that scope or level of detail within a brief time frame. While one may think that Greek tragedies do not require establishing shots, we must remember that fifth-century Athenians would have at the very least seen a stage building of some sort that represented a temple or palace, depending on the needs of the play. The audience would also have seen the eisodoi, the ramps that are
believed to have been used for entrances and exits to and from spaces in the diegetic space beyond the theatron. On radio, such dimensions must be established both by anchoring scenographic elements in speech and in sound (e.g., evoking the palace for the listener to complete its image and properties in their minds, completing the dramatic frame).

While there is an example of a scene change in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, generally the settings of Greek tragedies remain static. On film, the camera can travel through space, taking the audience along with it through an uninterrupted tracking shot. This effect is also possible on radio, although it is usually restricted to scenes where the audience identifies closely with the protagonist and the perspective of the two is shared (a narrative strategy that allows for close identification between the dramatic figure and the audience). For Greek tragedies on radio, the audience is almost exclusively static. Yet, as Andrew Crisell reminds us, radio can “switch between settings with great speed and emphasis” (149). In the adaptations studied here, shifts in space are rare but not unheard of (and in Chapter Five I will demonstrate how dramaturgical innovations create new spatial dynamics). When this does occur, the effect of a fade-out and fade-in is commonly used to effectively denote a shift through an aural curtain (much like with the temporal properties of a scene change). Finally, there is no need for crosscutting to unify two spaces in a single time frame (to show concurrent events) as messenger speeches recount action subsequent to its execution off-stage.

Spaces can be defined in terms of their location, size, shape, and texture. As Andrew Crisell writes, sound effects can be used “as environmental indicators, acoustic means of depicting scenes or settings” where, for example, “birdsong can suggest the
countryside” (146-147), an owl’s hoot can evoke “not merely an owl but an entire setting – an eerie, nocturnal atmosphere” (46), a crowing sound can “signify not only ‘a cock’ but ‘daybreak’,” and where “the sound of strumming may suggest not only a guitar, but a Spanish setting” (46). These sounds carry what Crisell calls “extended signification” where sounds are sometimes indexical (where crowing is an index of the cock) but also symbolic (where the crowing stands in for daybreak and a country setting). These sounds provide us with the general atmosphere, but not the specific proxemics of figures and things or their kinesics. Expressing the dimensions of space through sound sometimes involves more than one sound. This is because we can determine space based on the relative positioning of different sounds. For example, the sound of a clock’s chime may be soft in volume, but it may not be immediately known whether this is because that is the true volume of the clock or whether the clock is actually at some distance from the point of perspectival focus. To establish space, Erving Goffman indicates two options for the radio producer: The producer will establish a near sound, a distant sound and an intermediate sound in order to establish the size of the space being heard, or the producer can anchor space by verbal accompaniment, “thus assuming that what might otherwise be an isolated sound is identified as to character and source” (Goffman 164).

An example of the establishment of spatial relations can be found in the 1980 BBC Electra. The opening scene involves wind effects (a soft but continuous howling), the chirping of crickets, and when dramatic figures enter and exit (or make significant movements within the field of the playing space), we hear the sound of their footsteps through rustling leaves. This effectively conveys that the scene is set outdoors and it is dark (as crickets only chirp in the dark). The exception is the entrance of Clytemnestra
who presumably enters from the palace and whose movements are not accompanied by sound effects. This distinguishes between the spaces of entrance for Orestes (who arrives from having travelled across country) and Clytemnestra (in her interior setting). Clytemnestra also maintains her distance from the space occupied by Electra and the chorus. This is evident because her voice is recorded at some distance from the microphone, placing her in the mid-ground of the perspectival field, and also because we never hear her movements cause the rustling of leaves (indicating that she stays close to the home while Electra, the chorus, and Orestes occupy the wild space of nature outside the domestic space of the home).

Some spatial dimensions are more difficult to sustain, and this is particularly true of more specific parts of the diegetic space. For example, set elements such as doors are easy to evoke when in use (through sound effects) but when not in use, their presence is not particularly significant, and so it is acceptable for the audience to maintain a sense of their existence but to not be overtly conscious of their presence at any given time. However, other set elements bear greater significance yet can be forgotten if not referenced in speech or if the element itself does not produce any sound. I previously considered the tapestries laid out before Agamemnon as one such element. Another example of a set element where its spatial placement and presence is of some significance is to be found in *Oedipus Tyrannos*. At the beginning of the play, we find the chorus of Thebans and a Priest at an altar, offering supplication. Oedipus is the first to speak and comments on their actions, which is what establishes the altar of Apollo in the playing space. Later, Jocasta offers sacrifices to the altar, but between these two moments where diegetic speech establishes the altar in space, the altar is forgotten. Much like when
dramatic figures are silent for prolonged periods of time, scenographic elements that are not referred to or that do not produce their own sounds, are effectively erased from the perspectival field. This is potentially problematic in *Oedipus* because, as Martin Revermann determines,

> the continued presence on stage of a statue of Apollo […] is pertinent here, because the statue is a vital part of the play’s static, yet constantly dynamized, visual framework. From beginning to end the plot unravels under the auspices of Apollo, who is both healer and destroyer. Sophocles’ choice of making Apollo physically manifest and omnipresent on stage heightens the uncanny feeling of divine machinations as the driving force behind Oedipus’s fate. Conversely it helps to underline the notion of human autonomy in the face of (literally, given the presence of the statue) divinely ordained catastrophe, which is crucial to many tragedies, not least this one. (“Spatio-Temporal Dynamics” 793-794)

With the audience of the radio adaptations of *Oedipus* unable to perceive the continued presence of the altar, the dramatic irony of the play’s scenography is lost. While we will see in Chapter Five that the dramaturgical erasure of silent figures is sometimes rehabilitated through the addition of speech and gesture, the “silence” of scenographic elements such as the statue of Apollo is not adequately addressed in the adaptations included in this study and such elements and their connotations are effectively extinguished from the audience’s perspectival field.

> The movement of figures through space has also been introduced previously in this chapter in my description of non-diegetic narration (in the CBC 1960 *Trojan Women*, in particular) and diegetic narration, where the chorus or primary dramatic figures note
the approach of another figure and identify them (sometimes providing additional information about their appearance). I also discussed this in terms of Medea’s exit with regards to the use of sound effects to represent performance gestures, and also with Agamemnon’s crossing of the tapestries. However, the movement of figures through space is often as simple as a straight entrance or exit. To provide another example, in the 1991 CBC *The Trojan Women*, the frequent entrances and exits of the women who have been enslaved is marked by a sound effect of the clanging armour of their captors as well as the sound of loose gravel being trod upon by soldiers’ feet and by the wheels of chariots or wagons. These sounds are further anchored in speech where the chorus or other figures note who is arriving. Another example is found in the CBC’s 1987 *Antigone* as adapted by Charles Tidler. Upon Creon’s first entry, we hear a trumpet’s call, the sound of soldiers marching and stopping, accompanied by the sound of the chariot’s wheels coming to a halt. We then hear an announcement from what we assume is a kind of herald figure: “The King speaks!” The herald later announces “The King departs!” and we hear the trumpet call, marching feet, and the chariot’s wheels as they recede into the distance. This highly indexical narration is somewhat excessive, but the impetus for the inclusion of the departure announcement’s inclusion is clear: no one else notes his departure and without either narration, sound effect, or musical effect, his departure would not “read” in dramatic terms. Tidler’s inclusion of the announcement introducing Creon’s speech functions to create balance with the exit announcement.

There are also more complicated issues in the proxemics of tragedies on radio, involving both more complex and subtle movements through space. For example, in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, at the moment when Jocasta tells the story of what happened to her
child, a story which suggests that Oedipus murdered Laius. “Oedipus flinches. She asks ‘what is the worry that makes you turn and say this’ (726-728); and it may be that Oedipus physically turned away from her for a moment – away from the truth” (Taplin Greek Tragedy in Action 65). On radio, the 1954 CBC production maintains the line and evokes Oedipus’ gestures (she says “How you turn and start”). This implicit stage direction, combined with the feverish delivery of Oedipus’ subsequent lines, effectively guides the audience to imagine Oedipus’ struggle with the truth as his gestures mirror his internal state. However this also suggests that Oedipus has put together the pieces of the puzzle and that subsequent questions are only meant to confirm his suspicions. The 1992 BBC production omits the implicit stage direction, which delays Oedipus’ realization, or at least his mounting suspicions are delayed. While this does not maintain fidelity with the original play, it more effectively builds the play’s tension. Another example of fine performance gestures is found when Oedipus commands that the Shepherd’s arms be seized (1152-4), Taplin points out that the first two lines indicate that Oedipus may raise his hand to strike the Shepherd (even if it is merely a threat):

Oedipus: If you won’t talk willingly, you’ll regret it.

Shepherd: No, by the gods, don’t maltreat an old man.

Oedipus: Seize his arms immediately. . . (1152-4, qtd. in Taplin Greek Tragedy in Action 65)

However radio adaptations, such as the 1992 BBC production, modify Oedipus’ line to make it more of a threat (“If you do not speak with a good grace, you shall be made to speak”), providing the motivation for the Shepherd to beg, rather than suggesting that it is in response to any physical gesture. The 1997 BBC production similarly interprets the
line with Oedipus threatening the Shepherd: “Well, if I must torture you to make you talk, I shall.” This dramaturgical intervention effectively resolves the problem by removing the need for a physical gesture that would be difficult to convey through inflection in the original spoken line or through any other musical or sound effect.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of the significance of proxemics and kinesics involves Oedipus’ final exit. Taplin talks about how the audience is prepared for Oedipus’ exit into exile (Greek Tragedy in Action 45-46). However, he argues that this is simply misdirection. Instead of leaving Thebes, Taplin writes that

Oedipus is taken off into the palace where he will await a final verdict from the gods. Creon had ruled back at 1432ff. that he would consult ‘the god’ (presumably the Delphic oracle) before taking any action; and though Oedipus justifiably protests that the original oracle was perfectly clear (1440f.; cf.1519), Creon insists on waiting for confirmation. And the great cleaning’s final exit is abandoned. […] The point is that Oedipus, formerly the king, now cannot even control his own destiny: he has to be in Creon’s hands […]. The entry to the house is deeply significant. Oedipus cannot escape from the place where he blinded himself and Jocasta killed herself, to death or desolation: he has to go on being humiliated and guilt-ridden where he belongs. (Greek Tragedy in Action 46)

The significance of the ending is heightened when we consider the stage kinesics. Martin Revermann provides a detailed analysis of this final gesture in his 2003 article, “Spatio-Temporal Dynamics in Sophocles’ Oedipus the King.” He points out that without the assistance of his daughter-sisters, Oedipus would have to stumble or even crawl towards
the palace, and that “this is what happened in the Sophoclean production, of only for a brief moment” (798). His argument is compelling as he reminds us that the point of this stumbling and crawling was to make Oedipus visually re-enact the riddle of the Sphinx, thus turning Oedipus into an exemplar of the human condition. […] Crawling on all fours in this scene, if only for seconds, Oedipus re-enacts man’s infantile stage, while the blind man with the stick, a situation that he is bound to encounter irrespective of what precisely will happen to him, recalls the three-legged creature of the riddle. Is it a coincidence that in their final lines, which dwell so memorably on the condition humaine, the chorus explicitly mention the fact that Oedipus is the one ‘who knew the famous riddle and was the most powerful of men’ (1525)? Ecce homo. (799)

Many translations suggest that Oedipus holds on to his daughters as he moves towards the palace. Creon demands that Oedipus let go of his children and while Oedipus begs to not have them taken away from him, Creon denies him his wish, reminding him that he is no longer King. The text seems quite clear and Revermann’s envisioning of the play’s ending offers a suitable and satisfying conclusion.

On radio, the realisation of the play’s final kinesics is difficult. The CBC’s 1948 production combines Creon’s final lines with the choruses, leaving one actor to narrate the play’s end and providing no sense of Oedipus’ exit. Instead of focusing on the mode of exit, the ending has an epic, Hollywood-style feeling as music swells underneath the diegetic narration. The 1997 BBC production and the 1954 CBC production both use the low and persistent drumming of timpani to accompany Oedipus’ exit but there are no indications of how he exits. In the BBC version, the chorus simply says “People of
Thebes! Look! There goes Oedipus” and the CBC version has a single speaker state “Behold Oedipus.” The 1992 BBC production utilizes some pained vocalizations from Oedipus as his voice fades out, suggesting his departure. This is brief, perhaps lasting only five seconds until Oedipus is beyond the perspectival field. Yet there is no suggestion that Oedipus struggles or that he has a great distance to cover, unaided and blind. It would appear that none of the adaptations in this study were either interested in or able to convey the final scene as imagined by Revermann. The loss of this particular aspect of the play’s kinesics does not necessarily change the meaning of the play, but it does reduce the tragedy’s impact.

The positioning of the audience takes on great significance in the adaptation of tragedies to radio because, unlike the audience of a stage play, the audience of a radio play does not have the ability to be selective in what aspects of the drama they attend to at any point in time. In this sense the radio drama listener is more like the viewer of a film where the selection of shot scale, angle, and duration, is made by the director and this determines the audience’s point of perspective and all facets of the perspectival field. On radio the point of perspectival focus is the same as the location of the audience; they are always at the center of the diegetic world. While their position is not necessarily fixed in space (indeed, in the consideration of the creation of intimate space we will see how shifts in space can occur) adaptations of Greek tragedy on radio tend to treat the audience as being fixed and the action revolves around this fixed position.

On radio, indicating the distance between the audience’s position and the position of the dramatic figures is relatively simple: in recording, the producer considers the microphone to be the audience’s position. The microphone provides directional
information as voices approach it and retreat, offering changes in volume and resonance that inform the audience of changes in spatial orientation. The microphone can also create an acoustic “close-up” when a particular dramatic figure (or group of figures) is recorded closest to the microphone. This gives more weight to the voice of that individual or grouping of individuals and places them in the foreground of the perspectival field.

The placement of the microphone close to an individual dramatic figure can also produce the effect of an aside, or a soliloquy (although both in effect sound like internal monologues and there is little distinction between asides and soliloquies on radio). As William Stanton finds,

The effect of intimate physical presence (we are inside their head) is achieved by proximity to the microphone and also the use of the acoustic baffles or sometimes a small anteroom with a dry acoustic. On the other hand, if actors are supposed to be calling someone from the far end of a corridor, they stand at some distance from the microphone and “pitch” their voices in something approaching a shout.

(Stanton 96)

The close placement of the microphone thus creates an intimate space to be shared by the dramatic figure and the audience. This affords adaptations of tragedy to radio a unique opportunity to provide more nuanced deliveries in some lines, creating private conferences within public spaces in a manner of great flexibility that is not possible on the stage. For example, in the 1980 BBC Electra, while Clytemnestra asks that her prayers be granted she is placed at some distance from Electra. Electra’s voice is closest to the microphone, aligning the audience with her, while Clytemnestra’s voice has greater resonance, a slight echo, suggesting she is in open space. However, Clytemnestra’s
appeal to Apollo is interrupted by a brief aside. Clytemnestra calls out to Apollo: “If there are those that plot against my throne, to hurl me down, then use your power to thwart their plans and grant instead that I live on unharmed, still ruler of the House of Atreus, still prospering with those who share my fortune now and all my children too.” Then, immediately after invoking the idea of her children, the echo effect is dropped from her voice, which is now recorded close to the microphone, as she quickly says: “Save only those who hound me with their rancour and hate,” before proceeding in her speech to Apollo with the echo effect restored. It is clear, from the aural modulation and her delivery, that this thought is meant as an aside or internal monologue, for the audience to hear but not for Apollo or for any other figure in the diegesis. This rapid shift in spatial relations with the audience is only possible due to radio’s flexible properties. In the 2001 CBC Medea, which I will discuss in Chapter Five, radio’s flexibility is further exploited for great dramatic effect.

While radio adaptations tend to work extensively with the relationship between figures being near to or far from the audience’s point of perspectival focus, rarely do these productions utilize arrangements from side to side, from left to right; this is in spite of the fact that the representation of space on radio has undergone significant changes since the introduction of stereophonic recording. Two-channel recording, where the listener uses two different ear pieces to hear each separately recorded sound, had been experimented with since the late nineteenth century but stereo was not invented until the 1930s and its use on radio was not introduced until 1961. Prior to the use of stereo, radio could express distances but not directionality. This means that the sensation of objects being “near” or “far” could be represented, but all objects of representation were
essentially immediately in front of the listener. It was not possible to move to the left or right, or even to go behind the point of perspectival focus. This is best explained by Rudolf Arnheim’s observations of early radio in 1936. Arnheim describes how a microphone in the center of a room will note differences in the sound of a speaking subject walking towards and away from the microphone. But once that subject walks in a 360 degree circle around the microphone, while maintaining a consistent radius, it will sound as if the subject is standing on the same spot (99). Stereophonic broadcasting changed the geography of radio, “spread[ing] the sound so that it appears to emanate from an area rather than a point” (Wade 242). The introduction of stereophonic broadcasting was not uniformly welcomed. Martin Esslin, writing in the 1970s, had reservations about the impact of stereo. He found that the greater layering of sounds which stereo affords, the ability to locate characters “in an arc from left to right” deprives radio of “its special advantage as an immaterial medium not definitely located in space, able to move between dream and reality, the inner world of the mind and the outer world of concrete objects” (Esslin 184). Esslin also bemoans the development of “4-way radio” (surround sound) as it results in listeners experiencing “theatre in the round” (184). Esslin thinks that these things make the experience too concrete. He actually suggests that radio drama producers continue to produce plays that are monaural (emanating from just one spot in space). However, while Esslin objects to spatial orientation in terms of left/right and forward/back dimensions, even the monaural recording has a geography (of near/far).

Writer Jonathan Raban describes how “stereophony adds a quality of dense, subtly textured realism which is unavailable in a mono production. Stereo is an excellent tool for fleshing out certain atmospheric ideas; it can bring the illusion of all the sounds
of a particular event into the listener’s own room” (qtd. in Rodger 145). However, Raban also finds that this effect “tends to impose a mechanical naturalism on everything it records. It keeps sounds ‘out there’, making it hard to create that special, intimate ‘in here’ quality which was once the hall-mark of radio drama” (145). It is perhaps for this reason that the majority of the contemporary adaptations of tragedies to radio do not exploit the stereophonic capacities of the medium. The argument over the use of stereo may be a moot point as listeners do not always have the technology to receive the production as it is intended. As Stephen Katz, a CBC producer, notes, “We can do the most sophisticated stereo mix, with all sorts of subtleties, and people hear it on the car radio in mono over the sound of a motor through a rainstorm” (qtd. in Rabinovitch 3). Some of the more innovative adaptations do, however, experiment with stereophony and I will return to this in Chapter Five.

Music and Song

Music and song are employed extensively in adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio. Some would see this as a return to the form’s Greek roots, where parts are believed to have been sung and the plays were accompanied by simple instruments, such as the aulos (a double-reeded flute). Radio, as “a purely acoustic art” is “more closely connected with music than any other aural art (sound-film or theatre)” (Arnheim 32). Similarly, Greek tragedy was closely associated with the choral music (and dance) from which it emerged. According to Peter Wilson, the association was so strong that audiences attending the competition of the City Dionysia would describe their activity as going “‘es chorous (‘to the choruses’) or perhaps ‘es tragoidous’ (to the tragos-singers’)” (“Music”
Choral competitions at the City Dionysia involved roughly 1,165 citizens each year, making this a significant component of Greek social and cultural life (191). The presence of the chorus is the most significant feature of Greek tragedy and it readily distinguishes this form of drama from all other forms. The chorus would sing or chant during its entrance and entrance-song (parados), during roughly three or four choral interludes (stasima), during sung exchanges with actors (kommos), and during its exit at the end of the play (exodos) (184). It is believed that actors delivered their lines in a variety of modes, including speech (albeit a stylized and rhythmic speech), but also extending to song and recitative (Hall “Actor’s Song in Tragedy” 106-107; Taplin Greek Tragedy in Action 19). As Wilson reminds us, several works on the music of tragedy were written in antiquity but have been lost and, further, very few transcriptions of ancient music have survived (including only seven lines of choral song from a tragedy, Euripides’ Orestes) (“Music” 191). As a result, Wilson finds that “it is little wonder that the music of tragedy has remained a rather abstruse special interest within dramatic studies” (184). The use of music in adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio has not received scholarly attention to date. I will provide an overview here, but must note that these adaptations employ extensive original compositions that warrant their own sustained examination.

The limited examination of the use of music in contemporary adaptations of tragedies is likely due to the fact that song, in particular, is rarely used in stage adaptations. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, sung parts are more commonly found in opera and musical theatre, but not often associated with serious drama. The conventions of modern and contemporary drama are so far removed from the conventions

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100 Specifically, Wilson notes the works of Aristoxenus of Tarentum (of the early 4th century BCE) who wrote On Tragic Poets, On Tragic Dancing, and On Aulos-Players (“Music” 184).
of fifth-century Athens that many stage adaptations of Greek tragedies minimize the
Chorus (rarely utilizing the 12-15 members that would have been common in the original
performances) and even divide the Chorus’ lines between individual actors. On radio, the
audience is better able to accept a sung chorus as the medium is so closely associated
with the broadcast of music and song. The surviving CBC and BBC adaptations of Greek
tragedies infrequently make use of singing Choruses, almost exclusively utilizing spoken
choruses. However all productions employ music and this music functions in a number of
ways. In terms of its formal properties in adaptations of tragedies, music can a) establish
setting by virtue of its style; b) operate as a framing device to create the beginning and
end of scenes; c) act indexically, representing actual music within the diegesis, mostly in
terms of song; d) act iconically, representing the action of a figure or object within the
diegesis through non-diegetic sound; e) represent the emotions felt by the protagonist,
causing the audience to identify with the protagonist; f) represent the mood of the play at
large, providing a broader representation of what is happening in the play at any given
moment in time; and g) it can accompany choral lyrics and set the tone for the content of
those lyrics. I will consider each function here, in turn.

Music is perhaps the most important indicator of a radio play’s setting and period
since there is no visual scenography to provide such temporal cues to the audience. The
style of music used in these adaptations is predominantly either contemporary classical
(involving full orchestral arrangements) or austere arrangements for flute, harp, and
timpani or other similar percussion. In the former instance, the musical style is used to
maintain a sense of timelessness, albeit one that is still rooted in ancient Greece. The
latter is instance is clearly an attempt to mimic the original staging conditions to some
degree. On occasion, productions attempt to establish the Greek setting using distinctly Greek instruments. For example, in the 1975 BBC production of Sophocles’ *Electra*, this attempt is made with the use of the bouzouki, a double-stringed lute that may be related to the ancient Greek pandoura, or trichordon. The most significant departure from the Greek setting is found in the 1998 CBC *Trojan Women* which is set to Blues music, establishing a modern context where the enslaved women are African-Americans (as well as “Trojans”). The 1976 BBC adaptation of *Agamemnon* (Gabriel Josipovici’s *Ag*) creates a modern setting through sound effects (including the layering of the sound of a tennis match played over the stylichomic exchange between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra). These are, however, exceptions, as all other productions in this study maintain an ancient Greek or more universal and timeless setting.

As a framing device, music can indicate when a scene begins and ends. In doing so it also acts as a bridge between scenes, often doing so through a fade-out followed by a fade-in. Rudolph Arnheim calls the fade a kind of acoustic “curtain” (108). Andrew Crisell agrees and extends the comparison to blackouts (50). Crisell also notes that music is used extensively to frame the dramatic narrative and separate it from advertising breaks and breaks for news reports (50). The majority of the productions in this study utilize music to indicate scene shifts, and also as prelude and epilogue, framing the play as a whole.

The diegetic use of music in radio plays is often straightforward. This is where music performs an indexical function, representing “ordinary sounds of the world which radio portrays” (Crisell 52). For example, the sound of an orchestra is heard as a man asks a woman to dance. The woman accepts and we understand that they are now dancing
to the orchestra’s music. In adaptations of tragedies, diegetic music is largely restricted to song and short musical lines such as the flourish of trumpets or drums to announce the entrance of royalty. While the latter are not specifically anchored in speech and it is not made explicit that the trumpets or drums originate in the diegesis, the audience can readily assume this to be the case (whereas the music of a full orchestra is not imagined to be in the space of the diegesis in these tragedies).

In the radio plays in this study, music is perhaps the element most likely to operate non-diegetically and iconically. For example, the 1966 CBC *Prometheus Bound* utilizes sustained notes produced by several brass instruments, along with the staccato thump of the timpani to punctuate the diegetic sound of Prometheus’ shackles being hammered to rock. This musical line is repeated several times as Prometheus is affixed, with dissonant, short notes played by violins added as the violence of the action escalates, when Prometheus’ breast is impaled. Later in this production, when Prometheus hears the “soft fluttering of wings” (the nymphs of Okeanos, the play’s chorus, making their entrance) the sound is not represented diegetically, but only non-diegetically through the sound of a flute’s trill. It is evident that the wings do not actually make the sound of a flute, but that the flute’s line acts iconically. This use of music is found in virtually all of the tragedies included in this study and it is used extensively within these productions.

Music can also punctuate a character’s emotions or actions (Goffman 164). As I have demonstrated, musical lines can be associated with specific stage gestures as stylized sound effects. Further, music can create a kind of aural subtext. When a dramatic figure speaks ironically, and this dramatic irony is meant to be registered only by the audience, non-diegetic music can alert the audience to that infelicitous speech. I will also
return to this in Chapter Five in my discussion of the 1998 CBC production of *The Trojan Women*.

Music also often acts as “mood music” or as background. According to Crisell, music here functions as “background enhancement which is understood not to be heard by the characters [as it is non-diegetic] but is heard by the listeners as a clue to the characters’ feelings or thoughts” (Crisell 51). This type of music thus operates symbolically. Often such music acts to compensate for a lack of visual scenography. Music can also restrict narrative information from the audience by only reflecting the current state of things, allowing the audience to be surprised by the plot’s turn of events. Alternately, music can act as a clue to the coming events, foreshadowing and creating tension. In the adaptations in this study, such foreshadowing was often associated with a kind of unrestricted narration where the audience knew (or was led to expect) what was to come. Most notably this occurred in productions of *Medea* where the music mirrored the contents of the text, highlighting Medea’s ability to kill her own children. Interestingly, the productions of *Oedipus Tyrannos* in this study did not use such foretelling cues. It is possible that this strategy was not employed in those productions due to a sense that the play’s tragic irony required no further signposting than what was included in the text.

While the non-diegetic use of music as “background” is extensive in these productions, this practice was not uniformly in vogue with radio producers. Martin Esslin, a producer with the BBC from 1940 to 1977, disapproves of “the proverbial celestial choirs” that end Hollywood films and similarly disapproves of non-diegetic music in radio drama (Esslin 183). He describes how non-diegetic music can disrupt the radio drama frame in this manner: “An intimate love scene accompanied by a symphony
orchestra playing a Tchaikovsky symphony may well conjure up in the listener’s mind not only the lovers but the orchestra as well – and in the same room: quite the wrong image!” (Esslin 183). Esslin promotes the restrained use of non-diegetic music. In his view, non-diegetic music can be used for punctuation and “as psychological counterpoint to the text” (183) as in the examples I provided here, above.

The use of song in CBC and BBC adaptations of Greek tragedies is largely restricted to the operation of the chorus. The style of the choral songs ranges from repeated musical lines to a more recitative-style delivery, and overwhelmingly we find song performed in groups rather than as solos. However, the use of sung rather than chanted choruses is infrequent in adaptations of Greek tragedies on Canadian and British radio. I believe that this is likely due to concerns over the pace of the production as sung lines take longer to emit than spoken lines. In the plays in this study, only the 1991 CBC Trojan Women, the 1992 BBC Oedipus the King (as well as the rest of the 1992 BBC Oresteia) use song for the Chorus’ lines. There are a handful of additional examples from other surviving recordings, but relative to the number of total adaptations such examples are in the minority. C.A. Trypanis commented on his translation of the Oresteia and its use in the 1962 BBC adaptation of the trilogy, explaining the decision to use a chanted rather than a sung chorus:

In the present production the handling of the choruses is of special interest.

Choruses, because of their long static character, have always been the stumbling-block in any sound or other production of ancient Greek drama. The music which accompanied them in antiquity having been lost, a spoken and not a sung chorus is all we can ask for today, as the words are bound to be obscured if set to modern
music, however successful that may be, and some of the most striking poetry in ancient drama is to be found in the choruses. (Trypanis 20)

Indeed, in the productions where choral lines are sung it is more difficult to hear the words of the lyric. But we must remember that the restlessness of the audience during a static choral interlude is not necessarily a problem. The opportunity to pause the play’s action and to create time for reflection is a legitimate dramaturgical strategy. In the productions studied here, most productions edit the chorus’ lines significantly and then utilize either a chanted chorus or divide these lines among individual members of the Chorus. There appears to be little interest in static moments in the works studied here.

We find an example of sung choruses in the CBC’s 1991 production of The Trojan Women. The chorus sings in two-part harmony, accompanied by a harp, and the choir sounds as if it consists of at least a dozen singers, but likely closer to two-dozen singers. The effect on radio is that the chorus does not sound as if they are in the same space as the primary dramatic figures. The sung music sounds almost non-diegetic, likely since the choral recording is made with the microphone at some distance from the choir, and further because it is difficult to hear the words being sung, creating the sense that this is background music rather than song by important dramatic figures. This production also limits the chorus’ lines in order to achieve a total running time of 60 minutes, which further limits the chorus’ role in the play. The BBC’s 1975 Electra avoids the problem of incoherent sung choruses by combining chanted and sung choric lines, with the sung lines performed in recitative (in speech-like rhythms, without repeated musical lines or identifiable melodic patterns).
Dramatic Figures

The representation of dramatic figures on radio involves some dramaturgical challenges but also allows for a great degree of flexibility and freedom. Certainly, the audience cannot glean character information from the figure’s costume, physical attitude, fine gestures, or facial expressions. Rather, the audience is only presented with a disembodied voice. However the lack of such concrete information also allows the audience to complete the dramatic frame in their imagination, stimulated by the actor’s voice, creating a particularly personal experience of the drama since the imagination is subjective and particular to each individual. Further, on radio the producer does not need to be concerned about whether an actor looks the part. Cantril and Allport describe how the radio producer “cares nothing for beauty, grace, physical ‘type,’ age, facial animation, or gestures. He wants actors who can sound their parts” (229). All that matters is what is evoked by the sound of their voice. Martin Esslin reminds us that this a particularly useful quality of the medium as, for example, the director of The Trojan Women does not need to be concerned with casting an “ideal beauty” for the role of Helen, whose face launched a thousand ships (172-173). Rather, each individual listener can imagine their version of this ideal beauty, solving a significant dramaturgical problem.

It is this individuality and specificity that is often overlooked in the criticism of radio plays. While I concede that a certain degree of stereotyping occurs in radio plays, this is done merely to distinguish between different figures and not to be reductive in the play’s treatment of the figure’s dimensions. Greek tragedies similarly restrict their dramatis personae to ones that are easily distinguishable from one another. We typically

101 The allusion is not from Euripides’ play but Christopher Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus, A-text 5.1.90.
see figures of diverse genders and ages occupying the stage. In the fifth-century theatre, much like in the space of radio, a number of dramatic figures who are of similar ages and genders, and even cultural background, can become difficult to distinguish from one another (in the case of the Greek theatre, for the similarity of their representative costumes and masks on radio for the similarity of their voices). It is helpful for the audience to hear the voice of an old man and to be able to associate this figure with, for example, Tiresias, the eldest figure in the plays in which he is featured. In Rudolph Arnheim’s 1936 work, *Radio: An Art of Sound*, the need for typecasting is addressed, with the suggestion that the nature of the figure’s voice will relay more than simple information about the figure’s identity. Arnheim promotes basic typecasting (e.g., the casting of a high-voiced actor to play a young woman) but further suggests that sound can mirror or contrast with the plot’s action (38). In mirroring action, Arnheim suggests that the voices of dramatic figures at odds with one another be played by voice types that are also in opposition (e.g., bass vs. tenor) and that dramatic figures with similar actions and goals in the play be voiced by actors with similar voice types (e.g., two sopranos, acting as allies) (28). This casting suggestion seems to be influenced by casting choices typical in operas and this strategy is worth noting. However, there are additional ways toaurally represent dramatic figures.

Defining dramatic figures through sound relies on the musicality of the voice (its timbre and texture), the rhythm and pace of speech, the accent employed, and the positioning of the figure in space. In the 2001 CBC *Medea*, the actor who plays the title role, Seana McKenna, employs rhythms and pacing that are distinct in the play. When speaking from the heart, her bitterness and rage result in rapid and staccato line delivery,
almost as if McKenna is spitting out the words. However, when McKenna is attempting to persuade others (be it the chorus, Creon, Jason, or Aegeus), her voice takes on a measured, steady pace, with legato dynamics. The timbre of her voice is also distinct from the other women in the play, and its pitch (a mezzo-soprano range) is also distinct, with the nurse being played by an alto of advanced age, and the chorus played by one young soprano, and two altos.

However, the 2001 CBC Medea does not make use of what would surely distinguish Medea from the others in the dramatic frame: an accent. Medea is known as a barbarian, an outsider in Corinth. Of the three productions in this study, only one makes use of an accented Medea (that is, an accent different from the remainder of the cast) and this is possibly due to the fact that the actress starring in the 1962 BBC Medea is the Greek actress, Elsa Verghis (who speaks English with a Greek accent). The use of an accent provides an immediate and ongoing marker of Medea as an outsider, as different from the others, including the women of Corinth who act as the play’s chorus. While the text makes clear that Medea has come from a foreign land, the fact that Medea is not only a foreigner but essentially stateless is somewhat lost when we are not reminded of her ethnicity.

BBC producer Martin Esslin recommends the use of regional accents to distinguish characters based on class types, such as “well spoken butler” and the “cockney bus driver” (Esslin 182). This use of clichéd voices is not distinctly employed in adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio, perhaps due to an attempt to reproduce the plays as period pieces placed in their original setting, and a possible concern that easily geographically located accents will localize the works in contemporary and non-Greek
spaces and settings. However there are, at times, some markers of difference between messengers and aristocratic figures, where the latter typically speak in received pronunciation while the former use clear but common accents. Adaptations, more frequently, make this distinction through variation in diction. The British productions typically employ English accents, with the exception being the BBC’s production of Seamus Heaney’s adaptation of *Philoctetes* (*The Cure at Troy*) where the cast is fully Irish.

The Canadian productions operate much in the way that the Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada operates: those whose voices are naturally accented speak with accents while those who sound “Canadian” do not modulate their voices to take on other accents. The shift from the early adaptations to more contemporary ones demonstrates a shift away from softened British accents to English-Canadian accents (primarily the accent of the North American mid-west) as casts consisted increasingly of native Canadian actors, but this is uneven within the cast of any particular production. There is no noticeable inclusion of non-British accents in spite of Canada’s significant immigrant population.

The acting style of radio actors in these productions is largely dependent on the musicality of voice, the information provided in the text through speech, and musical accompaniment. Esslin points out some of the challenges of these acting conditions, reminding us that “an actor playing a policeman or a parlour maid on the stage has most of the basic task of characterization done for him by the costume he wears” (186) but radio actors must rely on their voice. Further, the actor can not use fine performance gestures to provide additional information about the character they play. Neither can the
actor indicate complicated physical reactions to what others say, filling in the subtext for silent moments. Indeed, on radio, the silent figure is extinguished from the audience’s awareness (as I further discuss in Chapter Five). Some gestures in Greek tragedies are provided through diegetic speech, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, and these comments also often characterize the attitude of the dramatic figure as they perform the acts being narrated. For example, in *Oedipus Tyrannos* the chorus comments on Jocasta’s final departure from the stage: “Why has she run out in *wild grief*? I fear some evil from her silence” (1073F5, italics mine). However, without such diegetic narration, as Perloff reminds us, “it takes enormous discipline on the part of the actors to communicate a whole world of experience purely through voices and breath: no touching, no gestures, no eye contact – just a voice and a mike and an occasional sound” (Perloff 295).

However, these perceived “lacks” also result in a situation where such details can be provided by the audience, resulting in a more personal and intimate experience of the diegetic world. Indeed, the acting style of the radio actor is likely more akin to the acting style of the film actor than to the style of any stage actor (be it a contemporary one or a fifth-century Athenian actor). This is because the microphone can capture subtleties in the voice, particularly since the introduction of stereophonic recording. There is a kind of “smallness” to radio.102

One of radio’s most significant aids in the representation of dramatic figures on air is its capacity for creating intimacy and for representing situations that are not easily reproduced in other media. For example, Crisell describes a situation where radio’s unique properties allow it to be more effective than other media: the viewpoint of being

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102 While Bachelard’s concept of the miniature is different from my description of “smallness” his juxtaposition of the miniature and the immense is what inspired my conclusion here. See *The Poetics of Space.*
inside a coffin while being buried alive. The point-of-view of the victim is almost impossible in theatre and even on film, the environment can not be effectively conveyed in complete darkness and “the slightest attempt to illuminate the situation would reduce the horror it is meant to impart” (Crisell 157). While this extreme positioning is not employed in Greek tragedies, the example illustrates how on radio the audience can effectively get inside the mind of a dramatic figure and experience the diegetic world from their perspective.

Radio plays employ additional narrative strategies that promote the close identification with dramatic figures. This is accomplished through perspectival relations (the positioning of dramatic figures relative to the microphone and the audience’s point of view) and, by extension, the use of interior monologues. First, the simple positioning of the play’s protagonist closest to the microphone for the majority of the play acts in much the same way that cinema’s continuity editing technique of shot, reverse-shot functions. In film, a dramatic figure may be shown to be looking off beyond the camera’s perspectival field, and in the following shot the audience experiences a close-up, reverse shot of an object. Continuity editing suggests that the dramatic figure is looking at the object. This is reinforced by returning to the original shot and revealing the dramatic figure’s reaction to what has been observed. This narrative strategy encourages the audience to closely identify with the dramatic figure in question, since the audience sees what the dramatic figure sees, from their perspective. On radio, if the point of perspectival focus remains fixed in one location, as it does in the vast majority of the plays in this study (with the exceptions being discussed in Chapter Five), and further if one dramatic figure overwhelmingly occupies the space closest to that point, the audience
will experience the diegetic world as that dramatic figure experiences it, closely aligning the two. For example, in the CBC’s 1991 production of *The Trojan Women*, when Hecuba speaks, she exclusively occupies the front-center of the perspectival field, being closest to the microphone. This is significant in this play because there are a number of dramatic figures who enter, deliver long speeches, and exit, yet we are always reminded that Hecuba’s perspective is the one with which we are to be aligned. We may sympathise with Cassandra or Andromache, but it is Hecuba’s response to these women that is emphasized through the proxemetics of the action.

In addition to these basic perspectival relations, radio’s properties allow for the audience to become more intimately acquainted with the plays’ dramatic figures by virtue of the audience’s ability to hear inside the private world of the figures. CBC radio producer Damiano Pietropaolo describes how this is achieved:

Radio dramaturgy allows the listener to enter into the private, inner world of the protagonist by simply abolishing the separation between private and public utterance. And lest you mistake this technique for a radio version of the stage aside, which momentarily breaks through the fourth wall, bear in mind that radio has no fourth wall. By its very nature radio allows us entry into the subconscious life of characters in the play because the characters inhabit the same space as the listeners. Dramatically the radio dramatist can collapse the private and the public into a simultaneous presence.” (“Narrative and Performance” 75)

The collapse of spaces promotes the close identification with the figure, usually the play’s protagonist. But radio promotes an identification that is more intimate than what
one would experience in a novel or on film. This is due to the subjective and personal function of the imagination.

The role of the listener’s imagination in radio is that it abolishes the conventional distinction between the actors (who perform) and the audience (who sit apart and watch) because the words, delivered by the actors who are a vast distance away yet through the paradox of technology ‘closer’ to us than they would be to a theatre audience, invade each of us alone and our own surroundings and force us to take over some of the functions which would be performed onstage. (Crisell 153)

By taking over certain functions, the audience fills out the dramatic frame through imaginative completion. One example of this is found in the use of monologues which are heard as the externalization of internal thoughts. Crisell notes that it is “in the blindness of radio” where “the monologue is much more effective; improbability is rather less obvious on radio. We may hear the character talking to herself, but at least we do not have to see her doing so” (Crisell 156). By collapsing the space between the dramatic figure and the audience, the monologue becomes an intimate expression, shared by the audience. This is radio’s strength and, because of this, radio is exceptionally good at dramatizing plays where the emphasis is on internal conflicts. Such conflicts are frequently found in Greek tragedies and this is one of the reasons why these stage plays adapt so well to radio.

This chapter has demonstrated the different functions of the formal properties of radio plays as they apply to the dramaturgy of ancient Greek plays in adaptation. In my discussion, several features of the tragedies have been shown to adapt easily to radio
while others required dramaturgical intervention. In the following chapter I will further consider more significant interventions as well as innovations in CBC and BBC adaptations.
CHAPTER FIVE

Dramaturgical Interventions and Innovations

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how the dynamics of Greek tragedies function in adaptation to radio. In that discussion, the formal properties of tragedies were shown to be suitable for adaptation to radio, given the shared qualities in the dramaturgy of tragedy and radio drama. The extensive use of diegetic narration, in particular, was shown to facilitate the audience’s comprehension of the play’s action and the dramatic figures’ proxemetics and kinesics. The use of various dramaturgical interventions was also introduced, including non-diegetic narration, sound effects to represent performance gestures, and non-diegetic music. While the impetus for such interventions varied, two primary motivations were identified: the need to remedy differences in dramaturgies and the perceived need to adapt the works to be suitable for “unknowing” audiences. In this chapter, I will assess more significant interventions that are made with different motivations. The productions in this chapter are primarily examples of adaptations that fully exploit the properties of radio, producing innovations where producers begin to experiment with point of view (in Medea), setting and the use of music (in The Trojan Women), temporal order and spatial relations (in Antigone), and montage techniques to produce an defamiliarizing effect (in Agamemnon). This chapter then concludes with a discussion of perhaps the most significant issue in the adaptation of stage plays to radio: dramaturgical erasure. This erasure occurs when figures are silent for a prolonged period of time and no other dramatic figures calls attention to their presence. On stage, silent figures are noted and their proxemetics and kinesics maintain significance within the scene.
of their presence. However on radio, such figures are effectively extinguished by their silence, they are forgotten by the audience, and there are significant implications here for figures such as Jocasta (*Oedipus Tyrannos*) and Cassandra (*Agamemnon*). The productions in this chapter move away from the textual and narrative fidelity generally maintained in other CBC and BBC adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio.

**Perspective, Identification, and Extension in Euripides’ *Medea***

As I previously discussed in Chapter Three, radio is particularly adept at not only creating aural “close ups” but it is also able to place us “inside the mind” of a dramatic figure. On radio, the aside and soliloquy become an intensely intimate expression that is shared not with the dramatic figure and the audience as a whole, but with the dramatic figure and individual audience members. In addition to offering a point of view that aligns the individual audience member with the dramatic figure, providing their perspective on the diegetic world, the process of imaginative completion that I discussed in Chapter Two results in the close identification of the listener with the dramatic figure. Since the completion of the dramatic frame requires the listener’s individual imagination, their subjective experience of the world being what fills in the gaps left by radio’s suggestions, listeners ultimately extend themselves into the dramatic frame. There are some potential problems with this close alignment between listener and protagonist and the implications of the audience’s extension into certain dramatic figures are what I wish to explore here. In particular, the treatment of Medea as a central dramatic figure
becomes problematic when, on radio, the audience closely aligns their perspective with hers.

Medea may be more successful in adaptation due to the play’s action being organised around a psychological study of the central dramatic figure, which plays on the formal strengths of radio, where the audience becomes complicit in Medea’s decision-making by identifying with her in the process of imaginative-completion. If an adaptation of Medea wishes to heighten the audience’s identification with her, the radio producer must capitalize on the medium’s strengths to exploit these and produce Medea as a woman of significant complexity. The Stratford Festival of Canada’s 2000 production, that was adapted to radio with the CBC in 2001, provides an excellent example of an adaptation where Medea gains complexity and the audience’s identification with her point of view is encouraged. This is primarily achieved through the central placement of Medea, in close proximity to the microphone and immediately at the point of perspectival focus.

The narrative strategy of the 2001 CBC production is set in motion with the opening scene where the Nurse speaks of Medea’s past. Robinson Jeffers’ adaptation, like many translations, develops the Nurse as a figure sympathetic to Medea. The Nurse wishes that the Greeks had never sought the Golden Fleece as she identifies this action with setting in motion the disastrous chain of events that lead to the present moment, casting responsibility away from Medea. She criticizes Jason for turning from Medea in order to gain advantage in Corinth in a new marriage. But the Nurse also foreshadows the play’s climax, worrying that Medea hates her own children. The children soon enter, and while onstage they are silent figures, on radio their presence is anchored in vocalisations.
The boys are heard laughing, indicating not only their presence but their attitude, suggesting that they are playing together. On radio this is more effective than in the stage version of this same production where the boys can not continue to play in the background as this would draw visual attention away from the main action between the Nurse and the Tutor. On radio, the boys are ever-present in the background as their laughter is used to punctuate portions of the scene where the Nurse and Tutor speak of Medea’s state of mind, acting as an acoustic foreshadowing device, linking Medea’s anger with the young boys. The repetition of the sound of laughter further maintains the presence of the silent figures who would otherwise be erased from the scene.

The laughter’s significance is heightened by the “offstage” sound of Medea’s angry exclamations. The Jeffers adaptation adds interjections by Medea, emphasising her curses on Jason and his household. It is made clear that she speaks from within the house while the action takes place outdoors in front of the house. This is indicated by the positioning of the Nurse, Chorus and Tutor in the foreground, the children in the midground, and Medea’s voice (with additional resonance indicating an indoor space) in the background (a spatial relationship maintained from the stage production). However, when Medea finally leaves the home and joins the Nurse and Chorus outside, she quickly moves into the center of the perspectival field. Medea addresses the Chorus, the women of Corinth, and from this point onwards, Medea is the primary occupant of this central position, with few exceptions.

Medea’s central position allows the audience to experience the diegetic world from her perspective, creating a close identification with her. Because the process of imaginative completion is so personal and subjective, the identification with the play’s
protagonist creates a kind of extension of each audience member into the diegetic world. We experience the world as Medea experiences it and extend ourselves into the diegetic world through her. This is accomplished in the radio production both by having Medea dominate the position closest to the microphone, but also by creating private moments between Medea and the audience. For example, after Creon grants Medea the remainder of the day to prepare herself for exile, it is during his exit that Medea says to him “I will thank you” and then to herself “and the whole world will hear of it.” The latter phrase is uttered, bitterly, in a low voice, close to the microphone, indicating either an aside or an internal monologue that is shared with the audience. The radio production also creates intimacy between Medea and the audience during Jason’s first appearance onstage. When Medea evokes memories of happier times with Jason, the audience hears non-diegetic music that is full of bright harmonic tones and long, sustained notes. The suggestion is that Medea is not using these memories as ammunition to lure Jason, but rather that she is experiencing her own genuine nostalgia. This is further reinforced by its contrast with Medea’s speech to Aegeus where the production suggests she is both manipulating and enchanting him. As she makes Aegeus swear to protect her, the non-diegetic music of chimes ringing and a low, measured drum beat suggest that he is hypnotized by Medea.

Following Jason’s departure, the production creates a true internal monologue by having Medea deliver her speech on the nature of great love with a high degree of resonance. Medea’s speech resonates as one’s voice would in a small, tiled washroom, creating the sense that Medea speaks in order to hear herself, speaking only for herself, as if she speaks in a small space. This space is identified as being in her own mind as the youngest chorus member reinforces and anchors the sound of Medea’s speech when she
asks “What is she doing, that woman? Staring like stone, staring.” It becomes clear that the Chorus observes Medea in a trance and that Medea’s speech, which was heard by the audience, is sound that was strictly internal. Similarly, when the Nurse announces that Aegeus approaches, Medea offers a prayer asking the gods for help with her cause. This prayer is whispered directly into the microphone as a soliloquy, not meant to be heard by the Chorus.

It is during moments such as Medea’s soliloquies where the audience is aligned with Medea. Her interior monologues allow the audience to take the perspective of being inside the mind of the protagonist, creating identification with their point of view and, as a result, closeness between the audience and the protagonist. This is necessary because there are more challenging moments in the production where the audience’s identification with Medea is potentially strained. I suggest that the close identification with Medea is necessary because I believe that most contemporary adaptations of the play wish to make Medea’s choices problematic rather than to simply present her as an evil and single-minded woman. Unlike the original context, where Medea was likely presented more as a cautionary tale, the modern Medea is one who the audience could find sympathetic. Indeed, in the 2000 Stratford Festival of Canada’s stage production, the audience was

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103 Peter Wilson writes about how the Greeks populated their stage with dangerous and rebellious women but also with deeply flawed men (men who make poor decisions, men who can not come to a decision, and men who allow women to make decisions for them) (“Powers of Horror and Laughter”). One popular hypothesis to explain this preoccupation with flawed individuals is that these plays served a cathartic and didactic function – offering a place to exercise and exorcise one’s fears and anxieties, to reinforce societal values and offer models of good behaviour (with the latter being found usually in secondary figures, such as Creon – at least in Oedipus Tyrannos). In the original context, Froma Zeitlin finds, “the plays are never really about women, but rather they are about the effect on the male audience” (65). On radio, the audience is not homogeneous and the potential for identification with the play’s central figure is great, whether that figure is a woman or a man. This creates the opportunity to identify with many problematic figures, from a vengeful and infanticidal sorceress to a patricidal mother-marrying King, not to mention the usual cast of rebellious sons and daughters, foreigners, and usurpers in their migration from the ancient Greek stage to the modern radio.
clearly critical of Jason. When Medea speaks with Creon and wishes “that Jason is as kind to [Glauc] as (pause) to me” the audience responded with laughter, siding with Medea in their vilification of Jason’s actions.

This close identification with Medea is a strategy that creates greater dramatic tension when Medea struggles with her plan for revenge. As she weighs her options, Medea is torn between her love for her children and her desire to make Jason suffer through the loss of his sons. She weighs her own pain at the loss of the children against Jason’s as she gazes at her children. (The childrens’ speech is indicated here in parentheses while my descriptive stage directions are both in brackets and in italics.)

No one has ever injured me but suffered more than I have suffered… Therefore, this final sacrifice I intended glares in my eyes like a lion on a ridge. We still hate, you know. A person nearer than these more vile, more contemptible, whom I (Medea inhales sharply.) I cannot. If he were my own hands, I would cut him off, or my eyes, I would gouge him out, but not you. (‘Mother?’) Oh! That was madness. (Deep inhalation.) So, Jason will be able to say, “I have lost much, but not all. I have children. My sons are well.” (Medea’s voice catches in her throat.) No (she groans). I want him crushed. Boneless. Crawling. (Pause.) I have no choice. […] Loathing is endless. Hate is a bottomless cup I will pour and pour. (Sharply and harshly.) Children! (Medea softens) Oh my little ones. What was I dreaming? Oh, never, never, never, never shall my own tender babes be hurt.

And as Medea looks at her children, describing their features sweetly, foreboding music begins to play and Medea once more links the children with Jason: “Would you say that this child has Jason’s eyes?” The addition of music works well here as an indicator that
Medea has made her final decision. On stage this moment is more pronounced (Medea abruptly pushes her son forward to one of the Chorus members and asks the same question) but the softer interpretation on radio allows potential for wishful thinkers to believe that the children might still be spared. Indeed, the radio adaptation allows for some ambiguity. When we hear Medea groan “No,” we might imagine that she means “No, I can not kill my own children,” or “No, this must be done.” Each listener, completing Medea through their imagination, particularly the “unknowing” audience member, is confronted with the conclusion they have personally drawn. After the brief silence, her pained guttural moan is revealed to indicate her willingness to accept the consequences of the planned murder.

Throughout the full-length production, the strategy of selective vocal ambivalence is evident and effectively emphasises Medea’s wavering resolve. Her attempt to make this extreme choice has been the focus of the majority of the play. This is not the first time where we hear her waver in her decision-making process. The distinction between the stage and radio versions is significant here. On stage, Seana McKenna plays a Medea who explicitly appeals to the sympathies of the audience yet the staging ensures that she is seen as an outsider (which is her status in the world of the play, as she is a foreigner who is to be exiled). The chorus is positioned to constantly mediate Medea’s actions, often inhabiting center-stage while Medea paces the perimeter of the stage space (which was the Tom Patterson stage in the 2000 production, a considerably deep but narrow thrust stage). In the radio production these spatial dynamics are inverted, and instead of Medea performing her outsider-ness, she remains in the phonic equivalent of center stage. Her asides, her monologues (which both easily become internal monologues on radio),

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her growls and utterances, are all presented directly to the radio audience (by placing her voice in the centre of the acoustic space and closest to the microphone) facilitating an intimate relationship with Medea. As McLuhan said, when we listen to radio, we are inside it (Understanding Media 298) – and in the case of Medea, through imaginative completion, when we listen to this radio play, we inhabit Medea’s very body. As Damiano Pietropaolo noted, there is no fourth wall on radio and the division of stage and audience spaces are collapsed into a single space residing in the audience member’s inner cognitive space of reception (“Narrative and Performance”). As a result, we experience Medea’s internal thoughts with great immediacy and intimacy.

The 2001 CBC production of Medea takes the close identification with Medea one step further in its innovative use of space. The production presents two disparate spaces, simultaneously, and draws us inside Medea’s mind, revealing her internal thoughts as she locks herself indoors with her children, struggling with her planned act of murder. While the chorus pleads for Medea to release the boys, banging on the doors to the house, we simultaneously hear Medea (understood to now be behind closed doors, but again in the center of the perspectival field and closest to the microphone). Medea instructs herself to resist her planned actions (repeating “don’t, don’t, don’t” in urgent whispers) and the audience is not restricted to the perspective of the chorus as we are in the stage production of the same play (where Medea’s hesitation is not represented). This simultaneous representation of two unique spaces is similar to the cinematic split-screen, but much more effective on radio where we are not as conscious of the technological manipulation of space. The result is a degree of surprise when, shortly after Medea’s hesitation is registered the sudden screams of the children are heard. It is interesting,
however, that this production uses a highly stylised scream, modulated through a synthesiser to sound almost inhuman. This choice further softens the audience’s position towards Medea, limiting our condemnation of her actions by dehumanizing the children and desensitizing the audience at the moment of their murder.

As I noted, the adaptation of a play such as Medea may be more successful in adaptation as the action is organized around a psychological study of the main dramatic figure, but it is clearly also successful due to the adaptive strategies of the radio producer that allow this production to exploit the medium and produce a woman of significant complexity. The dramaturgical strategies employed facilitate the activity of the audience’s imagination and potential identification. While the term “identification” is problematic, we can say that in this context it is not a mere recognition (from a distanced and critical stance) but at least partly a subconscious and involuntary connection between the protagonist and the audience (in their ‘dream-like’ state of imagination.) In the private, inward performance space of radio drama, the potential for identification is great. When invited by certain production practices and through imaginative completion, the individual spectator can extend themselves into the dramatic frame, allowing for a personal and intimate experience of the theatrical world and close identification with the play’s dramatic figures.

Speech and Music in Euripides’ The Trojan Women

In the 1990s, the CBC extended its radio play production to include co-productions with radio play units from around the world. One of the products of this
endeavor is the 1998 CBC-BBC co-production of Euripides’ *The Trojan Women*. Using the translation of Irish poet Brendan Kennelly, the production was directed by the BBC’s Martin Jenkins and produced by the CBC’s Damiano Pietropaolo, with a fully Canadian cast. What is particularly interesting about this production is its use of blues music. The music for this production, in the “modern electric blues”\textsuperscript{104} style, was composed and performed by Canadian Colin Linden. The story of the Trojan women is thus read through a musical narrative of American slavery,

Much like the ancient Greek play, blues, as a form of music, emerged out of a culture of orality. Blues music emerged in the 1880s as communal performance that was part of the daily life of southern African-Americans (Tracy 2-3). The blues and their vocal style are believed to have developed from oral traditions including

work songs – apparently African-derived, secularized group labor songs with their antiphonal structure, highly rhythmic, heavily accented cadences, and improvised or traditional lyrics dealing most frequently with love of hard work and strung together loosely, frequently emotionally connected units – and the field hollers – themselves similar to work songs but individualized, somewhat freer and more decorative in their vocal lines. (Steven Carl Tracy “Introduction” 2).

Afro-American Studies scholar Steven Carl Tracy draws parallels between the blues singer and the griot figure in African societies (2). A griot is a praise singer and a storyteller (of cultural history, often of his tribal leader’s history). However Tracy finds the blues singer to be “not much of a genealogist, nor a historian describing the ancestral history of a tribal chief’s or important person’s family” but rather a figure who traces a

\textsuperscript{104}“Electric” blues emerged following the invention of the guitar amplifier in the 1930s and its widespread use in the 1950s and 1960s.
“group psychic history” (2). Also, the blues singer’s role is one that can be taken by anyone, whereas the griot’s role was often an inherited one. Because this form of storytelling is shared, blues music involves certain standard archetypal structures. For example, common refrains are used to set up a line of thought that was then often improvised. Refrains include “woke up this mornin’” and “I’m goin’ away” (Tracy 4).

The 1998 CBC-BBC production presents Poseidon as the play’s griot who establishes the play’s history and immediate context. In this production, Poseidon’s introductory speech becomes a blues lament with his voice playing in a call and response pattern with a harmonica, accompanied by a steel-string guitar playing classic blues lines (bending strings, using slides and heavy vibrato). Poseidon sings: “War is over, when will another war begin? I’m a tired old god, in an old tired world. I’ve seen war piled on war, horrible horrors, death on death…” These lines echo classic blues themes of fatigue with the suffering of life. Further, as Tracy writes, “the blues is imbued with the lash of slavery, the empty promises of Reconstruction, the indignities of Jim Crow, and the continuing inequities inherent in American society” (Tracy 6). That the blues are almost synonymous with slavery makes this a suitable choice for modernizing *The Trojan Women*. A central theme of blues music is migration (and being left behind) and in Euripides’ play the enslaved women are forced into migrating, leaving their dead husbands and sons behind.

The adaptation to blues music is interesting because the play becomes not just about Troy or the American south, but about other cultures that share a history of enslavement. While the adaptation makes the play contemporary, it also strikes a universal chord. Tracy writes that
by using traditional lyric ‘formulas’ and stanzas transformed to relate to contemporary experiences, and by tapping into characteristics of expression and performance that can be seen as part of a kind of ‘blues persona,’ blues performers can be seen as purveyors of both personal and communal, contemporary and historical, realities and visions. First person singular on the surface, first person plural down deep, multi-tensed in their echoes of the past, soundings of the present, and reverberations in the future. Unifiers. (Tracy 7)

So when Poseidon sings about the end of war, he also looks forward to the future, calling on women and on their love to “rule the world.” This creates a sense of hope and renewal which is also part of the counterculture of blues performance. Blues performances (at least until the 1940s) were not a call to action. They were not “incendiary” and “did not end in race riots or civil rights marches,” as historian R.A. Lawson puts it (18). While the emancipation of slaves (by Abraham Lincoln on 1 January 1863) technically brought freedom, “within blues music we see black southerners’ recognition that they have been relegated to second-class status after Bourbon ‘redemption’ and ‘progressive’ segregation; we see the will to reject the dictums of Jim Crow segregation while acknowledging that there was little they could do to overhaul the social system at large” (Lawson 57). To a great degree, this reflects the position of the Trojan women of Euripides’ play. They have been defeated but still have some hope of evading their fate. Poseidon speaks of the noble Hecuba and how “even in slavery, she struggles to be free.” The hope for the future that frames the play’s opening with Poseidon’s song, where he speaks of having to leave his city much like the enslaved women, is perhaps necessary as otherwise the play offers little by way of hope.
Following Poseidon and Pallas Athene’s opening exchange, we are transported into the outdoor space before the sacked city of Troy. This is simply accomplished through the use of the sound of crickets to indicate an outdoor space and a summer setting, and this sound plays underneath all remaining text that is not accompanied by music. For the remainder of the play, song is incorporated into the monologues of the women in the play and into the Chorus’ lyrics. For example, in Hecuba’s call to the women to come and see the ships that will take them to slavery she sings lines such as “come out” performed as a refrain. The women of the chorus advance, with the sound effect of the chains that bind them indicating their movement. The Chorus’ lines are sung individually (“Where will they take me. To some island without a name? Where I must lie, under the sun and moon of shame? Never, never again, to see my own city. Where will they take me?”) with some call and response (when one chorus member mimics the Greek’s selection of their slaves, singing “I want you” the Chorus as a group responds in kind, and this is repeated). The Chorus then sings and creates contrast between their impending sexual enslavement and their position in the city where their love for their respective husbands began. Sexuality, and specifically sexual freedom, is another common theme in blues music and the music is used heavily when such themes are the focus of the play’s scenes. While the Chorus laments the loss of their sexual freedom, we are soon introduced to Helen who exploits her sexuality and its power, even as a captive.

Blues music also acts to create subtext in this production, particularly in the exchange between Helen and Menelaus. While Robert Cushman, a Toronto theatre critic and great admirer of radio drama as a genre, claims that there is “little room for subtext”
on radio (Cushman 4), the use of music to act in counterpoint to speech is highly effective on radio and this production effectively demonstrates this.

Helen’s advance is indicated through both the diegetic narration of Hecuba who notes her entrance, but also the diegetic sound effect of the chains which bind her as well as a non-diegetic walking bass line punctuated by a brief guitar riff with bending strings. Helen’s speech to Menelaus is initially delivered with no other musical or sound effect, save for Hecuba’s exhalations and vocalizations in response to Helen’s early insults. When Helen turns her attention to Menelaus her speech is initially “public” in that she speaks in the mid-ground of the perspectival field and speaks out, seemingly to Menelaus and the other women in the playing space. But Helen, in her strategy to soften Menelaus’ stance, soon shares intimate moments with him alone. She appeals to him as she describes her marginalization in Troy.

You left Paris alone with me and took to the open sea away from me, away, away from me, leaving Paris alone with me. (pause) Do you know what it means to be alone. Alone as a madwoman, who in her madness has moments when she knows she is not mad. Alone is a cry for help too obvious to be heard. Alone is a whisper in a sick room. Would you rather go to war than be alone? […] I was stolen from you. I did not leave you. I suffered misery and pain at the hands of a strange man. Helen’s description of herself as a victim is reserved for Menelaus and her lowered voice, whispering at times, spoken close to the microphone, effectively places Helen close to Menelaus in a private and intimate space. Here, the erasure of the members of the chorus and of Hecuba is highly effective as Helen is in no way distracted by the critical presence
of those women whose onstage proxemics would change the nature of the scene (to one where Helen must guard herself from them while appealing to Menelaus).

Towards the end of her speech, a guitar, snare drum and walking bass line begin to accompany her words. Helen speaks as if she is pronouncing an incantation, hypnotizing Menelaus with the words of her spell: “If you choose to kill me for my truth, [SFX: music cue] then kill me: but know that it is Helen’s truth you kill to your internal shame. Truth-killer Menelaus. May that never be your name. Your name is sweeter far than that. (closest to the microphone) Menelaus, reasonable man, lover of justice, patient listener to a pleading voice. Helen’s voice.” Here the guitar’s musical line sounds like the slinky advance of a hungry cat approaching its wounded and disabled prey. It is through this musical cue that the audience understands that Helen has enchanted Menelaus, disarming him, and effectively won her argument and her life. This is further reinforced when Helen tells Menelaus to touch her, instructing him to touch her “there” and “there” and we hear him moan in response.

Here, the blues line represents Helen’s sexual power and her deployment of this resource. This is distinct from the musical lines that play during moments where dramatic figures reflect on their enslavement and that distinction is made primarily through the walking bass line which offers Helen’s speech a particularly sexual and predatory feeling. Both uses of music are particularly effective because of the connotations of blues music and the meanings carried by this form of expression. The CBC-BBC co-production effectively modernizes the story through the choice of this distinct musical style, but also maintains strong links between the common themes of blues music (enslavement and sexuality) and the themes of Euripides’ play.
Gestures, Off-Stage Action, and Flashbacks in Sophocles’ *Antigone*

In Chapter Four I introduced the 1987 CBC adaptation of *Antigone* when I discussed its use of diegetic narration and sound effects to establish spatial relations. I explained the production’s simple use of a herald to announce Creon’s entrances and exits, accompanied by a muted trumpet playing a simple interval (a major fourth). However this production also experiments with more complex spatial and even temporal relations. In the scene with the Sentry and Creon, we find a memorable performance gesture and an aside to the audience that creates two distinct playing spaces, and then in the reports of offstage action we experience the only true flashback sequences evident in the surviving adaptations of Greek tragedies on radio. While these features may not be considered innovative when compared to other experimental radio plays, in the context of the CBC and BBC adaptations sourced for this study, this production stands out in its effective use of radio’s properties.

The scenes between the Sentry and Creon offers perhaps the most significant opportunity for comic relief in all of the extant Greek tragedies. In the CBC’s 1987 adaptation, the Sentry offers comedy but some of it is elicited through his suffering. He speaks in earthy language, illustrating a class distinction between him and Creon. He is a man just doing his job, a man who does not care about questions of familial duty or civic justice but who cares to keep his job and save his own neck. In this production, Creon is a brutish tyrant with a short temper and the Sentry becomes the victim of his impatience.
First, the Sentry’s hesitation to bring Creon the news is relayed with some fidelity to the original text:

SENTRY: (COMING ON) At last, my king, I’m not the last one here, though it’s true I’ve come alone. I’m running backwards, sir, because my feet insisted on going the other way. I told my feet to run to Thebes, Creon must be told, but my feet cried out, “why not run straight to hell since that’s where we’re going as soon as Creon knows”…

While the Sentry’s actual entry, jogging backwards through space, does not get a laugh from the radio audience (as they witness no physical comedy) actor Paul Beckett’s delivery suggest the Sentry’s clowning through its musical patter. The production reinforces this by having the chorus of male citizens laugh in response to the Sentry’s clowning, encouraging the radio audience to receive his foolishness lightly.

However Tidler’s adaptation also adds aggressive physical gestures to the scene as Creon chokes the Sentry for bringing bad news.

SENTRY: The body, sir. Someone has buried the body.


SENTRY: (CHOKING) I don’t know. I don’t know. Your fingers, sir, dig deeper prints about my throat than we could find upon the ground.

Creon’s grip on the Sentry’s neck is apparently released only about a dozen lines later, in the middle of the Sentry’s report of the details of the guards’ discovery. We know that he has been released because the Sentry gasps, inhaling sharply and then speaking more freely. Here the chorus does not find humour in Creon’s response and as the Sentry becomes increasingly insolent the chorus grows fearful. This scene also effectively
demonstrates how ineffective the chorus is in advising Creon. They fear him and are placed in the mid-ground of the perspectival field. As the scene concludes, it is the Sentry who is in the centre of the perspectival field, placing him on the side of the audience with Creon in direct opposition with this position. Creon dismisses the Sentry, commanding that he finds the culprit of Polyneices’ burial.

CREON: Out of my sight!

SENTRY: I had nothing to do with the burial sir.

CREON: Bring me my sworn enemy or your purse shall have your head for its profit!

HERALD: (SFX: Trumpet) The King departs!

CHORUS murmurs, their murmurs fade.

SENTRY: I’ll go and have another look, but the odds are very good you’ll never hear from this odd man out again! (SFX: Trumpet, fading)

The Sentry’s final line is delivered directly to the microphone while the activity around him is receding into the distance, framing his line as an aside to be shared only with the audience. By creating two distinct spaces within the perspectival field – the receding action and the aside – the production prepares the audience for more significant spatial modulations.

Sophocles’ Antigone involves a number of reports of significant off-stage action. First comes the Sentry’s report of the off-stage burial of Polyneices, then the Sentry returns with Antigone, having discovered her attempting to bury Polyneices once more. Haemon reports to his father, Creon, that he has heard (off-stage) that the citizens of Thebes are sympathetic to Antigone and warns that punishing Antigone may not be
prudent. A messenger later reports to Eurydice the discovery of Antigone’s body and
Haemon’s subsequent suicide in front of his father. Finally, there is another messenger’s
report of Eurydice’s off-stage suicide. In adaptations that maintain great textual fidelity,
these reports are sustained through the original diegetic narration as indicated in
Sophocles’ text.

In the 1987 CBC adaptation of *Antigone* by Charles Tidler, we find some of these
off-stage episodes being represented as flashbacks rather than as reports. This highly
cinematic device of “showing” rather than “telling” allows the audience to experience
first-hand the scene at Polynoeices’ burial place, Teiresias’ off-stage attempt to light a
sacrifice, as well as the scene of Antigone and Haemon’s suicides, transporting the
audience there through a spatio-temporal shift. This shift is accomplished quite simply
through the use of a cross-fade, where one scene fades out (with a decrescendo of
volume) and another scene fades in (with a crescendo of volume). This process is
repeated in order to once more transport the audience back to their original time and
space, aurally bracketing the flashback sequence. However in these examples we shall
also see how two spaces and times are united through diegetic narration overlapping with
the flashback’s representation of events.

When the Sentry returns to the stage, having captured Antigone, he relates what
happened offstage and the audience is transported directly to the off-stage space where
the events transpired and back in time to the exact moment of its occurrence. The spatio-
temporal shift is indicated through a cross-fade between scenes where the Sentry’s
description of events fades out while the howl of wind fades in (see Appendix C for a
script sample of this scene). Tidler here adds a scene where he represents the guards’
blinding by blowing sand and their fear of the screams of birds (which turn out to be the cries of Antigone). What is particularly interesting is that Tidler maintains the Sentry in the “present” so that the audience experiences two temporal moments and spatial locations simultaneously. The effect is both comic (the guards stumble into each other and one calls another “Asshole!”) and frightening (with the bird screams/Antigone’s cries represented as a piercing caw that is part human, part beast).

Tidler continues to employ this device representing Teiresias narrating his performance of an offstage sacrifice and then representing it through a flashback (where we hear a repetition of birds “shrieking and crying” to continue the motif established earlier in the play). Then, in the play’s most extensive flashback sequence, Creon’s discovery of Antigone’s body and the exchange that leads to Haemon’s suicide is also represented in flashback with a Messenger’s narration occurring simultaneously in the “present.” The diegetic narration in the present helps to anchor complicated actions and kinesics in particular (see Appendix D). This device is also employed in the play’s closing scene where Tidler sends Creon into the palace in time to hear Eurydice’s death cry (she calls Creon a murderer). Collectively, this device fleshes out the diegetic space, allowing the audience to experience three “offstage” spaces by relocating them within the perspectival field.

While the Greek plays are thought to adapt well to radio because of the implicit stage directions and diegetic narration that are extensively employed by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the dramaturgy of radio offers greater flexibility and it makes sense for the radio producer and adapter to fully employ these capabilities. Transporting us through time and space is something that radio does easily and the shifts introduced to
this adaptation of *Antigone* demonstrate how diegetic narration can easily be adapted to be represented through flashbacks.

**Plot Structure, Time, and Subtext in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon***

While the CBC’s 1987 *Antigone* manipulates time and space with the use of analepsis (flashback), Gabriel Josipovici’s 1976 adaptation of *Agamemnon*, entitled *Ag*, further innovates with regards to spatial relations and temporal order and duration. And, as the 1998 CBC-BBC *Trojan Women* utilizes music to create subtext, *Ag* layers incongruent sounds over scenes to produce subtextual cues for the audience. Josipovici’s *Ag* creates thematic and associational links rather than relying on chronology and verisimilitude. By reordering the story, the production ruptures linear time and dispenses with causal links in the narrative. The ultimate effect is one of defamiliarisation, where demands are made on the audience to actively piece together the fractured narrative in order to create meaning yet the pleasures of identification and dramatic fantasy are denied. Defamiliarisation is also achieved by utilizing varied vocal delivery styles (from evenly paced but dispassionate drones, to speech that is technologically modified to slow down, to lightning fast delivery) and by layering incongruous elements into the narrative (including modernizing sound effects and speech elements). This adaptation demonstrates innovations not seen in any other CBC or BBC radio adaptation of the Greek tragedies. *Ag* is an adaptation of Aeschylus’ play that experiments with radio’s aural qualities, creating a poetic production that develops a soundscape of evocative language. This
production notably violates the cause and effect narrative pattern, rejecting continuity in
favour of the discontinuity of montage.

The aural montage of Josipovici’s *Ag* is much like the cinematic montage of
Sergei Eisenstein. In the 1920s, Eisenstein developed his theory of montage in response
to the perceived problems with Hollywood’s “realism.” Eisenstein found that “that which
is not slightly distorted lacks sensible appeal; from which it follows that irregularity –
that is to say, the unexpected, surprise and astonishment, are an essential part and
characteristic of beauty” (55). He rejected the use of the logical connections between
shots in a film such as continuity editing’s attempts to make the cut disappear through the
illusion of seamlessness. Continuity editing’s narrative coherence is exemplified by
match-on-action shots (e.g., where in one shot we see a woman in an elevator reaching
for the operating panel and in the next we see a close-up of a hand –presumably hers –
pressing a button), eye-line matches (e.g., where the shots cut between a person looking
and the object being observed), establishing shots, the 180 degree rule (where the camera
does not cross the axis of action), and the use of continuous diegetic sound (where sound
contributes to the sense of continuity to distract from the fragmented nature of the editing
process). In the continuity editing system, shots are related by narrative logic. In
Eisenstein’s discontinuous montage editing, the relationship between shots is merely
symbolic, linked by “associational logic” (Antoine-Dunne 2). Eisenstein used a number
of different types of montage to achieve his goal, but it is perhaps his “overtonal
montage” that is most useful for our purposes. In this approach,

the “overtones” or resonances become important considerations in the process of
construction. […] They result from the careful editing of shots through which the
spectator is, as Arnheim put it in a different context, “brought to see something
familiar as something new.” These overtones are never fixed, but are dependent
on a dialogue between producer and receiver. (Antoine-Dunne, Arnheim qtd. in
Antoine-Dunne 8).

The notion of ideas “resonating” with the audience to create a new perspective on a
familiar thing describes a situation where the audience’s consciousness is altered.
Montage invites the audience’s imagination to work but in a manner that expands the
process of imaginative completion to allow for further subjective associations since the
defamiliarisation technique rejects linear and causal story building. It is important to note
that Eisenstein’s aesthetic does not dismiss unity, it simply rejects narrative continuity as
a method of achieving a sense of unity for the audience. Similarly, Josipovici’s Ag
provides some narrative closure and a sense of a whole, but it achieves this without
classical dramaturgical strategies, choosing instead to experiment with montage and a
highly Brechtian technique of defamiliarisation.

While Eisenstein’s montage was achieved through the use of editing, on radio
there are no perceivable “cuts” as there are in cinema (where the cut is noted when one
image is replaced by the next). Instead, on radio, montage is achieved through either
layering sounds on top of each other (to occur concurrently) or contrasting sounds that
precede or succeed other sounds (to occur consecutively). To achieve Eisenstein’s
montage, this layering and contrasting involves incongruous elements that disrupt a
classical, causal development of action and ideas. In Josipovici’s Ag this is achieved by
re-ordering narrative events, disrupting action through non-diegetic narration, and
modulating the actors’ delivery of lines (all of which I will discuss shortly). These
structural and stylistic adaptations are reinforced through the use of incongruous sound effects. Most notably, *Ag* utilizes the sound of a game of table tennis, accompanied by the sounds of a referee and large crowd (that would be more suitable for an outdoor game of tennis). This sound is played in a moment where the stagnant ships of Agamemnon and Menelaus are evoked and we can imagine the table tennis as a pastime engaged in by the soldiers awaiting the winds to set sail. The association between this impending war and table tennis is then linked to the stichomythia between Agamemnon and Klytemnestra. The table tennis match plays out, layered against their verbal sparring, complete with points being awarded and a crowd’s applause for won points. While to some degree this mirrors the action, it also works against it by creating disjunctive relationship between the audience’s expectation of the play’s classical setting and the thoroughly modern game of table tennis. The production employs other disruptions within its montage, including the sound of a narrator listing styles of Greek masks, the sound of girls calling out to a hippopotamus (presumably at a zoo), and the repeated musical motif of Ella Fitzgerald singing Ira Gershwin’s “I’ve Got a Crush On You” which creates irony in the contrast between Klytemnestra’s intentions for Agamemnon and Fitzgerald’s sung proclamations of love. These layered and contrasting sounds effectively produce the resonance and defamiliarisation promoted by Eisenstein in his theory of montage.

This plot structure of this production eschews narrative continuity, re-orders events and plays with non-diegetic narration. The production opens with the non-diegetic narrator creating a link between Agamemnon and the sun, suggesting that “his death in the bath-tub symboliz[es] the daily and seasonal cycles of light and dark” (Wrigley “Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*”). A second non-diegetic narrator offers a summary of
Aeschylus’ play, and we then hear a long wail (which, later in the production, is revealed to be Klytemnestra’s victory cry, “Elelelelelu!”). Following this opening there is an extended sequence of associational words that develop the play’s central themes. They are vocalized in overlapping patterns, delivered by several different voices, playing with pitch and rhythm (See Appendix G). Following this, a few of Aeschylus’ central scenes are maintained in loose order. The Watchman’s opening speech, Agamemnon’s speech upon his first entrance, the stichomythia between Agamemnon and Klytemnestra and Cassandra’s speech are maintained in order, but these events are interrupted by additional non-diegetic narration, extended passages by the chorus, and extended sequences with modern and incongruous sound effects (as I previously discussed). The non-diegetic narration roughly follows the pattern established in Aeschylus’ play where past events are diegetically narrated by the chorus and to some degree by Cassandra (who evokes the curse of the House of Atreus) but is more extensive here. Through several narrational episodes, the story of Agamemnon’s ancestors is told through to the current situation and we also hear a prolepsis of the fate of Orestes. However, the narrational episodes do not follow each other in order, nor does any individual episode contain its content to any particular part of the story. This non-diegetic narration essentially disrupts the action of the play and functions to distance the audience, emotionally, from any connection or identification that may have been developing during other scenes. Amanda Wrigley, in one of only two published works on BBC adaptations of Greek tragedies, finds that these narrative interventions mimic the academic interventions common in earlier BBC productions (their introductions and accompanying lectures and articles in BBC Radio Times) (Wrigley “Aeschylus’ Agamemnon” 234). The effect of all this is that a
“knowing” audience can loosely follow the story, but must re-evaluate each familiar segment due to its contrast with unfamiliar segments (occurring concurrently with and consecutively to familiar passages). This destabilizes Aeschylus’ narrative and demands that the audience both listen carefully, attending to the production’s unexpected maneuvers, and reconstruct the story of Agamemnon from the fragments presented in Josipovici’s montage.

Ag further creates a defamiliarising effect by varying the actors’ delivery of lines, sometimes through natural means and at other times through technological manipulation. Following the play’s opening vocal montage of thematic words, several voices alternate a “droning lament” that is vocalized dispassionately. This distancing effectively denotes that the actors are players and that they are reading their lines. The illusionism that promotes imaginative completion is here denied. Next, the narrator (who reviews the story of Atreus and Thyestes all the way to Orestes’ found refuge at Delphi) speaks at breakneck speed and at length, challenging the audience to follow the complexities of the story (see Appendix I). Once more, we find an example here of how Ag rejects the tendencies in other adaptations of Greek tragedies to use non-diegetic narration to improve comprehension of the play’s story. Indeed, even the stichomythic exchange between Agamemnon and Klytemnestra is not always delivered clearly. In its second repetition, the exchange slowly accelerates, first due to the actors’ delivery and then as a result of electronic manipulation (see Appendix H for a script sample). The production takes these defamiliarising techniques further by breaking any remaining sense of illusion when we hear a producer discussing the pacing of the delivery with one of the actors:

PRODUCER: OK? Mike? Jane? Shall we try it?
(SOMEONE MAKES A SOTTO VOCE JOKE. LAUGHTER.)

PRODUCER: Let’s try it that way then.

(MORE LAUGHTER AND TALK IN LOW TONES.)

VOICE: Pete, you want us to take it at a natural pace?

[...]

PRODUCER: OK boys and girls? Are we ready then? One more try before lunch.

Let’s get it right this time.

Following this rupture, the production returns to the vocalizations of the play’s associational themes, Klytemnestra’s victory cry, and then once more the stichomythic exchange. In this repetition of text, Agamemnon and Klytemnestra’s speech employs pacing that is hypnotically slow, perhaps aided by some electronic manipulation of their voices to achieve the unusually trance-like delivery. This acts in contrast with the rapid paced delivery common in other segments of the play and it is interesting that Josipovici selects this moment to slow down the action and manipulate temporal relations as it is immediately following this exchange that Agamemnon enters the palace to be murdered by Klytemnestra. Josipovici enforces an anti-climax that, much like the rest of the defamiliarising techniques described here, produce an unexpected interpretation of Aeschylus’ play.
Dramaturgical Erasure through Silence in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannos* and Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*

In adaptation while certain elements of the play can be highlighted others can be diminished or, in some instances, inadvertently lost. Radio drama must “meet the audience half-way” in order for imaginative-completion to occur, otherwise, dramatic figures can not only be dramaturgically “flattened,” but in fact, they can be erased. Andrew Crisell reminds us that, “Silence on radio can act to provide a gap in the noise for the listener’s imagination to work and it can even punctuate a moment when it is surrounded by other sounds,” however, “no character who is present in a scene can stay silent for long, for if not regularly heard or referred to she ‘disappears’” (*Understanding Radio*, 53, 144). I will now consider two instances of dramaturgical erasure, to demonstrate how the audience’s activity can be blocked, shutting them out of the inner worlds of two significant figures, Jocasta and Cassandra, who are “lost in adaptation”.

As Crisell notes, on radio “No elaborate stage business is possible since its prerequisite is space, and our sense of space – of the physical position of the characters relative to one another and their moves and actions – is primarily visual” (*Understanding Radio*, 144). Note that the problem is *elaborate* stage business, not just the existence of stage business at all. Further, “While one character is speaking it is not possible to show the listener any reactions she might produce in the other characters, to counterpoint what is heard with what is seen” (144). In Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannos* on radio, the impossibility of our viewing Jocasta’s reactions to the words of others, our blindness to her expressions and gestures, prohibits our ability to understand at which moment she truly recognises that Oedipus is not only her husband but also her son. I believe the
duration of her stage presence and simultaneous silence indicates a significant and complex anagnorisis scene. Whereas on stage the complexity of this recognition is dramaturgically completed through the use of visual cues, on radio there are limited options in the representation of this realisation because Jocasta has no spoken lines. On radio, extended periods of silence essentially erase silent characters, removing them from the attention of the audience. When Jocasta receives the final clues as to the true identity of her husband-son, she remains silent and in the original staging context a physical gesture or even simply her positioning in relation to Oedipus and the Corinthian messenger, would likely indicate her growing recognition of the prophesy’s fulfillment.

We take up the story when the messenger from Corinth, intending to ease the tyrant King’s fears about his familial curse, in fact begins to confirm his fears and reveal Jocasta’s secret. First (line 1017) he says “Polybus was no kin to you in blood.” This is where Jocasta may begin to indicate her unease with the report as mere moments before she stated her belief that the prophecy had already been averted. Several lines later (1027) the messenger says he found Oedipus “on Cithaeron’s slopes” which is a clue Jocasta must recognise as this is where she sent the infant-Oedipus to die. When Oedipus later asks ‘what ailed me when you took me in your arms?’ the messenger replies ‘I loosed you; the tendons of your feet were pierced and fettered (1033). Another clue – yet Jocasta remains silent. The messenger continues with the fourth and fifth clues, revealing first that Oedipus was given to him by another shepherd (1039-1040) and then that the other shepherd was a servant of Laius (1042). The evidence mounts rapidly, and is very powerful, at least, when one can watch the scene and register Jocasta’s reactions.105 On

105 Her reactions can be conveyed through facial expressions, physical gestures (particularly in the case of masked productions), or through Jocasta veiling herself at the moment of recognition.
radio this scene becomes merely a dialogue between the Corinthian shepherd and Oedipus, as Jocasta’s silence effectively removes her from the discussion.

Each progressive piece of evidence confirms with greater certainty that Oedipus is her cast-away son and Jocasta’s recognition will likely occur over the course of the scene (this, naturally, being dependant on the acting and directing choices of each different production). However, this representation simply does not register on radio as Jocasta has no lines to speak and the sub-textual indicators offered in staging can not exist. Jocasta is left silent for four or five full minutes while the Corinthian completes his message to Oedipus. Not only is Jocasta’s “anagnorisis” not fully represented, but she is also effectively edited out of the scene as the audience is not textually directed to her presence in the dramatic space. This omission is what I call “dramaturgical erasure” where in adaptation, the dramaturgical strategies eliminate significant elements from the original play, be it deliberate or inadvertent. In this instance, the audience cannot fully “complete” the frame and imagine Jocasta’s reactions as her presence does not register. As the messenger completes his message, she speaks only briefly, and it would sound (to a radio audience) rather abrupt, after all five clues have been revealed, imploring Oedipus to halt his investigation, and after her subsequent exit she ‘reappears’ only in the verbal report of her off-stage suicide. Unable to register the timing and nature of Jocasta’s recognition of Oedipus’ identity, the audience is denied the opportunity to identify with her, effectively reducing her dimensions as a dramatic figure.

In the radio adaptations included in this study, only one attempts to intervene in order to recover Jocasta. The 1992 BBC adaptation creates a moment for Jocasta’s anagnorisis to be registered. When the Shepherd says that the child he found came from
Laius’ household, Jocasta is heard to exclaim “Oh!” before Oedipus continues to question him. While not fully adequate (I wonder how Jocasta could not begin to suspect the truth sooner, although such fine gestures – the subtext of silence - are difficult if not impossible to represent on radio) this production has at least made an attempt to deal with Jocasta’s dramaturgical erasure.

Cassandra, of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, is perhaps the most significant silent figure in all of Greek tragedy and shares Jocasta’s problem of representation as a disembodied but silent tragic figure. She arrives in Argos as Agamemnon’s slave and captive. As Oliver Taplin writes on this stage entrance:

> There is something wrong with what we actually see. In the chariot with Agamemnon is a woman who wears the trappings of a prophetess. It may be obvious to the audience from her costume that she is Trojan. It may even be assumed that she is Cassandra. But no specific attention is drawn to her yet; she remains as a peculiar, unexplained part of the total picture, an anomaly, a source of disquiet. (*Greek Tragedy in Action* 103)

Taplin notes that “Cassandra is silent on stage for nearly 300 lines before she utters a sound. For most of this time our attention is fully occupied on other things, but she remains only in the corner of our eye” (*Greek Tragedy in Action* 103) or at least she would if we were experiencing the play on stage. While Agamemnon draws attention to her briefly midway through this time, no one else mentions her or her silence. Taplin reminds us that it is only when Clytemnestra returns to draw Cassandra into the house, to her death, that Cassandra begins to make “wild gesticulations” and finally “she breaks her

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106 We know that it is Jocasta as hers is the only feminine voice in the scene and the production contrasts the pitch of her voice with the pitch of the voices around her.
long silence, at first in strange cries, then in song and finally in speech” (*Greek Tragedy in Action* 104). On stage, her long silence is tremendously significant as her presence within the frame of the scene acts as the visible thorn in the side of the house of Atreus even before her prophecy is fulfilled and she brings doom to this *oikos*. This woman, who remains silent for so long, is revealed to be the one character who tells the truth and makes the situation clear – despite the fact that no one, of course, believes her prophecy. On radio, none of this registers.

In the 1956 BBC *Agamemnon*, as I previously discussed, Agamemnon notes Cassandra’s presence, naming her and positioning her within a second chariot, immediately before he enters the palace. This production maintains Cassandra in silence, avoiding any attempt to have her speak strangely and editing out comments from the chorus and from Clytemnestra about how incoherent her barbarian words are. Instead, Clytemnestra beckons her indoors and asks why she is silent. When Cassandra eventually does speak, she speaks clearly and with no accent. Aside from the diegetic narration that establishes Cassandra’s proxemics at the start of the scene, Cassandra is not referred to and in her silence she is effectively erased from the audience’s perspectival field.

In addition to these women, it appears that children are at risk of dramaturgical erasure. The figure of Astyonax in *The Trojan Women* as well as Medea’s two unnamed sons are silent yet occupy a significant duration of stage time. What is different about these situations, when compared to Jocasta and Cassandra, is that the children are the subject of ongoing dialogue. While silent, they are consistently referred to and, as a consequence, the audience maintains an awareness of their presence. Alcestis is similarly silent but present, although (as I previously discussed) her actual entrance is not
diegetically narrated and so adaptations must contend with this dramaturgical problem to bridge the moment of her entrance with Heracles to the moment where she becomes the primary subject of the conversation between Heracles and Admetus.

It is evident that in some instances, the absence of visual information (particularly in the case of silent figures) minimises the complexity of some female tragic figures and threatens to extinguish them completely. Certain texts in adaptation, in taking an ear for an eye, present distinct problems for the adapted figures, where silence, in particular, is deadly.
CONCLUSION

My purpose in *An Ear for an Eye: Greek Tragedy on Radio* has been to undertake an interdisciplinary study of how the dramaturgical process contends with the adaptation of plays being transposed from ancient to modern oral media. Drawing on the tools and theories of formal analysis, adaptation theory, and phenomenology, I examine the adaptation of Greek tragedies to British and Canadian radio, conducting a dramaturgical analysis of the results of the shift of the text from stage to sound wave. In doing so, I demonstrate that we must revise our conception of the interaction between the affordances of modern oral media, on the one hand, and an adapted play’s changing demands on its audience and the audience’s changing experience of that play, on the other hand. With a focus on remediation and the role of the audience, I have argued that these adaptations communicate the play’s sensorial dimensions through the agency of sound and the stimulation of the imagination: in other words, they rely heavily on both the play’s aural evocation of elements of the mise-en-scène and the audience’s contribution to the play through the highly subjective process of imaginative completion, which completes the dramatic frame of the radio play.

In “Part One: Radio Reception in a Mediatized Culture,” I begin by demonstrating how the conditions of twentieth-century radio productions are in many ways analogous to the original staging conditions of the fifth century BCE. Radio, like tragedy was in its day, is a mass medium capable of communicating its message to a sizeable audience. While tragedy developed in a time when the sensorial demands of media were slowly shifting from the aural to the visual (with the introduction of the alphabet and
advancements in script culture), radio created an abrupt reversal of sensorial hierarchies, demanding that a visually-focused audience experience a return to orality, replacing the ear for the eye as the primary sense for reception. Paradoxically, auricular-based radio dislocates listeners, temporally and spatially, from the source of broadcast, yet simultaneously provides them with an experience of immediacy and presence. In fact, the experience of radio entails a complete immersion within it, as McLuhan noted: “I live right inside radio when I listen” (qtd. in Crook 8). This phenomenon of the audience’s immersion results in the positioning of the audience at the center of radio’s perspectival field. This position heightens the significance of the audience’s role and increases their participation in the proceedings. In the reception of radio, audiences become a critical component of the dramatic frame, contributing to the completion of this frame through the process of imaginative completion; in this process, the individual’s imagination is stimulated by the radio play to evoke personal and subjective experiences that act to complete the play’s dramatic frame. Radio effectively adjusts the receiver to a new oral mode of reception, demanding collaboration in the completion of the dramatic frame and privileging the audience in the construction of meaning.

In “Part Two: Radiophonic Dramaturgy and Representation,” I begin with a historical account of the motivation for adapting Greek tragedies to British and Canadian radio, paying attention to the didactic impetus in the programming of a “national theatre of the air” in both contexts. I then proceed to demonstrate that the dramaturgical similarities between Greek tragedy (a drama that developed in an oral culture) and the form of radio drama (a form that acts as an amplifier of orality) constitute one of the reasons behind the frequent adaptation of these plays to radio. This formal affinity
between the two genres is in evidence in the six principles of adaptation I outline in this study: formal preferences for a certain plot complexity, order, and structure; a tendency towards reported versus represented action; the predominance of action revolving around internal character conflicts; limitations on aspects of character types and the number of dramatic figures; an emphasis on speech and musicality with recognizable rhythmic patterns and melodies; and the minimization of information that is conveyed through visual means. In my study of narrative orchestrations, these principles are explored through a categorical analysis of formal elements, including paratheatrical framing techniques, the representation of action through speech and sound effects, temporal and spatial relations, music and song, and the construction of dramatic figures.

This study moves from a demonstration of how the affinities of Ancient Greek and modern radio dramaturgies readily enable the adaptation of Greek tragedies to this new oral context to a detailed analysis of key features of the plays that are lost in adaptation. In response to the loss of visual gesture, for example, producers notably intervened in many instances to anchor gestures in speech or music. In response to the expectation that modern audiences would not be aware of the original play or the myths upon which the plays are based, producers offered more detailed paratheatrical framing geared towards these “unknowing” audience. However, in spite of these accommodations, there remains a significant problem in the adaptation of Greek tragedies to radio in terms of what I have called “dramaturgical erasure.” This is the phenomenon of dramatic figures being effectively erased from the audience’s perspectival field through their silence. While there is evidence of attempts to reintegrate silent figures through the use of added exclamations and vocalizations, silent figures are
overwhelmingly lost in adaptation. These figures are frequently women (such as Cassandra and Jocasta) whose silent presence on stage would speak volumes, yet whose presence in the acoustic sphere is extinguished.

While this study has not emphasized distinctions between early and later radio adaptations, there are some notable innovations that occur with new recording and editing technologies, particularly post-1970. In particular, I examined a production that employed the manipulation of perspective through the proxemics of dramatic figure and microphone, and of space through the use of an aural “split-screen” in which audiences simultaneously experience action occurring in two disparate spaces (the 2001 CBC Medea), a production that employed flashback sequences with aural cross-fades to indicate shifts in space and time (the 1987 CBC Antigone), and a production that experimented with aural montage (the 1978 BBC Ag). These dramaturgical innovations reflect the influence of cinematic techniques on radio’s remediation of Greek tragedy.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is the identification of 153 Canadian and British adaptations, including the confirmation of 65 productions surviving as recordings. While I have explored some aspects of this material, there is significant room for additional investigations to be done on this body of work. There is also some urgency here to interview performers and producers from the height of radio’s golden age while they are still living. I suspect that additional scripts and recordings are being kept privately and that such interviews will result in the identification of additional productions and the recovery of audio recordings. This is the case with adaptations of classical tragedies, but it is also quite evident that radio drama in general requires greater scholarly attention. For example, Howard Fink, of the Concordia University Centre for
Broadcasting Studies (the official repository for all CBC scripts), has preserved over 16,000 Canadian scripts that have received little scholarly attention. It is my hope that this dissertation will call attention to this field of study and the rich opportunities available to the academic community. I further hope that my dramaturgical model for the analysis of radio form will be employed to advance the dramaturgical analysis of radio plays. In the case of adaptations, it is evident from my analysis that the remediation of a stage play for radio can reveal important properties of the work through what is highlighted and what is lost in adaptation.

There have been repeated declarations of the end of radio drama. Indeed, radio is “a medium that has read its own obituaries many times,” while radio drama “has been written off as a dying art form countless times” (Taylor R3; Harris C7). In 1957, Val Gielgud wrote of radio’s decline following the introduction of television. He compared the introduction of television and its impact on radio to the introduction of sound to films and its impact on the silent film (British Radio Drama 181). Yet radio plays continued to enjoy large audiences, in spite of the lure of the visually-oriented television. Nearly thirty years later, in 1984, the British band Queen wrote an ode to radio entitled “Radio Ga Ga.” Freddie Mercury, the band’s lead singer, crooned “you’ve yet to have your finest hour” and promised that in spite of the television’s hypnosis of the world’s audiences, “radio, someone still loves you.” Mercury pleads with radio to not “become some background noise” and predicts that radio will rise again “when we grow tired of all this vision.” It appears that “resurrections are a way of life in broadcasting” (Harris C7), and, in spite of an overall downturn in the number of radio plays produced annually since the introduction of television, sound drama has continued to entertain and stimulate mass
audiences. Further, critics like Robert Cushman have anticipated a revival of the form as recently as 2010 (Cushman 4). If this comes to be, the locus of this revival will likely be through the CBC and BBC, as they are the world’s top producers of sound drama (Cushman 4). However, with the rise of new modes of distribution, aided by the wired world (internet radio, podcasts, MySpace, file-sharing, etc.), that provide artists with options for self-promotion, there is significant room for the circulation of independently produced sound drama. The potential for radio plays or sound drama to experience a renaissance appears to be high. Thus, there is a need for scholarly attention to both the corpus of works produced to date and to contemporary productions (of both adaptations and original works). While radio of the future may not closely resemble the radio of today, sound technologies continue to enjoy a popularity that is unlikely to fade. And as long as artists continue to look to the past for inspiration, there will likely be a place for Greek tragedies on the sound waves.
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Agamemnon


Prometheus Bound

“Prometheus Bound.” Aeschylus. Translated by Rex Warner. Produced by Mary Hope Allan. BBC R3. 16 Nov. 1948.


SOPHOCLES

Antigone


Electra

“Electra.” Sophocles. Adapted by Len Peterson. Produced by Esse W. Ljungh. CBC. 


Oedipus Tyrannos


Philoctetes


310
Euripides

Alcestis

“Alcestis.” Euripides. Translated by Darryl Hines. Produced by Esse W. Ljungh. CBC. 

BBC. 12 May 1972.


“Alcestis.” Euripides. Translated by Ted Hughes. Directed by Susan Roberts. BBC Radio 

The Bacchae

“The Bacchae.” Euripides. Translated by Kenneth Cavender. Produced by Charles 
Lefeaux. BBC. 5 June 1964.


Medea

“Medea.” Euripides. Translated by Philip Vellacott. Produced by Raymond Raikes. BBC. 
18 May 1962. (Note: only a partial recording of this exists.)

“Medea.” Euripides. Adapted by Brendan Kennelly. Produced by Eoin O’Callaghan. 

“Medea.” Euripides. Adapted by Robinson Jeffers. Produced by Barbara Worthy. CBC 
Stratford Festival Series. 2001.
The Trojan Women


Appendix A

CBC Radio Adaptations of Greek Tragedies, 1946 – 2001

This list is arranged chronologically. Of the following 22 titles, 3 are adaptations of Aeschylus (14%), 10 are of Sophocles (45%), and 9 are of Euripides (41%).

There are 5 additional, related adaptations (listed separately, further below).

Notes:
* indicates a surviving recording (confirmed). Recordings are available at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa or at the CBC Archives in Toronto. [Rpt.] indicates the date of the program’s repeat broadcast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Playwright</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/10/1946 [Rpt. 1947]</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus the King*</td>
<td>Produced by Esse W. Ljungh. Adapted by Lister Sinclair. Music by Lucio Agostini. Technical operation by Wallace King. Cast: Andrew Allan (Oedipus), Marjorie Leet (Jocasta), Lorne Greene (Chorus), Bernard Braden, Bud Knapp (Creon), John Drainie (Tiresias), Frank Peddie (The Priest, and the Shepherd), Tommy Tweed (the Messenger), Hedley Rainnie (the Herald and Second Messenger), Lister Sinclair (Senator). CBC Stage. Duration: 60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/03/1948</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus the King*</td>
<td>Produced by Esse W. Ljungh; Adapted by Lister Sinclair. Music by Lucio Agostini. Cast: Andrew Allan (Oedipus), Marjorie Leet (Jocasta), Lorne Greene (Chorus), Lloyd Bochner, Budd Knapp (Creon), John Drainie (Tiresias), Robert Christie (Priest), Frank Peddie (Shepherd), Alan King (Senator), Tommy Tweed (Messenger), Mavor Moore (Messenger). CBC Stage 48. Duration: 60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/01/1954</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Return to Colonus</td>
<td>Adaptation by Lister Sinclair. CBC Stage. Trans-Canada Network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Oedipus at Colonus)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/10/1955</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Electra*</td>
<td>Radio program featuring a radio drama by Sophocles and adapted for radio by Len Peterson. Chorus Mistress, Beth Lockerbie. Production credit: director/producer, Esse W. Ljungh; sound, David Tasker; music, Morris Surdin; technical assistant, Arthur Scoles; announcer, Lamont Tilden Cast credit: Diana Maddox as Electra, Douglas Rain as Orestes, Margaret Braidwood as Clytemnestra, Pegi Brown as Chrysothemis, John Drainie as Aegisthus, Frank Peddie as the Old Man, Grace Webster, Ruth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/03/1957</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women*</td>
<td>Radio program featuring a radio drama written by Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray and adapted for radio by Andrew Allan. Production credit: director/producer, Esse W. Ljungh; music, Morris Surdin. Cast credit: Eleanor Stuart, Francis Hyland, Diana Maddox, Katherine Blake. CBC Stage. Trans-Canada network, 8 p.m. Duration: 55 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/10/1959</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Radio program featuring a radio drama written by Aeschylus and adapted for radio by Len Peterson. Production credit: director/producer, Esse W. Ljungh; sound, Fred Tudor; music, Morris Surdin; technical assistant, Terry Russling. Cast credit: Douglas Rain, Frances Hyland, Henry Comor, Frank Perry, Murray Westgate, Tommy Tweed, Alice Hill, Beth Lockerie, Maxine Miller. CBC Stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/05/1960</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women*</td>
<td>Translated by Richmond Lattimore. Produced by John Reeves. Ruth Springford as Hecuba, John Drainie as Talthybius, Diana Maddox as Andromache, Mavor Moore as Menelaus, Barbara Allen as Cassandra, Frances Hyland as Helen. This play appears within a program called Four's Company. Duration: 60 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
---|---|---|---
22/10/1961  | Euripides  | Iphigenia in Tauris*  | Adapted by Alice Frick, Directed by Andrew Allen, Music by Morris Surdin. Amelia Hall (Iphigenia), Peter Donat (Orestes), Frank Perry (Pilades), Percy Rodrigues (King Tauris), Barbara Chilcott (Palace Athena), Alan King (Herdsmen), Alan Pierce (Soldier), Sandra Scott, Lena Shuster, Dawn Greenhouse (Temple Maidens). Fred Tudor (sound effects), Terry Russling (technical production). CBC Stage.
24/10/1965  | Sophocles  | Elektra*  | Adapted by Diana Maddox. Translated by David Grene. Directed by Esse W. Ljungh. Duration: 60 min.
09/10/1966 [Rpt. 06/11/1966]  | Aeschylus  | Prometheus Bound*  | Adapted by Len Peterson. Directed by Esse W. Ljungh. John Scott as Prometheus, Marilyn Lightstone as Io, Barry Morse as Oceanus, Sandy Webster as Hephaestus, Sean Malahie as Kratos, Arch Macdonald as Hermes. With Beth Lockerie, Corrine Langston, Sandra Scott, as the three nymphs. Duration: 57 min.

<sup>107</sup> In the October 22<sup>nd</sup> recording of Iphigenia in Tauris, the announcer refers to the play being “Playbill Four on CBC Stage, fourth and last in a cycle of plays by Ancient Greek dramatists telling of the House of Atreus.” This Electra was likely broadcast on October 1 or 15 (as the plays were broadcast over consecutive weeks). This also means that the fourth production (undocumented in the CBC archives or the National Archive of Canada and unlisted here) was either Aeschylus’ Libation Bearers (Choephoroi) or The Furies (The Eumenides), or Euripides’ Electra or Orestes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-29/04/1978</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Hecuba*</td>
<td>This program was originally produced for the BBC. Directed by John Tydeman and adapted for radio by David Cain. Hecuba is performed within a variety show called &quot;Audiences&quot; and is presented along with other programs, including lectures and music. Duration: 115 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1980s [10/11/1991108]</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women*</td>
<td>Translated by Richmond Lattimore. Adapted, directed and music composed by John Reeves. Frances Hyland as Hecuba, Kate Trotter as Helen, Eve Crawford as Cassandra, Nonnie Griffin as Andromache, Sandy Webster as Menelaus, David Hughes as Greek Herald, Corine Langston as Trojan Woman. Stereodrama/Sunday Matinee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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108 I believe this is a re-broadcast (as John Reeves had retired from the CBC in the late 1980s, prior to the date of this broadcast) but can not determine the program’s date of recording and original broadcast.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Euripides</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Medea*</td>
<td>Adapted by Robinson Jeffers. Directed/Produced by Barbara Worthy. Seana McKenna as Medea, Robert Benson as Creon, John Dolan as Aegeus, Bernard Hopkins as The Tutor, Kim Horsman as First Woman of Corinth, Rita Howell as The Nurse, Claire Jullien as Third Woman of Corinth, Kate Trotter as Second Woman of Corinth, Scott Wentworth as Jason, Max Besworth as The Child. <em>Stratford Festival Series</em>. Duration 96 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Production</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Lister Sinclair</td>
<td>Return to Colonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Robinson Jeffers</td>
<td>The Cretan Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/07/1968</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Bacchae*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/1969</td>
<td>Sophocles, Seneca</td>
<td>Oedipus-Oedipe*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

BBC Radio Adaptations of Greek Tragedies, 1924 - 2003

This list is arranged chronologically. Of the following 132 titles, 73 are adaptations of Aeschylus (55%), 20 are of Sophocles (15%), and 40 are of Euripides (30%).

Notes:
* indicates a surviving recording. Recordings are available at the British Library’s Sound Archive.
** indicates the original broadcast date [Repeat broadcast dates follow in square brackets].
*** indicates that it is unknown whether these records indicate the recording or broadcast date.

Symbols:
R2 - Radio 2
R3 - Radio 3
R4 - Radio 4
HS - Home Service (later, Radio 2)
NAT - National Programme
TP - Third Programme
Empire - Began in 1932, shortwave, later became Overseas Service, European Service, and finally World Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (day/month/year)</th>
<th>Playwright</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28/06/1925**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Medea</td>
<td>Trans. Gilbert Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/10/1936**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Hippolytus</td>
<td>Trans. Gilbert Murray. Produced by Barbara Burnham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NAT) (Rpt. 01/10/1945 HS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/36** (Empire)</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Trojan Women</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/05/1937**</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Antigone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/08/1940**</td>
<td>(HS)</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Seven Against Thebes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>(between 1940 and 1945)</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Persians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/10/1945***</td>
<td>(HS) [Rpt. 13/10/1946 R3]</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Hippolytus*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/1945**</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/1946***</td>
<td>(HS)</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/10/1946***</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Persae*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Playwright</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/10/1946***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus Rex*</td>
<td>Herald's Monologue from Oedipus Rex by Sophocles, spoken in modern Greek by Alexis Minotis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/10/1946***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Electra*</td>
<td>Extracts from Electra, spoken in modern Greek by Katina Paxinou.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/11/1946**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women</td>
<td>Trans. F. Kinchin Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/12/1946**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Ion Helena</td>
<td>Ad. E. Sharwood Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09/1947**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Alcestis</td>
<td>A new adaptation by G.E.O. Knight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/09/1947**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Medea</td>
<td>Trans. Martin (or Martyn) Shepherd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/07/1948**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Ad by H. Bowen as &quot;Helen in Egypt&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/1948**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Theban Brothers</td>
<td>E. Harwood Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/10/1948**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Andromache</td>
<td>Trans. Philip Vellacott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/10/1948**</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Hippolytus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/04/1949**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Eumenides</td>
<td>Adapted by Ross Nichols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/06/1949***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Agamemnon*</td>
<td>Extracts from a performance in Greek by Bradfield College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/05/1949**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Adapted by Moore Pim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/10/1949**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Choephoroe, or Libation Bearers</td>
<td>Trans. Gilbert Murray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/03/1950</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Alcestis*</td>
<td>Produced by Frank Hauser</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(R3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/12/1951</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus</td>
<td>Adapted by James B. Fell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/01/1954</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Choephori,</td>
<td>Trans. Philip Vellacott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/1954</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Persians</td>
<td>Trans and ad. By Peter Green. (resub. Pearn, Pollinger &amp; Higham)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/04/1954</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound,</td>
<td>Trans. F.L. Lucas. Part of the program: &quot;Greek Drama for Everyman&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/07/1955</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteia:</td>
<td>Trans. Philip Vellacott</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Agamemnon,</td>
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<td>The Eumenides,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Choephoroi</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/05/1956</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Trans. Robert Whitehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/05/1956</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy.</td>
<td>Translated by Philip Vellacott. Producer: Raymond Raikes. Incidental music composed by Antony Hopkins, and played by the Boyd Neel Chamber Orchestra, conducted by the composer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I: Agamemnon*</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/05/1956</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy.</td>
<td>Translated by Philip Vellacott. Producer: Raymond Raikes. Incidental music composed by Antony Hopkins, and played by the Boyd Neel Chamber Orchestra.</td>
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<td>II: The Choephoroe*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Translator</td>
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<tr>
<td>27/05/1956***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy. III: The Eumenides*</td>
<td>Translated by Philip Vellacott. Producer: Raymond Raikes. Incidental music composed by Antony Hopkins, and played by the Boyd Neel Chamber Orchestra, conducted by the composer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/08/1956**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Choephori</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/12/1956**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Agamemnon</td>
<td>sub-titled &quot;Why Preserve the Faults of the Original&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/06/1957**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Persians</td>
<td>Trans. P. Vellacott</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/04/1958**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Persians</td>
<td>Trans. Peter Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/04/1958**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteia</td>
<td>Trans. Peter Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/02/1959**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Trans. Edith Hamilton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/02/1959**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Agamemnon</td>
<td>Trans. Edith Hamilton.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/04/1959**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Trans. Warren D. Anderson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/02/1960**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Seven Against Thebes</td>
<td>Trans. Philip Vellacott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/12/1960** [30.1.1962 TP]</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy: Agamemnon</td>
<td>Trans. C.A. Trypanis. (On the original broadcast date, this was broadcast as a full trilogy with the two titles below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Work Title</td>
<td>Translations and Production Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/01/1962***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy. I: Agamemnon*</td>
<td>Translated by C.A. Trypanis. Produced: Val Gielgud. Incidental music (MS) composed and conducted by John Hotchkis, and played by the English Chamber Orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/01/1962***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy. II: The Choephoroe*</td>
<td>Translated by C.A. Trypanis. Produced: Val Gielgud. Incidental music (MS) composed and conducted by John Hotchkis, and played by the English Chamber Orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/02/1962***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteian Trilogy. III: The Eumenides*</td>
<td>Translated by C.A. Trypanis. Produced: Val Gielgud. Incidental music (MS) composed and conducted by John Hotchkis, and played by the English Chamber Orchestra.</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/03/1962**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Trans. Paul Roche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/05/1962***</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Medea*</td>
<td>A new translation by Philip Vellacott. Arranged and produced by Raymond Raikes. With Elsa Verghis as Medea, Stephen Murray as Jason, Leslie Perrins as Creon, George Curzon as Aegeus, George Hagan as Tutor, Vivienne Chatterton as Nurse, Anthony Jacobs as The Messenger, and Jill Balcon, Catherine Dolan, and Sheila Grant as Women of Corinth. Incidental music composed by Christopher Whelen. (Verghis also read parts of her role in Greek at the end of this broadcast.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/03/1963***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Philoctetes*</td>
<td>Translated by Kenneth Cavander. With music composed and conducted by Christopher Whelen. Produced by Charles Lefeaux. With Steven Murray as Philoctetes, Antony Jacobs as Odysseus, Barry Justice as Neoptolimus, Raif Truman as Hercules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/05/1963***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Electra*</td>
<td>Translated by C.A. Trypanis. Produced by Val Gielgud. With incidental music composed and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Playwright</td>
<td>Play Title</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/02/1964**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Adapted by Peter Eadie (Part of &quot;A Trilogy of Prometheus&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22/07/1964**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Agamemnon</td>
<td>Translated by David Rudkin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/03/1965**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Trans. Paul Roche.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/02/1966***</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Electra*</td>
<td>Translated by David Thompson. Incidental music composed by John Beckett and played by ad hoc orchestra conducted by the composer. Producer: John Tydeman</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/03/1968*** [R3] [Rpt. 21/04/1968]</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus the King*</td>
<td>Translated by W.B. Yeats. Adapted and produced by John Tydeman. Music composed and conducted by John Beckett. Michael Bryant as Oedipus,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/10/1970***</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Ion of Euripides*</td>
<td>Translated from the Greek by Hilda Doolittle, adapted and produced by Raymond Raikes. Music by Anthony Bernard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/01/1971** [R3]</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>&quot;Freely translated&quot; by Robert Lowell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/02/1972**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus</td>
<td>Translated and adapted by Mrs. Ann Graham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/05/1972***</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Alcestis*</td>
<td>Translated by Daryl Hines. Produced by Douglas Cleverdon</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/06/1973***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Agamemnon*</td>
<td>One act Opera by Brian Havergal, with B.B.C. Northern Singers, B.B.C. Northern Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Armstrong. Based on the tragedy by Aeschylus. Words by J. Stuart Blackie and the composer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07/1973**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteia</td>
<td>Trans. Ian F. Sinclair</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/06/1974** [15/08/1982 R3, as &quot;The Seven&quot;]</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Seven Against Thebes</td>
<td>Tr. Anthony Hecht and Helen H. Bacon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Playwright</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>??/04/1978**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Oresteia Trilogy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/06/1980**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Seven Against Thebes</td>
<td>Trans. Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/08/1980***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Electra*</td>
<td>Translated by Derek Coltman. Produced by Jane Morgan. Jane Laportaire as Electra, Michael Pennington as Orestes, Jeremy Kemp as Tutor, Margaret Tysac as Clytemnestra, Cheryl Campbell as Chrysothemis, Pauline Letts as Nurse, Phillip Votts as Aegisthus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/10/1980**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Oresteia</td>
<td>&quot;version with music&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/08/1982***</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Seven*</td>
<td>A version of Aeschylus's <em>Seven Against Thebes</em> devised by Gabriel Josipovici &amp; Jonathan Harvey from the translation by Helen Bacon &amp; Anthony Hecht. Realised at BBC Radiophonic Workshop with assistance of Brian Hodgson. Produced by John Theocharis</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/02/1983**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>Prometheus Bound</td>
<td>Adapted by Everard Flintoff</td>
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<td>13/10/1983**</td>
<td>Aeschylus</td>
<td>The Suppliants</td>
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<td>03/02/1985***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>The Theban Plays - Oedipus the King*</td>
<td>Translated by Robert Fagles. With Tim Pigott-Smith as Oedipus, Sian Phillips as Jocasta, Patrick Stewart as Creon, Robert Eddison as Tiresias, David Collings as the Messenger, David March as the Priest, Arthur Hewlett as the Old Shepherd, and Alan Dudley as the Shepherd from Corinth. Music by Christos Pittas. Produced by David Spenser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/02/1985***</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>The Theban Plays - Oedipus at Colonus*</td>
<td>Translated by Robert Fagles, With Tim Pigott-Smith, Lucy Gutteridge, Nicky Henson, Patrick Stewart and Scott Cherry. Produced by David Spenser.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/02/1985</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>The Theban Plays – Antigone*</td>
<td>Translated by Robert Fagles, With Lucy Gutteridge as Antigone, Patrick Stewart as Creon, Anton Lesser as Haemon, Robert Eddison as Tiresias, Moira Leslie as Ismene, David Collings as the Messenger. Produced by David Spenser. Duration: 95 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Playwright</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/03/1997</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus the King*</td>
<td>Trans. and adapted by Ranjit Bolt. With Alan Howard and Suzanne Bertish. Music by Judith Weir. The Royal National Theatre production directed by Peter Hall. Produced by Peter Kavanagh. Duration: 90 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/03/1997</td>
<td>Sophocles</td>
<td>Oedipus at Colonus*</td>
<td>Trans. and adapted by Ranjit Bolt. With Alan Howard and Suzanne Bertish. Music by Judith Weir. The Royal National Theatre production directed by Peter Hall. Produced by Peter Kavanagh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/02/1998</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>The Trojan Women*</td>
<td>CBC-BBC Co-production. Translated by Brendan Kenelly. With Karen Glave, Marium Carvell, Conrad Coates, Michelyn Emelle, Phil Aiken,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Artist/Producer/Author</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/12/2001</td>
<td>Euripides</td>
<td>Hecuba*</td>
<td>Translated and adapted by Timberlake Wertenbaker, with Olympia Dukakis, Timothy West, Emma Fielding, Greg Hicks and Nicholas Woodeson. Directed by Ned Chaillet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C


This extract of pages 17-19 of the radio script of *Antigone* is reproduced courtesy of Charles Tidler.
1. SENTRY: My king ...[not so long ago I swore never to face you head nor tail again. Surprise! (LAUGHS; BEAT)] Here she is. This girl. She's the one who did it. [BEAT] Well, take her, take her ...]

2. CREON: Antigone?

3. SENTRY: (BEAT) I ... guess I can go--

4. CREON: Not so quick. Where did you find her?

5. SENTRY: Throwing earth upon the corpse.

6. CREON: Do you realize what you're saying?

7. SENTRY: Plain as day, sir. I say what I saw.

8. CREON: Tell it! All of it!

9. SENTRY: Okay, it was like this: I returned to the other men and told them your threats. We all went down to the corpse, destroyed the bogus grave, and left the naked body beneath the sun. [We set up guard on the hill above, clear of the rotten stench drifting in the air about the corpse.] Sharp words and blunt sticks kept us awake and alert--
1. **SEX:** Cuts to: men fighting & cursing: with a strong wind blowing: with:

2. **GUARD #ONE:** Wake up, asshole--

3. **SFX:** Wind becomes a violent duststorm: with:

4. **SENTRY:** (N/C) Suddenly a duststorm, a blind plague blew--

5. **GUARD #TWO:** Oh ... send in my eyes--

6. **GUARD #ONE:** (SPITTING) damn-- $\bigcirc$ damn it--

7. **GUARD #TWO:** I can't see-- I can't see--

8. **SENTRY:** (N/O) We clung to the earth for fear of being swept into the sky--

9. **SFX:** Storm subsides to: screaming of an angry surreal bird: screaming: with:

10. **GUARD #ONE:** What ... what is it?

11. **GUARD #TWO:** I don't know ... a bird, a god--

12. **GUARD #ONE:** (PRAYING) Gods of heaven, protect--

13. **SFX:** Cuts to: Public gathering in theeds: with:

14. **SENTRY:** It wasn't a bird, no god ... but this girl screaming above the stinking corpse.
1. **SFX:** A GASP RUNS THROUGH THE CROWD: TO:

2. **SENTRY:** She picked up handfuls of earth[ to remake a hasty grave. She poured out three libations[ from a small urn of precious oil. But that was it! We were all over her in a flash ... and, to everyone's relief, she admitted everything. (BEAT) I'm sad to see this girl in trouble ... but don't get me wrong. I'm not willing to take her place or anything. I'm here to save my skin as well as tell the honest--

3. **CREON:** Enough! (BEAT) Well, and what's your story? (BEAT) Speak!

4. **ANTIGONE:** The truth is clear: all the dead have now been honoured.

5. **SENTRY:** Alright! That's good enough for me.

6. **CREON:** Yes, you are free ... to stay where you are. (BEAT) Antigone, tell me, were you unaware of the new law forbidding what you've done?

7. **ANTIGONE:** Who could miss a trail of slime upon the city walls?

8. **SFX:** A SHOCK THROUGH THE CROWD: WITH AN ISOLATED BUT CLEARLY ARTICULATED LAUGH: TO:

9. **SFX:** THE CRACK OF A SHARP SLAP IN THE FACE.
Appendix D

Messenger’s Second Speech, Antigone (CBC, Charles Tidler, 1987).

This extract of pages 55-57 of the radio script of Antigone is reproduced courtesy of Charles Tidler.
fell in yesterday's war. Tell me, what's the matter? (BEAT) Please, do tell. I can take whatever news for I am an old friend of sorrow and wish to share in your pain with tender compassion.

1. MESSNER: (BEAT) My queen, I'll tell the story I've carried to Thebes, and the gods are my witness,

I'll tell it all. (BEAT) I went with your husband to bury Polynices— and

2. SFX: CUTS TO: GROUP OF MEN FEEDING A LARGE BONFIRE: CREON GIVING ORDERS: WITH:

3. MESSNER: (N/O) We gathered brush and scraps of wood and set fire to the remains—

4. SFX: CUTS TO: GROUP OF MEN PRAYING: WITH:

5. MESSNER: (N/O) We made prayers to the god of the dead to take care of his soul—

6. SFX: CUTS TO: GROUP OF MEN DIGGING: WITH:

7. MESSNER: (N/O) We gathered the ashes and buried them in an urn beneath the earth—

8. SFX: CUTS TO: CREON YELLING "TO THE CAVES! TO THE CAVES!": WITH:
1. MESSANGER: [(N/O) We were off] to rescue Antigone--

2. SFX: MEN MARCHING IN ROCKY/HILLY COUNTRYSIDE: THEN FAR AWAY A STRANGE ECHO OF HAEMON'S VOICE SCREAMING & CRYING: WITH:

3. CREON: Halt!

4. SFX: MARCHING CEASES: THE SCREAMING CONTINUES: WITH:

5. CREON: I am a wretch on the blackest road of my life. I hear my son. I hear my son.

6. MESSANGER: (OFF) The entrance to the cave!

7. SFX: MEN RUNNING OVER ROCKY GROUND: WITH:

8. CREON: Is it my son, or have the gods driven me insane?

9. SFX: CUTS TO: MEN RUNNING INSIDE THE CAVE: DEEP HOLLOW ECHO TO FOOTSTEPS/MOVEMENT/VOICES: HAEMON'S VOICE NEARER & NEARER: UNTIL RIGHT ON TOP OF HIM SOBBING UNCONTROLABLY: WITH:

10. CREON: My poor, unhappy boy, why are you here? Come away, come away, please, my son, come away--

11. SFX: HAEMON SPITS!: WITH:

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1. MESSENGER: (N/O) Haemon spat in his father's face, drew his sword--

2. SFX: HAEMON DRAMS SWORD: WITH:

3. HAEMON: Aahhhhh--!!

4. MESSENGER: (N/O) ... and struck

5. CREON: Haemon--

6. SFX: A SHORT STRUGGLE: AHHHH:

7. MESSENGER: (N/O) Creon leaped away untouched, and Haemon ...

8. SFX: HAEMON'S DEATH CRY: WITH:

9. MESSENGER: (N/O) drove the sword home into his own side. (BEAT) He clutched at the dead girl--

10. HAEMON: (DYING) Antigone ... .

11. MESSENGER: (N/O) --who swung above by a noose fashioned from her wedding gown--

12. SFX: CUTS TO: PUBLIC GATHERING IN THEBES: WITH:

13. LEADER: My queen ... ? (GOING OFF) Eurydice--

14. MESSENGER: I volunteered to run ahead--
Appendix E

“He Taught Us to Survive.” (CBC Times 3-9 Oct. 1959: 9)

PROMETHEUS is one of our present-day heroes. It is quite wonderful what he did for us. But did he go too far? Judge for yourself when you hear his story. He was one of the Titans of Greek mythology, vigorous, audaciously defiant to the point of recklessness, but a warm, very human character, indeed. The tale goes that the great god Zeus employed him to make men out of mud and water. Then, in pity for the helpless creatures he had brought to life, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to them, and taught them many arts, including the one of self-preservation. Zeus was naturally wrathful. It is said that he planned to destroy the human race and supplant it by a new and better species, to avenge himself because man had got the better of him. To counterbalance Prometheus' gifts to man, Zeus sent Pandora to earth as the first woman, to become the wife of Prometheus' brother. With her he took a box that Zeus forced her to open, but, having a woman's natural curiosity, she disobeyed, and let loose all the evils that have been hounding man ever since. Only Hope stayed inside.

Then Zeus turned his attention to Prometheus, who knew the secret of how the great god would be overthrown one day. He ordered Prometheus chained to a crag in the wilderness of Mount Caucasus, to suffer interminable torment — all day an eagle preyed on his liver, which was renewed at night, ready for further torture the next day. Unflinching, Prometheus steadfastly refused to tell Zeus the secret of man's power to preserve himself. Eventually he was delivered by being swallowed up in a giant earthquake. Through his heroism we retained the nucleus of our knowledge of science and the arts. But will this great treasure destroy us in the end? That, briefly, is the situation in Len Peterson's reworking of Prometheus Bound, one of a trilogy by the Greek playwright Aeschylus. If you are not a mythology fan, don't get the idea that this is just a grim, dry tale in archaic language about creatures with ideas too far removed from our philosophy to be credible. On the contrary, Peterson has modernized the language, put considerable punch into the story, re-arranged the sequences but retained most of the plot, and the result is a meaty, entertaining drama which will open the latest CBC Stage series Sunday night at 8 on CBC radio. Esse Ljung will produce.

Peterson felt that none of the translations of Prometheus Bound was quite right for broadcasting. Because none had been done by a playwright the dramatic potential hadn't been used fully and the figures of speech were too involved, so Peterson did a tailoring job on the story with interesting results. He thinks that the play "is especially good for radio because it hasn't much physical action, but it's a very powerful story and moves along nicely. I'm working in close collaboration with arranger-conductor Morris Surdin to make up for visual aids with some rather eloquent music."

Aeschylus has given Peterson some powerful material to work with. The ancient Greek is a master of contrasts in dealing with the dark mysteries of fate, with the forces of destiny working through divine will and human passion, which he reveals with shuddering intensity. But he gave more to the theatre than words. He introduced the raised stage, the elaborate tragic costume, and the second actor, making possible a clash of interests and characters. It is said that he was killed when an eagle mistook his bauld head for a stone and dropped a tortoise on it to break the shell.
Appendix F

“Prometheus.” (CBC Times 8-14 Oct. 1966: Back Cover)

The great god Zeus employed audacious Prometheus to make man out of mud and water. Then, in pity for the helpless creatures he had brought to life, Prometheus stole fire from heaven for them, taught them many arts, and refused to divulge to Zeus the secret of man’s power to preserve himself, even when Zeus sent an eagle to peck out his liver.

Len Paterson’s modern-language reworking of the tale, as told by Greek playwright Aeschylus in Prometheus Bound, will be heard on radio’s CBC Stage, Sunday, October 9th, at 1:03 p.m. edt / 2:03 adt, with production by Esse W. Ljungh.
Appendix G


This extract of pages 1-6 of the radio script of *Ag* is reproduced courtesy of Gabriel Josipovici and the BBC Written Archives Centre.
"Ag" (Stereo)

A play for stereo by Gabriel Josipovici
(A re-texturing for stereo of Aeschylus's Agamemnon in
the translation by Richmond Lattimore.)

Music specially composed by Christos Pittas

Produced and Directed by John Theocharis

REM/REC:    MUSIC:
            Friday 21st October 1000-1900, studio 6a
            Saturday 22nd October 1000-1800, studio 6a (EDIT)
            Sunday 24th October 1000-1800, studio 6a
            Monday 25th October 1000-1800, studio 6a
            Tuesday 26th October 1000-1900, studio 6a

TAPE NCS:  MUSIC = SLN42/DX667B
            (If required for a separate FX, T A P E S L N 4 2 / D X 6 7 3 B)
            EDIT: Wednesday 27th October, H54
            Radiophonic Workshop, Haida Vale:
            Thursday and Friday 28th and 29th October,
            Monday and Tuesday 1st and 2nd November.
            (Dick Mills)

ANNOUNCER: Friday 22nd October, 1400

TX: Radio 3 Sunday 14th November 1976, 2000-2100

Cast:

AGAMEMNON  .............. TIMOTHY WEST
KLYTEMNESTRA  ............ JILL MACKEN
C.LEITRIS/\p6 spl
p7 sp2, p3 spl  ............ MAUREEN O'BRIEN
ANNOUNCER/CHORUS ...... LESLIE HERITAGE (23-25.10.76)
W.THELAN/CHORUS ........ TIMOTHY A. MASON (23-25.10.76)
HERALD/CHORUS ........... JOHN ROWE (23-25.10.76)
CHORUS (Voice LEFT pp 26-28 23-25.10.76)
............ CHRISTOPHER BLIMELD
CHORUS .................. WILLIAM EDDEE (23-25.10.76)
                            DAVID GRAILE (23-25.10.76)
                            ROBERT BECKET (23-25.10.76)
FIRST CHILD .............. SHIRLEY DIXON (21.10.76)
SECOND CHILD ............. JUNE KNOWLES (21.10.76)
SINGER .................... MARTYN MILL
SECTION OF THE PHILHARMONIA OF LONDON, AND THE BBC SINGERS

STUDIO MANAGERS - 21, 22.10.1976 LLOYD SILVERTHORNE
21.10.1976 PENNY LEICESTER
22-26.10.1976 JOCK FARRULL
LLOYD SILVERTHORNE
ROY MULLIN

(Grace Robertson, ext. 2351)
"Ag"
by Gabriel Josipovici
(A retexturing for stereo of Aeschylus's
AGAMEMNON, based on the translation by
Richmond Lattimore)

MUSIC CUE ONE: DARK, MUFFLED, NON-PATTERNEO SOUNDS
MAY BE HEARD UNDER FOLLOWING:

1. ANNOUNCER: After Sophocles's Oedipus Rex the Agamemnon of Aeschylus
is probably the best known of the Greek tragedies.
It tells the story of the triumphal return from Troy of
Agamemnon, King of Argos, and of his death at the
hands of his wife, Clytemnestra. Some scholars, noting
Aeschylus's imagery which frequently links Agamemnon
to the Sun and noting too the fact of his death in a
tub of water, have seen behind the story the myth of
the daily death of the Sun as it sinks into the sea,
and of the annual death of the old god as he is
dismembered each Spring by the Earth Goddess and her
accomplice.

2. Aeschylus's play opens with the Watchman on the roof
waiting for news of the King's return. As he watches,
a beacon flares in the distance, heralding the
long-awaited event. As the chorus voice forebodings of
doom a Messenger arrives with the news that though much
of the Argive army has been destroyed either in the
capture of Troy or on the journey home, Agamemnon is safe
and at hand. The King enters and is greeted by
Clytemnestra, who urges him to walk on a crimson carpet
she has had laid out for him, and enter the house.
After some hesitation, he agrees. As he goes into the
house she lets out a terrifying, enigmatic cry.
She then follows him inside and there murders him
in his bath with the help of her lover, Aegisthus,

continued/......
1. ANNOUNCER CONT.: thereby avenging the sacrifice of her daughter, Iphigeneia, which Agamemnon had been forced to order before the fleet could sail for Troy. Outside the palace, the Trojan slave-girl Cassandra warns of the impending death, but can do nothing to stop it.

2. This is the story Aeschylus tells. It all happened a long time ago. Yet we cannot get away from it. It nibbles at the fringes of our consciousness:

3. The Sun King, arriving home, triumphant

4. Struck down in his bath by the woman

5. It is there. All the pieces are there. We don't want to have anything to do with it.

6. But it is there.

END OF MUSIC CUE ONE:

OVERTURE: (SILENCE: 5 secs.
Klytemnestra's SHRIEK OF TRIUMPH)

7. KLYTEMNESTRA: ELELELELEU! ELELELELEU! ELELELELEU!

(SOUND OF THE AXE. SOUND OF A\'S COLLAPSING IN THE TIN BATH. SOUND OF PEBBLES DROPPING SLOWLY INTO TIN BOX: 7 secs. CUT SHARPLY - SO THAT ONE GETS THE SENSE OF A TAPE BEING WIPED)

(REPEAT)

(SILENCE: 10 secs.)
SCENE I:

(a)

(OUT OF THE SILENCE FRAGMENTS OF WORDS Emerge,
DIVIDED AMONG THE SIX VOICES AND COMPLETELY FILLING
THE THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE: SOME HIGH, SOME LOW,
SOME FRONT, SOME BACK, SOME RIGHT, SOME LEFT,
SOME LOUD, SOME SOFT, SOME REPEATED AND ECHOING.
TO GET THE RIGHT EFFECT THE ACTORS SHOULD
PROBABLY SPEAK WHOLE WORDS WHICH WOULD THEN
BE CHOPPED)

Bla(ck)
  Hor(tal)
  Dea(d)
  Li(ght)
  Bloss(oming)

Bloss(oming)
  Bla(ck)
  Bless(oming)
  Li(ght)
  Da(rk)

Bla(ck)
  Black
  Bless(oming)
  Splendours
  Clusters

Bloss(oming)
  Sun
  Bla(ck)
  Hor(tal)
  Sun
  Maze
  Wild

Black
  Blossoming
  Itys

continued/......
(FAUSE: ECHO)

Itys Splendours
Clusters Showers Birthtime Birth Black

Birth Tub Birth
The silver tub

(b) (OUT OF THE FRAGMENTS WORDS AND EVEN PHRASES HAVE STARTED TO EMERGE. THE PROCESS CONTINUES AS ISOLATED SOUNDS BEGIN TO REVEAL A PATTERN OF SENSE)

Sing sorrow Black
The silver tub Blossoming
In the earth Drops come thicker
Fenced by the tub
Drops come thicker The house is falling

She will cut me down
Cut

(SLIGHT PAUSE)
King of the Ships, who tore up Ilium by the roots
What can I call her and be right?

Blossoming
What call her?
What?
Oh flame and pain

King of the Ships
Fenced by the tub
The house is falling

Such a victory as this
What call her and be right?
The sheer edge
Black
The sheer edge of the tearing iron
Black. Mortal.
Tearing iron
Dark red and violent
And violent driven rain of bitter
Bitter-savoured blood
Black mortal blood

Oh flame and pain that sweeps me once again

Drops come thicker
That sweeps
Spider's web
Fatal net
The sheer edge of the tearing iron
Violent
Violent driven rain
Black mortal blood
Oh flame and pain that sweeps

(SLOWING NOW)
Sweeps
Sweeps me
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps
Sweeps

(PAUSE: 3 sec.)

(OFF THE PHRASES COME WHOLE PHRASES.
BUT THESE FUNCTION DIFFERENTLY FROM WHAT HAS GONE
BEFORE. THEY SHOULD BE READ IN FLAT VOICES BY THE
SIX ACTORS, SEATED IN A ROW. THERE SHOULD NO LONGER
BE ANY SENSE OF THE WORDS DOTTED ABOUT THE STEREO
SPACE. / I THINK OF WHAT NOW FOLLOWS AS A LAYING OF
THE BOUNDARIES FOR THE ACTION, A CIRCLING IN LOW KEY
OF THE EXTENT OF THE MATERIAL - THE IMPRESSION OF A
FIRST READ-THROUGH OF A PLAY.)

MUSIC CUE TWO: DRONING LAMENT

1. FEMALE
   VOICE: Now all my suffering is past, with griefless heart I
   hie this man, the watchdog of the fold and hall;
   the stay that keeps the ship alive; the post to grip
   groundward the towering roof; a father’s single child;
   land seen by sailors after all their hope was gone;
   splendour of daybreak shining from the night of storm;
   the running spring a parched wayfarer strays upon.

2. MALE
   VOICE: She left among her people the stir and clamour of
   shields and spearheads, the ships to sail and the
   armour. She took to Ilium her dowry, death.
   She stepped forth lightly between the gates, daring
   beyond all daring.
Appendix H

Stychomythic Exchange, Ag (BBC, Gabriel Josipovici, 1976).

This extract of pages 22-23 of the radio script of Ag is reproduced courtesy of Gabriel Josipovici and the BBC Written Archives Centre.
1. KLYTEMESTRA In all things else, my heart's unsleeping care
   shall act
   with the gods' aid to set a right what fate ordained.

   (THIS IS THE ONE TOTALLY NATURALISTIC DRAMATIC
   EXCHANGE IN THE WHOLE PIECE, IT SHOULD BE DONE
   QUIETLY, WITHOUT RHEToric OR BRAVURA; AG MERELY
   STATES FIRMLY THE COMMON-SENSICAL AND OBVIOUS,
   NO BACKGROUND OF ANY KIND)

2. AG: Daughter of Leda, you who kept my house for me,
   there is one way your welcome matched my sense well.
   You strained it to great length. Yet properly
to praise
   me thus belongs by right to other lips, not yours.
   And all this - do not try in women's ways to make
   me delicate, nor, as if I were some Asiatic
   bow down to earth and with wide mouth cry out to me,
   nor cross my path with jealousy by strewing the ground
   with robes. Such state becomes the gods, and none beside.
   I am a mortal, a man; I cannot trample upon
   these tinted splendours without fear thrown in my path.
   I tell you, as a man, not god, to reverence me.
   Discordant is the murmur at such treading down
   of lovely things; while God's most lordly gift to man
   is decency of mind. Call that man only blest
   who has in sweet tranquillity brought his life to close.
   If I could only act as such, my hope is good.
(b) 
(THE CENTRAL SCENE - NINE STAGES)

(1) 
(THE STYCHOMYTIC EXCHANGE)

(2) 
(AS THE EXCHANGE GATHERS SPEED, CUT SUDDENLY AND INTO: A GAME OF PING-PONG:

FIRST WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE BALL, THEN THE VOICE OF THE UMPIRE CALLING OUT THE SCORE.

THEN THE SUDDEN SENSE OF A LARGE CROWD WATCHING THE GAME, CHEERING, CLAPPING, HOLDING THEIR BREATH, ETC.

CUT, LEAVING ONLY THE SOUND OF THE PING-PONG BALL, GOING TO AND FRO, IN WIDER AND WIDER ARCS, FROM ONE SPEAKER TO THE OTHER.

BRING UP SLOWLY AGAIN THE RUSHED STYCHOMYTIC EXCHANGE OF (1) AND FADE OUT PING-PONG.

OUT OF THE BLUR OF THIS A NUMBER OF DISTINCT VOICES EMERGE, READING IN TURN AS FOLLOWS:)

- 23 -
LEFT
(WE COME NOW TO THE CENTRAL SCENE OF THE PLAY, AND THE ONE WHERE IT MOVES RIGHT AWAY FROM AESCHYLUS. THERE ARE NINE STAGES)

(THE SYMPOMYTHIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN AG AND KLYTEMESTRA BEGINS PERFECTLY NATURALISTICALLY, FOLLOWING ON WITHOUT A BREAK FROM THE LAST SPEECH, BUT SOON IT SPEEDS UP, ACCELERATING FAST, PERHAPS THE FINAL SECONDS SHOULD BE SPEEDED UP ELECTRONICALLY. I MARK WITH AN ASTERISK THE POINT AT WHICH I FEEL IT SHOULD START TO GET OUT OF HAND. AS IT BLURS THE AESCHYLEAN TEXT BREAKS DOWN AND WE MOVE INTO (2). I GIVE THE WHOLE EXCHANGE, THOUGH THE BREAKDOWN WILL OBVIOUSLY OCCUR BEFORE THE END)

1. KLYTEMESTRA: Yet tell me this one thing, and do not cross my will.
2. AG: My will is mine. I shall not make it soft for you.
3. KLYTEMESTRA: It was in fear surely that you vowed this course to God.
4. AG: * No man has spoken knowing better what he said.
5. KLYTEMESTRA: If Priam had won as you have, what would he have done?
6. AG: I well believe he might have walked on tapestries.
7. KLYTEMESTRA: Be not ashamed before the bitterness of men.
8. AG: The people murmur, and their voice is great in strength.
9. KLYTEMESTRA: Yet he who goes unenvied shall not be admired.
10. AG: Surely this lust for conflict is not womanlike?
11. KLYTEMESTRA: Yet for the mighty even to give way is grace.
12. AG: Does such a victory as this mean so much to you?
13. KLYTEMESTRA: Oh, yield! The power is yours. Give way of your free will.
14. AG: Since you must have it—here, let someone with all speed take off these sandals, slaves for my feet to tread upon.

(LG MOVING AWAY IN HEAVY ARMOUR. KEEP THROUGHOUT NEXT SCENE)
Appendix I


This extract of pages 26-28 of the radio script of *Ag* is reproduced courtesy of Gabriel Josipovici and the BBC Written Archives Centre.
1. 3rd CHILD: Keep it in the bathtub.

(LAUGHTER)
(THE HIPPO MOOS)
(MOOS AGAIN. THE SOUND FILLS THE AIR)
(CUT AND BACK INTO LIST OF MASTS SEGMENT, BRIEFLY,
THEN BACK TO HIPPO)
(THE HIPPO’S MOO – VERY FAR AWAY)
(THE CLOSING CHORDS OF THE SONG – PLUS THE "WOM")

1. VOICE: Atreus and Thyestes, sons of Pelops, quarreled because Thyestes had seduced his brother’s wife and disputed the throne of Argos. Thyestes, defeated and driven out, returned a suppliant with his children, and Atreus in pretended reconciliation invited him and his children to a feast. There he slaughtered the children of Thyestes (all but one) and served them in a concealing dish to their father, who ate their flesh. When it was made known to him what he had been doing, Thyestes cursed the entire house and fled with his surviving son, Aegisthous. Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus, inherited the kingdom of Argos and married respectively Klytemnestra and Helen, daughters of Tyndareus the Spartan. Klytemnestra bore Agamemnon three children – Iphigeneia, Electra and Crestes. When Paris of Troy seduced Helen
(As this long speech proceeds, fragments of the play, from Scene 1 (5) on, start to intrude upon it. Play against it.)
1. VOICE CONT.: and carried her away, the brothers organised a great expedition to win her back. The armament, gathered at Aulis, was held there by wind and weather; Calchas, the prophet, divined that this was due to the anger of Artemis and, with the pressure of public opinion behind him, forced Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia, in order to appease the goddess. Agamemnon with his forces sailed to Troy and in the tenth year captured it, destroyed the city and its temples, killed or enslaved the people, and set sail for home. On the sea a great storm struck the fleet and Agamemnon with a single galley found his way back to Argos, the rest of the ships being sunk or driven out of sight and knowledge. With him he brought Cassandra, captured princess and prophetess of Troy. Meanwhile in Argos, Aegisthus had returned and Klytemnestra had taken him as her lover and sent Orestes out of the country. Warned of the king's approach by signal flares through which he had agreed to notify her of the fall of Troy, she made ready to receive him. She welcomed him into the house, but when he was unarmed in his bath, she pinned him in a robe and hacked him to death, then killed Cassandra as well. She defended her action before the people of Argos, who were helpless against Aegisthus and his bodyguard. But Orestes returned at last and was welcomed by his sister Electra, who had remained rebellous against her mother but without the power to act. Orestes, disguised as a traveller and pretending to bring news of his own death, won access to the house and killed both Aegisthus and Klytemnestra. Forteins and dreams had forewarned of this murder, and Orestes had been encouraged, even commanded, by Apollo, to carry it through. Nevertheless when he had displayed the bodies and defended his act, the Furies or spirits of retribution appeared to him and drove him out of Argos. Orestes took refuge with Apollo at Delphi and was at last purified of the murder,
(THE FRAGMENTS COME FASTER AND FASTER THEN DISSOLVE INTO: VERY LOUD CRYING OF HIPPO. THIS IS CUT OFF AND WE OVERHEAR WHAT MIGHT BE A DISCUSSION BETWEEN PRODUCER AND TECHNICAL PEOPLE, OF PRODUCER AND ACTORS. THESE SHOULD BE HALF HEARD AND REPEATED, BUT THE REPEATED FRAGMENT SHOULD BE CUT INTO A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY EACH TIME AND THE LEVELS ETC. SHOULD VARY - N.B. ONE SHOULD NEVER HAVE THE SENSE THAT THIS IS BEING DONE FOR EFFECT, BUT RATHER THAT WE ARE OVERHEARING SOMETHING NOT MEANT FOR US. POSSIBLE CONVERSATION:)

1. PRODUCER: OK? Mike? Jane? Shall we try it?

(SOMEONE MAKES A SOTTO VOCE JOKE. LAUGHTER)

2. PRODUCER: Let's try it that way then.

(MORE LAUGHTER AND TALK IN LOW TONES)

3. VOICE: Pete, you want us to take it at a natural pace?

(FADE. AS IT FADES, SOMEONE SAYS:)

4. VOICE II: In the head. It's churning round in his head like pebbles.

5. VOICE III: With a bloody big gold mask clamped on his face like that what do you expect?
but the Furies refused to acknowledge any absolution and pursued him across the world until he took refuge on the rock of Athens before the statue of Athene. There in the presence of Athene, Apollo and the Furies appealed to her for a decision, and she, thinking the case too difficult to be judged by a single person, even her divine self, appointed a court of Athenian jurors to hear the arguments and judge the case. When the votes of these resulted in a tie, Athene herself cast the deciding ballot in favour of Orestes. Orestes, deeply grateful to Athene and her city, returned to Argos, while Athene found it necessary to propitiate the angry Eumenides by inducing them to accept an honourable place as tutelary spirits in Athens. The law court of the Aeropagus, which had judged the case, was perpetuated as a just tribunal for homicide down through the history of man.

Appendix J

“World Theatre at 9.15: The Trojan Women of Euripides.”

(BBC Radio Times 1 Mar. 1946: 8)

B.B.C.

To: [Redacted]

The enclosed text from the 1946 BBC Radio Times is the same as the text I previously provided. It appears to be an advertisement for a radio broadcast of "The Trojan Women of Euripides." The text includes a brief synopsis of the play, mentions key characters, and provides the broadcasting details.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]
Appendix K

“A Post-war Drama of 415 B.C.” (BBC Radio Times 1 Mar. 1946: 3)

By Professor Gilbert Murray, O.M.

The Trojan Women of Euripides, in Professor Gilbert Murray’s famous verse translation, will be broadcast at 9.15 on Monday evening as the sixth play in the World Theatre series.

The story of the fighting and the great victory was told in various epic poems, but Euripides is not interested in the fighting. He shows us not the glory of conquest, but only the horror of war, and how the things people care about most in the world—love, friendship, hope for the future—can be swept away in a moment of violence. The Trojan Women was produced in the following spring, and shows the influence upon Euripides of that year of indescribable pity and dire foreboding. It is the first expression in European literature of pity for mankind excited into a moving principle, above all considerations of pride or national glory.

It is, of course, a political tract. Euripides never mentions Melos or Athens or the politicians of whom he disapproved. He takes his story from the legendary heroine Patroclus and clothes it in the language of tragic poetry. Such tragedy as it conveys is of the spiritual and eternal sort, as valid now, two thousand years later, as it was for the year in which the play was produced.

End of a Ten Years’ War

Euripides took as his subject the greatest legendary achievement of the heroic age, the conquest of Troy by the Greeks under the leadership of Agamemnon, “king of men.” It was an old and famous tale: how Paris, the son of Phoebus Apollo, came to Troy, was the guest of Mentor, king of Sparta, and carried off his host’s wife, Helen, most beautiful of all women; how Agamemnon, the elder brother of Menelaus, gathered an army from all parts of Greece, sailed across the sea to Troy. The war lasted ten years. Hector, the great defender of Troy, was killed; Achilles, best warrior of the Greeks, was killed; Paris was killed. At last, by a stranger, the town was taken. The Greeks broke up their camp and pretended to have departed in despair, leaving behind a colossal figure of a horse as an offering to the goddess Pallas Athena. The Trojans were induced by a false rumour to take the horse inside the walls. But inside the horse there lay concealed some Greek warriors, who at night opened the gates and let in the Greek army.

Hopeless but Unbroken

Then, as a strange contrast and interlude among these noble and tragic frames, comes Helen herself, the root of all evil, as beautiful as ever, cool and carefully dressed amid all the rage that surrounded her. Her old husband, Menelaus, has recovered her and means to kill her, but she has his measure and knows she can charm him again. As these pass by, all that is left of the great city is an old woman, Hector, holding in her arms a dead child, to be buried hand in hand with no coffins but his father’s shield. The city is burned and the women go forth, hopeless but unbroken, to slavery. Their gods have betrayed them; nothing is left them but their courage and their mutual trust. It is small comfort that we know, though they do not, that the Greek army is doomed to pay for its crimes by a rainstorm of war at sea.

There are only two male characters: the conqueror, Menelaus, angry and cruel, wild with jealousy, yet still beloved, and the faithful Talthybios, as honest and decent soldier, trying in vain to be kind to the women he has to take as slaves to their various masters.

One word more of more explanation. An audience is sometimes puzzled by the tendency of Greek gods and heroes, like characters in a Russian novel, to love more than one name. Trojans are also Phrygians. Troy is also Ilium; strictly speaking Ilion is the town, and Pergamus the towers of Ilion. Troy is the land. Pallas Athena has regularly two names, while Phebus Apollo, not content with two, is apt, when regarded as a prophet, to be called Locidas.