

The London Consortium  
**Static.** Issue 03 – Choice and Suffering

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# Tom McCarthy

## Agamemnon A Play in Two Acts

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Aiming to initiate interdisciplinary intellectual debate about paradoxes of contemporary culture, Static presents contributions from an international team of academics, artists and cultural practitioners.

The materials, assembled for each issue around a theme, include analytical essays and articles, interviews, art projects, photographic images, etc. Static will welcome feedback, argument and commentary from scholars, artists and other readers, and will be regularly updated in order to communicate the most recent and relevant ideas and interpretations on the chosen topic.

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# Act One

Lights up to reveal the entrance to a house. This consists of a free-standing doorway (frame only) installed in the middle of the stage and facing along the stage right to stage left axis, i.e. at an angle of exactly 90 degrees to the audience. On the floor immediately to the doorway's left (stage right), a doormat bearing the word 'Welcome'. Several feet to the doorway's right (stage left), a bathtub. At the base of the doorway itself, a block of wood or metal three feet long and one and a half inches high. This must be firmly attached to the stage floor.

Enter, from stage right, **Agamemnon**, a man in his mid-forties. He walks from stage right towards stage left in a straight line that runs through the doorway. As he passes through the frame, he trips on the block and falls over.

Lights down.

## Act Two

Lights half up to reveal a set cleared of doorway, doormat and bathtub, i.e. consisting only of the block. Across the stage's back wall the events of Act One, which have been filmed by a camera installed in front of the stage exactly in line with the doorway, are replayed by means of a video projector. The replay must take place in extreme slow motion, at such a speed that the sequence from Agamemnon's entrance to his arrival at a state of rest on the floor lasts 40 minutes.

Lights down.

### Notes

1. Agamemnon's fall must follow the same stage right to stage left trajectory as his walk, so that he falls through and from the frame towards the bathtub, coming to rest face down with his feet pointing back towards the doorway and his hands towards the bathtub.

2. If the video replay equipment being used for the production is not sophisticated enough to replay Act One in extreme slow motion within Act Two immediately, Act One should be filmed and the footage slowed down to the desired speed using appropriate editing software prior to the performance. In this case, the actor playing Agamemnon must ensure that his movements are identical both times he performs Act One.
3. For this version of *Agamemnon*, the camera must be placed among the audience seating exactly in line with the doorway, as stated. The director can, however, choose to stage different versions by placing the camera on the theatre's ceiling directly above the doorway pointing down towards the floor, in which case the play's title for that particular production should be amended to *Agamemnon (Gods)*; or by placing it off stage left pointing across towards stage right, in which case the play's title should be amended to *Agamemnon (Clytemnestra)*; or by using three cameras, one placed in each of the positions indicated above, in which case the play's title should be amended to *Agamemnon (Cassandra)*.