



The Medea of Euripides and Seneca: a Female Monster labeled a Greek Hero

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Abstract ;

Medea is the epitome of a Greek epic transgressive creature. By gathering the forces of Hecate, the harpies, the gorgons, and other monstrous creatures, Medea became the epithet for female monsters. This paper aims at exploring her psyche and to dismantle the idea that she drives her monstrosity from a masculine identity but rather exposes that motherhood is the core of her monstrosity.

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1.

Introduction:

In our theaters, it is the Medea of Euripides we have come to know: a witch, a foreigner, and a murderer. Produced in 431 BC, presumably at Dionysia, *Medea* ranked third in a contest against the works of Aeschylus' son Euphorion and the popular Sophocles. However, the Athenian reception of the play remains unknown, along with how shocking the twist may have been perceived (Clauss & Johnston, 1997, pp. 253- 296)¹; taking into consideration that Medea may not have been a foreign story to the audience. Archaic poets such as Eumelos' *Corinthiaca* (West, 2002, pp. 109-133)² had already introduced Medea as a mythic figure. As for the trials of Jason, and the murder of Pelias at the hands of Medea, they originated from the archaic poet Pindar . Kelly named the *Theogonyas* the origins of, "Medea's love for Jason and betrayal of family and homeland" . However, as disputed above, it only exposes Medea as a passed-down bride that submits to her husband.

Nonetheless, Euripides had enough material to reconstruct his Medea according to the social and political tensions of his time by making, "Medea an example of barbarians and uneducated persons, in whom anger is stronger than reason" .Medea is an extreme other, in the sense that, she is the complete opposite of the crowd for whom the play was intended, Greek educated men. But it is the inner working of the play, particularly her femininity that is the heart of the chaos she generates.

2. *Who is Medea?*

It is no surprise that Euripides' *Medea* became the backbone of Seneca's *Medea*, with his play mirroring a darker more eager Medea. Written around 50 CE, The Republic of Rome, through rapid expansions, was becoming a military despotism (Frisch 2). Freedom of speech, arts, and philosophy was under constant censorship or repression. During that age, Greek retellings became a subtle way to defend ideas through well-known stories. The lack of originality led Frisch to declare, "The Roman mind, never as imaginative and poetical as the Greek, lacked the ability and power to unmask, and hence these legends in their hands are devoid of the verve and immortality of their Greek predecessors" . Juxtaposed, the two texts both present the same account of the cursed divorce of Medea, with the main difference being in the layout; Euripides' play was performed, and Seneca's was recited (Frisch 1). But as I have stated above, Medea is an idea, an obsession that festers. In a psychoanalytical sense, she is a transgression of the psyche's definition of the duality of genders. For this reason, scholars mitigate her into two: an Archaic Hero, and a female monster. I argue that she is the latter.

Euripides' *Medea* opens with the Nurse offering a brief account of Medea's situation. Jason, her husband, has left her to marry the daughter of King Creon. She is now stranded in a foreign country after having betrayed hers to save Jason. The Nurse describes her as :

Medea, enraged, recites the list of Jason's vows, mocks the way he raised his hand as pledge and demands the gods stand witness to what her faithful love's produced. From the beginning, Medea is defined through the gaze of the Nurse. In other words, the crowd is watching the Nurse watching her. She is further isolated even in the language used to describe her, "like a rock, like a wave"). However, there is strength to derive from being associated with natural elements, elements that Jason had to survive in his epic. Stones refer to the Rocks which hid Scylla the female monster that devoured Odysseus' men)Wilson(2018 ,³ and Jason's Argo was the only one who survived her . As for the second, wave, it coincides with Scylla's sister, Charybdis(Wilson, 2018)⁴. She lurks near Scylla but remains underwater and instead of eating the voyagers, she "glup them down like a drink" (Wilson, 2018).

In Seneca's *Medea*, Medea directly call for those female monsters to avenge her, while in Euripides' *Medea* is eluded to be their revenge on the making. There is a grander narrative in Seneca's *Medea* that is directly established when she calls for the pentagon of Greek Gods and calls them, "ye deities by whom Jason swore to me", on the same line she groups herself with, "And ye deities whom Medea hath better right to invoke: thou Chaos of endless night; ye realms opposed to the upper world's; ye impious ghosts; thou Pluto, lord of the gloomy demesne; thou Proserpina, ravished with more honorable intentions" . There seems to be an echo of Hesiod's *Theogony*: Jason, the hero, is on the side of Zeus' order, and Medea is on the side of the feminine and the monstrous meant to battle and challenge the order. The imagery is strengthened further with the heavy description of the monsters she is calling out for, "ye goddesses who avenge crime, attend, your unkempt hair foul serpents, your bloody hands grasping the ominous torch" . In comparison, Euripides' *Medea* seems tame and hurt; it is no wonder she earned the pity of the chorus, while Seneca's *Medea* is a lonesome creature.

Yet both allude to the monstrous feminine. "Unkempt hair foul serpents" is a direct reference to the gorgons, most famous of all, Medusa. She, as well, was wronged by a Greek hero, Perseus, who beheaded her in her sleep . Further in similarities, both Medusa and Medea were born mortals in a line of immortals, and have gone through a corruption. Medusa, despite being a gorgon, was born mortal, beautiful, and "fair-cheeked" ,and seemingly, she later became a monster worth slaying. As for Medea, her corruption was mental but later became physical when she slaughtered an extension of her body, the children. In calling for the gorgons, she both cries out for Medusa, the avenged,

and her sisters, Sthenno and Euryale, the two immortal gorgons , forever chasing Perseus to avenge their sister.

The gaze, and the body, more precisely the head of the gorgons, have become the driving force of the fear of the feminine. Freud, in the segment, “Medusa’s Head”, anoints her with the following, “The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration linked to the sight of something” . He supports his argument with the use of Medusa’s head by the virgin goddess, Athena, as a means to repel sexual desire . By extension, and by reviving the snakes, Seneca’s Medea drives equal strength, as Athena, from the fear of castration.

If we view the plays through a male gaze, concerned with male anxieties, the castration of Jason throughout both plays is achieved in three distinct manners; the appropriation of the epic, the killing of the pure bride, and the murder of her children. As she castrates him, she kills her emotional weakness and transcends to immortality. However, if we are to use a female gaze, Medea must be rendered the subject, and Jason an object.

The nurse refers to her again as an element of Jason’s quests, “And you, keep them from Medea./When they are near, her eyes are fierce, savage like/a bull” , signifying a transition from a passive element of nature, to a threatening animal. She is described as such when her eyes land on her children. She sees in them a loss of herself and a waste of her labor; since Jason is about to abandon them, she, along with the children, have failed. For this reason, her first dialogue is, “My hope is death!” . She quickly establishes whose death. Thus despair morphs into hate :

I suffer!Nothing can answer it.I want my children dead. I want his house destroyed, to crush my sons and their father beneath it.

3. Conflict in the play Medea:

Passion versus reason has been accredited as the center of the moral conflict of the play of Euripides, but as Foley puts it, “Those who read the monologue as a struggle between reason and passion view Medea's story as a tragedy of sexual jealousy” , which is unlikely when she declares the first recipient of her hatred, the children. The play is not a matter of passion and reason because it is a dialogue between Medea’s divided self; the maternal, and the monstrous feminine. While scholars, who opted for a gendered reading of the plays, define the conflicts of the maternal and the masculine(Foley, 1989)⁵, I believe that while she incorporates traits of a Greek hero, it is her rejection and paradoxical acceptance of motherhood that fuels her inner division. After all, the first victims of her hate are the children, followed by the house of Jason, followed by the children again,

and at last the father. That she rejects her children so ardently signifies a hatred of motherhood itself that the Nurse sensed even before Medea planned or voiced her revenge(Bryson Bongie, 1977).

Jason came much later after her outburst. When she speaks of him, she is less emotional :

I made Jason swear to love and honor me, for after my shameful treason, I thought only great oaths would keep him bound to me.

His oath was supposed to cleanse her of her wrongs done for his sake. The matter goes beyond passion, in the words of Bongie, “She does not call on the gods to witness that Jason has broken her heart, but rather that he has broken his oaths” (35). Jason was to her more than a man, and his oath was a restoration to a state of purity. While at first, shameful treason refers to the murder of her brother, there is a surprising lack of plurality if the treason is that of her nation. She had murdered the boy and dismembered him, and while it is minor in comparison, she stole from her father the Golden Fleece, which she later anoints as her dowry. But the treason that could group all of them is her love for Jason, so corrupting, she could not believe his love could suffice to stay with her, and thus relied on an oath. By abandoning her, Jason forces her to carry her guilt alone.

Shame reappears when she calls for Artemis and Themis to bury Jason and his new Bride, she would like them to simply vanish out of sight . The new Bride forces her further into shame when she is made a legitimate wife, and Medea a concubine(Burnett, 1973). Another interesting interpretation offered by Boedeker is, “The person Medea plans to kill reflects herself as she was when vulnerable to Jason’s self-serving persuasion. Medea evidently wishes that this naïve version of herself never existed” . It is true that whatever she sees in the princess, she wants to kill it because it furthers her shame; I believe it to be jealousy. The princess is yet to be corrupted by Jason, as declared by Burnett, “Jason is the center of the pollution in the *Medea*” . Unlike Medea, blessed ignorance is still within reach. On the same line, the princess’s marriage will be less costly than hers; she will not have to kill anyone, nor leave her home country, nor is she burdened with the task of engendering a male heir, Medea’s sons are good enough. But Medea will not offer all she has earned without the pain it carries, hence why the poisoned dress was delivered by the children.

As for Seneca’s Medea, she is eager to be Medea. When the Nurse calls her, “Medea-”, she answers, “ -will I prove myself ” . This meta-intertextual awareness creates a polarity between the transformative flows of both characters. The actions of Euripides Medea are chiefly propelled by a need to go to the before, while Seneca’s Medea cannot wait to become Medea. She often refers to herself in the third person, as in the examples above, as if she had read Euripides’s *Medea* and knows and appreciates the trajectory of her myth.

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Her enthusiasm along with the nature of her language can easily lead to the division of Seneca's Medea, as with Euripides', into the masculine, and the maternal. However, Medea does not allow for an easy cut, when she announces, "Born is my vengeance, already born; I have given birth". As discussed in Hesiod's section, female recreational powers play a vital role in installing harmony in the world of men, and chaos in that of the gods. Paradoxically, children as leverage, even in a failed marriage, are hard to use. Thetis, for example, preserved and obeyed Achilles despite having been forced to conceive him with Peleus. As for Medea attributing her revenge to her birth, fishes revenge out of motherhood but does not realize it until further into the play.

She, nonetheless, embodies a more masculine persona than Euripides' Medea. Seneca's Medea never doubted her innocence, and against Creon, made her case clear, "Proceed now and pile your indictments high; I shall confess all. The sole charge to which I am liable is the return of the Argo", and when Creon confronts her with the murder of Pelias, she is quick to drag Jason into the matter:

why do you differentiate between a pair equally guilty? It is for him Pelias fell, not for me. Add to your indictment elopement and theft, a deserted father and a butchered brother-all the crimes that bridegroom teaches his new wives: the sin is not mine. Many times have I been made guilty, but never for myself .

Remembering halfway that she must persuade Creon of her harmlessness, she declares herself guilty, but after her strong defense, it is hard to not see it as meek acting, certainly compared with Euripides's Medea when she presents her case to Creon who is about exile her.

In a sense, Euripides' Medea has better control of her emotions because despite having only a brief moment to process her husband's new marriage, Creon comes knocking on her door. In the defense of Seneca's Medea, she admits before her confrontation to choosing, "Open hostility". As for Euripides's Medea, she downplays her power and intelligence to gain time :

A woman like me is mistrusted and despised for her cleverness, feared by you because your fear's misplaced. Creon, I'm not so clever. Don't fear me.

It is hard to imagine Seneca's Medea steeping on her pride on that level. All though she does cater to Creon, less ardently, and gain a day to prepare for her exile: she cannot let him go without a threat, "Generous, even if you curtail it a bit; I, too, am impatient".

In both plays the chorus, after the bargaining with Creon, inserts their opinion on the matter. In Euripides' *Medea*, a chorus is a group of Greek women who had come to love their foreign neighbor and were quick to come to help her when they first heard her cries . After learning about Medea's predicament, the Chorus hopes to soothe her, "When she sees us,/ our voices will be a song/ that calms her anger"

However, it is her that will ignite anger in them. Unlike Creon, Medea is roughly honest with the Chorus for they understand the implications of being a woman. She calls, “What other creatures are bred so exquisitely/and purposefully for mistreatment as women are?” . It is easy to see her as a cult leader, preaching anger out at the submissive wives of Greece. In a sense, she is a siren but for women. The following monologue in which she declares each of the hardships of being a woman, is not that of a woman that rejects her femininity, but rejects the treatment her femininity received at the hands of her husband :

Think of how we buy ourselves husbands, power and alliances for them, slavery and conquest over us. Bad enough to have no choice in servitude—but to pay for it and then celebrate a wedding feast adds salt to the wound. Try refusing the arrangement, or later petition for divorce—the first is impossible while the second is like admitting

you’re a whore. She is enacting her relationship with Jason which despite being different than that of the average Greek woman that would have been sold by her father remains the same in terms of suffering. Adding on to the fact that Medea was under the spell of Aphrodite, her marriage with Jason was a series of negotiations to save her honor. She follows with : for entertainment, death looks so good to us, much better than our husbands who think we adore only them, grateful that they, not us, go off to war. But they’re wrong! deluded by soldier fantasies. If they like pain and danger let them take a turn at bearing children and for every birth I’ll fight three wars.

Medea is denouncing the narrative of every woman in every period of Ancient Greece. She is the voice that culminates their greatest resentments; it is no wonder that they vow to be silent about her revenge. By choosing silence, the Chorus uses a virtue that is expected of them to protect evil.

Medea ends her monologue with the reminder that she is a stranger, that her pain surpasses all of theirs because they, at least, are in their land among their people. As said above, Medea indeed incorporates fragments of a Greek Hero’s persona, but by inviting the Chorus to take pity on her as a stranger, she asks them to embody the role of a Greek Hero. Hospitality is the central characteristic of the good, as seen on numerous occasions in *The Odyssey* where almost every encounter of Odysseus with an outsider, is a test of hospitality(Wilson, 2018)⁶. Yet, while in epics, hospitality contributes to the triumph of good over evil, in the case of *Medea*, it is the opposite. This is the power of the monstrous feminine; it corrupts and pollutes.

Medea confides in the Chorus and asks them, “So, friends, what method should we use?” .The Chorus is Medea's own Argo, the ship-filled heroes under Jason’s command, and their mission is to retrieve Medea’s Honor.

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For Seneca's *Medea*, The Chorus, being genderless, from their first appearance side with the new bride. They sing about her beauty, purity, and the legitimacy of her marriage, "Our maiden's comeliness surpasses far the beauty of Athenian brides" , Jason receives equal treatment, "So, I pray you heaven-dwellers, so may our lady transcend all wives, the husband far surpass all husbands" . As for Medea, a passing remark is given, "In silence and darkness depart the woman who surreptitiously marries a foreign husband" . However, this advice can be applied to the princess as well, in Seneca's play she is named Creusa. Since she is about to marry a foreign husband, Jason and Medea revert, she married him to belong to Greece, and he is marrying Creusa to belong to Corinth.

After Creon's visit, the Chorus chants the voyage of the Argo, and places Medea, "An evil worse than the sea and an appropriate cargo for the first of ships" . Unlike Euripides' Chorus that vows to sing her story: We'd sing, Medea, of your inspired love, how it guided you through the Black Sea.

We'd sing of what you lost, your fatherland, a husband's love, and now your children's home.

The Choruses are fighting a battle of reputation which is the defining trait of a hero, as well as Medea and Jason themselves. It is this battle of honor and reputation that is the core of Medea's declared masculine self. From the beginning of her confrontation with Jason, Medea has one goal in mind; to be the upper being. Jason, before she began her rants, declares, "You'll hate me, but it's a hate I won't return" , not because he does not, at least unconsciously hates her, but because he fears her more, or rather he fears what she represents; the heroine of his epic. Of course, Medea knows Jason well and retorts with, "I'll catalog your sins/ and feel better for it while you feel worse" . She begins listing all her heroic prowess that is as extraordinary as that of a Homeric hero; the harness of the fire-breathing brazen-footed bulls, the defeat of the earthborn warriors that would spring up after he had sown a field with serpents' teeth, and the slaying the deadly serpent that guarded the Fleece. However, she paired it with her ability to give life, "ask any Argonaut—they saw how I saved your life when my father", "brought your success instead of death" , and last, "if I'd been barren but I gave you sons!"

. Anger and persuasion led Bongie to say, "...although Medea may have the soul of a man, she nonetheless has the body of a woman" . The soul and the body are two inseparable entities; Medea offers no clear cut between her masculine and feminine selves and when she leans on one, the other is still present. She would have been a much more reassuring character had she displayed only masculine characteristics such as the Amazon warriors rather her complex psyche stems from her monstrous nature. For this reason, critics often accuse her of pretending, as in her convincing monologue with the chorus, citing that she is far from the typical Greek woman. While it is true that she is guilty of lies by omission, the crimes in question were done under the spells of Aphrodite, and her spells, in the Euripidean tradition, are deadly. In *Hippolytus*, Aphrodite pushes Phaedra to

sickness and mental torment that ends with her suicide. No one can resist the goddess of love. As for the Chorus they, before the monologue, already vowed friendship and love to her.

4. *Medea's female body*

In the discussion of Medea's female body, Bongie contradicts herself by declaring the various aspects in which the thinking of Medea is always tainted with her identity, which cannot be separated from her body, as a woman. She enumerates her physical inferiority, "A woman imbued with the values of the heroic male had to compensate for a deficiency in physical strength and training in some way". Medea's physical deficiency is questionable. She had been the one to behead the serpent, sleeping or not, the act requires great physical strength, dismembering a body as well. There are two reasons she chooses to poison. Medea explains the first plainly, she has no means of escaping if she was caught after her deed, or right before she has the chance. The second is more related to the nature of the sword. Killing by sword evokes a death of honor, a death on the battlefield where, according to Homer, men win glory. It is the weapon she chooses for her children, the least painful and most honorable. All though it doesn't lessen the gravity of her crime; it is a less deplorable way that the one she chooses to kill the princess, poison. As for Jason, she gives him a sentence worse than death.

All though more masculine than Euripides' Medea, Seneca's Medea transgresses the virtues of a typical Greek hero as well. During her confrontation with Seneca's Jason, he as his Greek counterpart chooses to not face her with anger. He openly admits to, "ply [her] with prayer", and relies on her maternity to prevent her from committing crimes. She takes the role of the rogue goddess when she forces Jason into a position typical of Greek heroes when faced with a god angered with them. First, she gives him back every ounce of guilt for the crime she committed, until he begs, "Why, wretched woman, are you dragging us both down to destruction? Go away, please!". Jason is facing a Medea that is already Medea, and which reminds him who to fear, "Medea, a greater terror". Throughout their bargain, he opposes her once without lending, when she asks to take her sons with her into exile, stating a matter of responsibility rather than will. It is at that precise moment that what has been unconscious becomes conscious; the instrument of her revenge is between her fingers.

It is necessary to note that Euripides' Medea transforms as well. Before her confrontation with Jason, she realizes, "Come, I must be Medea". Her epiphany is clear; she cannot go back to the Medea of the before, her only chance of saving her honor now is to be the Medea she has come to be known for, "Hecate's servant,/artist of potions and spells of guile". She is fully aware of her status as a woman when she declares, "Remember, you're a woman and it's useless/to compete with men like Jason", and from it derives her monstrosity through creation, "Be Medea, invent their grotesque murders".

In the scene, the source of Jason's resentment is exposed; he feels emasculated, "But I can't bear how you exaggerate/your selfless role in my success". However, as said by Burnette,

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Jason had never been a hero according to rule, for he had not set off alone (or with a single companion) but rather in a vast company, and he had conquered his monsters not by his own strength and the aid of an Olympian divinity, but by the borrowed sorcery of a local witch .

The moment Aphrodite, as he accredits her , made her fall in love with him, she became the hero of the Argo, but because she was a woman, each of her heroic acts polluted her and transformed her into a monster bound only by the oath of Jason. Nonetheless, her acts gave her pride and an honor that crushed Jason whose wounds can only be healed by a civilized bride. He cannot allow himself to acknowledge and treat Medea as a Hero(Foley, 1989). The princess, unnamed unlike his infamous wife whose name is unforgettable, is the only way he could restore his identity as a man and hero. By becoming her husband, and subsequently King of Cornith, he drives the Argo back on track and achieves what he voyaged for in the first place.

If Euripides' Jason is still raging with denial, and declaring himself the sole reason Medea acquired her fame (542-543), Seneca's Jason, as with his Medea, is subconsciously aware of his fate, and treads carefully with Medea. There is none of Euripides' Jason begging the gods that children come from a purer source than women, or the use of his children as mere excuses to marry, rather for Seneca's Jason the children are, "are my reason for living. The solace of a heart burned black with cares. Sooner would I be deprived of breath, of limbs, of light" . After Jason's confession at her altar, he is quick to leave her as if he doesn't want to witness the predictable answer to his supplication.

Both plays have been coined as plays of passion against reason, but both decide to murder their children after letting their passion burns itself during the confrontation. It is with cold logic that Euripides' Medea calls back for Jason after securing an escape to Athens through Aegeus, and reenacts his greatest fantasy: complete idolatry and submission from Medea, only through her can he regain his status. However, she is not a fixed element; she is water, fire, a bull, a lioness, and a constantly shifting force. He needs her to agree with him and quickly depart somewhere where he is no longer subject to her shifting moods. This is why he is ready to believe her despite the obvious way she is catering to his needs while moments ago she was promising him a fate worse than death. As for Seneca's Medea, she does not do this favor to Jason, and without an escape plan, starts brewing her deadly potion.

With the death of her children, she will earn the fear that she deserves, "No, they'll say I'm loyal as a friend, ruthless/as a foe, so much like a hero destined for glory . Her concern with her reputation led Foley and Boedeker to compare her to a Homeric Achilles or Sophoclean Ajax,

Her first off-stage words, her screams of suicidal rage which may endanger even those she loves, maybe deliberately reminiscent of Sophocles' Ajax. Her brilliance, craft, and drive for survival recall the Homeric Odysseus. Like Ajax or Achilles, she would deliberately sacrifice friends to defend her honor against a public slight from a peer .

While it is true that her concerns are typical of an archaic hero, Medea transcends both of them with her monstrosity. The wrath of Achilles sprung from the loss of Patroclus; had he known that

his stubbornness would result in his death, he would have never risked the life of, "Patroclus, whom I revered beyond all companions,/as equal to my own life?"(Alexander, 2015) For Achilles to be Medean he must choose to kill Patroclus himself to achieve the glory he sought. An act he could never commit for even after winning eternal glory, he expresses his lasting regrets of not having chosen a simpler life, and even in the afterlife, Patroclus remains by his side .

As for Ajax his revenge or inability to handle shame almost echoes that of Jocasta, when confronted with the fact that she bore children from her son, hanged herself; the fact that Ajax chose the sword instead is only masculine in presentation. Medea, on the other hand, is ready to kill her children to not let her enemy win. While she cries out for death too, she does not put her plan into motion until she secures her escape route, and like a goddess, she needs to gaze upon her violent scheme and the pain she causes in both herself and Jason. Lastly, she is as crafty as Odysseus, manipulating foes and enemy unlike. She, however, is assisted by no gods despite her ancestry being more divine than Odysseus, it is only at the very end that her grandfather gifts her a chariot. While Athena is ready to interfere and save Odysseus (and later his son) from threats he sometimes bought onto himself by arrogance.

The monstrosity of Seneca's Medea is reflected in the excessiveness of her witchery performed with, "fire given me by Prometheus". This Medea is on the side of the chaotic order opposing Zeus, and Jason is a helpless victim of her monstrous nature. It is established through the Chorus that Jason has suffered enough, "Spare him, ye gods; we pray your indulgence for the man who subdued the sea" . Despite being an oath breaker, Seneca's Jason is not a polluted hero, but a failed one only. By gathering the forces of Hecate, the harpies, the gorgons, and other monstrous creatures, Medea became the epitome of a Greek epic transgressive creature. She does not allow for any categorization, neither mortal nor goddess, neither wife nor concubine, neither mother nor monster for at the end she hesitates another particularity, in both plays, that is absent from the usual Greek epic. Achilles never hesitated or resisted his anger against Agamemnon, nor when he dragged Hector's body, mutilating him in front of his father and wife. As for Ajax, despite Tecmessa begging him to not end his life for her and his child's sake, he was quick to draw the sword to end his pain. But, as said by the Chorus, "Medea is preparing some bigger monstrosity" .

5. CONCLUSION

-Though *Medea* is not the first in the Greek Mythopoeia to reflect subconscious and conscious fears of the murderess's mother, it is however the first tale in which she survives.

- When we take about female a monster that kills or feeds on children, we think of a bleeding Clytemnestra with her son, Orestes, holding the sword, we think of Hansel and Gretel shoving the child-eating witch in the oven, we think of mad women killing their children and drowning themselves.

– Even when the mother wrongs her child out of ignorance they give themselves or are given death, as in the case of Jocasta who hangs herself or alternatively cuts her throat open. But Medea survives.

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