Between Revenge and Forgiveness:
Psychoanalysis of The Main Characters in
Euripides’ Medea and in Tyler Perry’s Diary of a
Mad Black Woman
-Comparative Study-

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Dedication

To my mother, who has been always there, standing by my side whenever I needed help.

To my sisters and brothers

To all my friends, I dedicate this modest work
Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This study deals with the psychoanalysis of each of the main characters: Medea by Euripides and Helen in Diary of a Mad Black Woman by Tyler Perry. This study is about the way women in both of the stories revenge. All the violence and terror in Medea is caused by Jason’s betrayal of his wife. Her sheer rage at his unfaithfulness drives her to commit horrific acts of bloody revenge. Ironically; Medea’s fury at her husband’s betrayal drives her to the use of trickery and manipulation, which is really just another form of betrayal. Medea shows how and when one person betrays another, All may be corrupted. However; Helen in Diary of a Mad Black Woman gives women a new vision on how to deal with relational pain and betrayal and how wounded people can be healed in a healthy emotional space somewhere between pained acceptance and soul-destroying rage before eventually learning to trust again.

Key words: Revenge, psychoanalysis, Forgiveness, Mulatto, Anger
Table of Contents

Dedication ........................................................................................................................................................................... I
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................................................................... II
Abstract .................................................................................................................................................................................III
Table of contents .................................................................................................................................................................. IV
General Introduction .............................................................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter One: Medea and the Greek Mythology:
A General Survey

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................................................... 7
1.1 Ancient Greek Literature and Poetry ............................................................................................................................... 7
1.2 The Greek Tragedy ............................................................................................................................................................. 8
1.3 Euripides Style .................................................................................................................................................................. 8
1.4 Tragedian’s Life of Euripides ............................................................................................................................................ 9
1.5 Plot Summary of Medea .................................................................................................................................................. 10
1.6 Medea as a Character ...................................................................................................................................................... 11
1.7 Cleverness of Medea ....................................................................................................................................................... 12
1.8 Major Themes
1.8.1 Theme of Revenge in Medea ...................................................................................................................................... 12
1.8.2 Theme of Betrayal in Medea ...................................................................................................................................... 13
1.9 Literary Criticism on Medea .......................................................................................................................................... 14

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................................................. 15

Chapter Two: Diary of a Mad Black Woman and the Postmodern Period

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................................................. 16
2.1 American Postmodern Movement .................................................................................................................................. 16
2.2 Tragedy in American Cinema .......................................................................................................................................... 17
2.2.1 The Tragic Mulatto ...................................................................................................................................................... 18
Chapter Three: Taylor’s and Euripides’ Feminism

Introduction ................................................................. 27
3.1 Feminism and Woman in Greek Mythology ................................. 27
  3.1.1 Euripides’ Feminism .................................................... 28
  3.1.2 Woman in Eyes of the Greeks ........................................ 30
  3.1.3 The use of Feminism in Medea. ....................................... 31
3.2 Postmodern Feminism .......................................................... 32
  3.2.1 Famous Postmodern Feminists ........................................ 33
  3.2.2 Critics of Postmodern Feminism ....................................... 34
  3.2.3 Taylor Perry’s Feminism ............................................... 35
Conclusion ........................................................................ 35

Chapter Four: Psychoanalysis of Euripides’ Medea and Tyler’s Helen

Introduction ........................................................................ 38
4.1 An Introduction to Psychoanalytic Criticism ................................. 38
  4.1.1 The Id ........................................................................ 39
  4.1.2 Superego ..................................................................... 39
  4.1.3 Ego ............................................................................ 39
4.2 Character Psychology ..............................................................39
4.3 Psychoanalysis of Medea ..........................................................40
4.3.1 Avenging Spirit, Goddess .....................................................40
4.3.2 Medea as a Sinner: Mother and Monster .................................42
4.3.3 Medea as a Victim ..............................................................44
4.4 Psychoanalysis of Helen ............................................................45
4.4.1 Helen the Tragic Mulatto .......................................................46
4.4.2 Reaction of Helen to the Topsy Figure ....................................49
4.5 Tyler’s Madea as Good Person ....................................................51
Conclusion ................................................................................51

General Conclusion ....................................................................55
Bibliography ..............................................................................57
Abstract (In French and Arabic)
General Introduction
General Introduction

The Greek Empire, in a certain time, had the half of the world; it embraced many cultures and languages (Abrams, 1999). Myths have been told and great stories have been said about how Greek was; this did not reveal just how Greek was great but also how great writers were at that time. Euripides is considered one of the greatest Greek playwrights of the epoch, because he endeavoured, through his literary production such as Medea (431), to reverse the set of norms and to change that stiff image people used to have over the nature of women. He contributed to the transformation of the social views (ibid.). This idea is defined in terms of space and time. Getting out of the Greek heritage, and arriving to the twenty first century, particularly in America which is considered as a melting pot, where a different ethnic groups founded: African Americans, Jewish Americans, and Indian Americans, to mention just a few. Also, there are some artists who are known for their literary works and others for their films. Taylor Perry is a famous playwright and film producer whose works introduces different characters which draw the image of the author’s society and mentality. Furthermore, in his first and popular work Diary of a Mad Black Woman (Tyler, 2005), where we can see Taylor Perry through three characters: Medea, Joe and Brain (ibid.).

Euripides, in Medea, sends a message for men to warn him how danger women in love are when they are scorned, betrayed and humiliated (Luschning, 1988). He conveys this message through the character of Medea by breaking all the boundaries that any men could imagine. He provides both the reader and society with Medea as new model which is an embodiment of aggressiveness. In this stance, Medea is an old fashioned model of repulsive woman of that time (ibid.). This is the unveiled nature of woman that forces man to change his views, attitudes and behaviours towards her.

Taylor Perry, in Diary of a Mad Black Woman, does almost the same thing. He sends the same message through Helen to refresh the memory of man. Helen, a weak girl, can do nothing without Madea who helps her, standing on her own feet for the first time in her life and faces what she has always avoiding.

In this study, we want to spot light on the main characters in both: Medea in the Greek play, and Helen in the American movie. By having a deep analysis through the psychology
of the main characters to see the way woman could fellow to achieve her revenge in deferent ways.

In Diary of a Mad Black Woman the tragic mulatto is another figure that both Judith Williams and Lisa Anderson touch on in the representation of African-American women. The tragic mulatto is a woman that is usually typified as pure and innocent. She is beautiful and almost passes for white. However, she has at least “one drop” of Black blood, which restricts her access to the white world and is therefore considered “tragic” because she is caught between two worlds (Anderson, 1997). This study also tackles is the examination on Topsy figure or the jezebel. This figure has a significant in the change of Helen’s life.

To reach the objective, this work discusses and analyse the array of female characters in both stories to underline the historical complexities of both African American and Asian female characters, and break down the notion of tropes and stereotypes through psychological introspective of the fictitious characters of women and the characters’ construction. To extract the timelessness message that both Euripides and Tyler Perry want to convey, and how universal it is, Helen, the Mulatto who lives a sort of discrimination which is likely to be different from the usual discrimination one is generally acquainted with. Moreover, this study tries to shed light on the author’s position vis-à-vis society, for he seems to develop a horizontal view disregarding the confessional ideological orientations. Finally, it shows the extent to which social class and etiquettes contribute to the birth of the new modern woman. Giving a final portray for the women of nowadays.

Thus, the questions that are raised through this work are as follows:

1. What are the feminist dimensions that Medea by Euripides and Diary of a Mad Black Woman embody?
2. What are the notions and the stereotypes about woman in Medea and Diary of a Mad Black Woman?
3. What is the timelessness message that both Euripides and Tyler Perry want to convey?
4. What are the factors that shaped the behaviour of a new modern woman to be a woman of good decisions and not a murder?
To answer the above mentioned questions, a number of hypotheses are formulated later:

1. A scorned woman cannot be denied or avoided. Tyler and Euripides gave a portrayal of a strong woman VS intelligent woman with wisdom.

2. Most of the stereotypes about woman is that woman is weak creature that has to find always a man to support her. And without him she is nothing more than a child bearer.

3. The timelessness message that Tyler and Euripides wants to convey in Medea and Diary of a mad Black Woman is that, despite time and place woman in the entire world; whatever her back ground, religion or social class, when they get hurt they think in the same way and want to do the same thing which is get her revenge from her enemy.

4. There are a several notions that shaped the ancient woman’s behaviour as faith in God and forgiveness that gives them the inner peace and show them the right thing to do.

5. Woman in the two stories (Medea, Diary of a Mad Black woman) is considered as a victim and as a sinner at the same time.

According to the noteworthy elements of the work that emerges the concept of women socially and hence psychologically. Moreover, to facilitate the systematic exploration and explanation of the phenomena of women in general, it is necessary to adopt two theories:

First theory is Feminism, in order to study the choice of woman for being the heroin rather than man to be the hero. Secondly, this study needs the psychological approach to study and analyse the psychology of the two main characters: Medea in Euripides’s Medea and Helen in Diary of a Mad Black Woman by Taylor Perry.

This work contains four chapters. The open chapter presents a general survey on the Greek mythology with Euripides’s Medea’s general themes and characterization. The Second chapter deals with the post-modern period with Tyler Perry’s biography and a general idea about Diary of a Mad Black Woman as a movie. The third chapter looks for feminism theory and its dimension that is clearly shown in the Euripides’ and Tyler’s works. Finally the fourth chapter tackles the psychoanalysis of the main characters Medea and Helen study that gives the reader a wide open eye on the two main characters meeting and different points about the way dealing with men as a lover wife or as a revenger if needed.
To conclude, this work would be hopefully beneficial for the student as well teachers of literature, and it might give the student of literature the chance to make a comparative analysis.
Chapter One

Medea and the Greek Mythology:
A General Survey
Chapter One

Medea and the Greek Mythology: A General Survey

Introduction

Euripides' Medea was first performed in Athens at the City Dionysian of 431 BC (Kenneth, 1999). As with any other work of literature, our understanding of the play is greatly enhanced by a sense of its historical context (ibid). And so this chapter begins discussion by outlining the social and cultural background to fifth-century Athenian tragedy. The chapter will also sketch Medea's place within Euripides' dramatic career.

1.1 Ancient Greek Literature and Poetry

The great British philosopher-mathematician Alfred North Whitehead once commented that all philosophy is but a footnote to Plato. A similar point can be made regarding Greek literature as a whole (1990).

Over a period of more than ten centuries, the ancient Greeks created a literature of such brilliance that it has rarely been equaled and never surpassed. In poetry, tragedy, comedy, and history, Greek writers created masterpieces that have inspired, influenced, and challenged readers to the present day (Blondell, 1990). To suggest that all Western literature is no more than a footnote to the writings of classical Greece is an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless true that the Greek world of thought was so far-ranging that there is scarcely an idea discussed today that was not debated by the ancient writers (kovacs, 2000). The only body of literature of comparable influence is the Bible (ibid.).

The language in which the ancient authors wrote was Greek. Like English, Greek is an Indo-European language; but it is far older(ibid). Its history can be followed from the 14th century BC to the present. Its literature, therefore, covers a longer period of time than that of any other Indo-European language (ibid.).
1.2 The Greek Tragedy

The term is broadly applied to literary, and especially to dramatic, representations of serious actions which eventuate in a disastrous conclusion for the protagonist (The chief character) (Worth, 1988). More precise and detailed discussions of the tragic form properly begin, although they should not end, with Aristotle's classic analysis in the Poetics (fourth century B.C.). Aristotle based his theory on induction from the only examples available to him, the tragedies of Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. In the subsequent two thousand years and more, many new and artistically effective types of serious plots ending in a catastrophe have been developed types that Aristotle had no way of foreseeing (Abrams, 2000). The many attempts to stretch Aristotle's analysis to apply to later tragic forms serve merely to blur his critical categories and to obscure important differences among diverse types of plays, all of which have proved to be dramatically effective. When flexibly managed, however, Aristotle's discussions apply in some part to many tragic plots, and his analytic concepts serve as a suggestive starting point for identifying the differentiae of various non-Aristotelian modes of tragic construction (ibid.).

1.3 Euripides’ Style

Euripides' writing style was unconventional for his time (Worth, 1988). Dialogue in his plays employed everyday language and the religious and moral values he portrayed often diverged from the accepted thought of the day. His plays were often criticized for their unconventional structures employing extended prologues, disconnected discrete segments, and a chorus that seemed to be independent of the primary activity on stage. The conflict the plays presented was often found within the characters rather than in the more accepted manner between two or more characters (Kenneth, 1999).

Euripides left Athens in 408 B.C. and was accepted into the court of King Archelaus of Macedonia. He died there two years later. It is estimated that he produced approximately ninety works, but only nineteen remain today (ibid.).

1.4 A Tragedian's Life of Euripides
Euripides first competed in the City Dionysia, the famous Athenian dramatic festival, in 455 BC, one year after the death of Aeschylus, and it was not until 441 BC that he won a first prize. His final competition in Athens was in 408 BC. *The Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* were performed after his death in 405 BC and first prize was awarded posthumously. Altogether his plays won first prize only five times (Blondell, 1999).

His plays and those of Aeschylus and Sophocles indicate a difference in outlook between the three men, a generation gap probably due to the Sophistical enlightenment in the middle decades of the fifth century: Aeschylus still looked back to the archaic period, Sophocles was in transition between periods, and Euripides was fully imbued with the new spirit of the classical age. When Euripides's plays are sequenced in time, they also reveal that his outlook might have changed, providing a "spiritual biography" along these lines: (Blondell, 1999)

1) an early period of high tragedy (*Medea, Hippolytus*)
2) a patriotic period at the outset of the Peloponnesian War (*Children of Hercules, Suppliants*)
3) a middle period of disillusionment at the senselessness of war (*Hecuba, Women of Troy*)
4) an escapist period with a focus on romantic intrigue (*Ion, Iphigenia in Tauris, Helen*)
5) a final period of tragic despair (*Orestes, Phoenician Women, Bacchae*)

However, about 80% of his plays have been lost and even the extant plays don't present a fully consistent picture of his 'spiritual' development (for example, *Iphigenia at Aulis* is dated with the 'despairing*Bacchae*, yet it contains elements that became typical of New Comedy). In the *Bacchae*, he restores the chorus and messenger speech to their traditional role in the tragic plot, and the play appears to be the culmination of a regressive or archaizing tendency in his later works. Believed to have been composed in the wilds of Macedonia, *Bacchae* also happens to dramatize a primitive side to Greek religion and some modern scholars have therefore interpreted this particular play biographically as (ibid.).

1) A kind of death-bed conversion or renunciation of atheism;
2) The poet's attempt to ward off the charge of impiety that was later to overtake his friend Socrates;
Evidence of a new belief that religion cannot be analysed rationally.

One of his earliest extant plays, Medea, includes a speech that he seems to have written in defense of himself as an intellectual ahead of his time, though he has put it in the mouth of the play's heroine (ibid.):

"If you introduce new, intelligent ideas to fools, you will be thought frivolous, not intelligent. On the other hand, if you do get a reputation for surpassing those who are supposed to be intellectually sophisticated, you will seem to be a thorn in the city's flesh. This is what has happened to me."

(Medea, lines 298)

1.5 Plot Summary of Medea by Euripides

Euripides' Medea opens in a state of conflict. Jason has abandoned his wife, Medea, along with their two children (Allan, 2000). He hopes to advance his station by remarrying with Glauce, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth, the Greek city where the play is set. All the events of play proceed out of this initial dilemma, and the involved parties become its central characters (ibid).

Outside the royal palace, a nurse laments the events that have led to the present crisis. After a long series of trials and adventures, which ultimately forced Jason and Medea to seek exile in Corinth, the pair had settled down and established their family, achieving a degree of fame and respectability (ibid.). Jason's recent abandonment of that family has crushed Medea emotionally, to the degree that she curses her own existence, as well as that of her two children.

Fearing a possible plot of revenge, Creon banishes Medea and her children from the city. After pleading for mercy, Medea is granted one day before she must leave, during which she plans to complete her quest for "justice" at this stage in her thinking, the murder of Creon, Glauce, and Jason. Jason accuses Medea of overreacting (ibid.). By voicing her grievances so publicly, she has endangered her life and that of their children. He claims that his decision to
remarry was in everyone's best interest. Medea finds him spineless, and she refuses to accept his token offers of help (knox, 1999).

Appearing by chance in Corinth, Aegeus, King of Athens, offers Medea sanctuary in his home city in exchange for her knowledge of certain drugs that can cure his sterility (ibid). Now guaranteed an eventual haven in Athens, Medea has cleared all obstacles to completing her revenge, a plan which grows to include the murder of her own children; the pain their loss will cause her does not outweigh the satisfaction she will feel in making Jason suffer (ibid).

For the balance of the play, Medea engages in a ruse; she pretends to sympathize with Jason (bringing him into her confidence) and offers his wife "gifts," a coronet and dress. Ostensibly, the gifts are meant to convince Glauce to ask her father to allow the children to stay in Corinth. The coronet and dress are actually poisoned, however, and their delivery causes Glauce's death. Seeing his daughter ravaged by the poison, Creon chooses to die by her side by dramatically embracing her and absorbing the poison himself (ibid.).

A messenger recounts the gruesome details of these deaths, which Medea absorbs with cool attentiveness (Hopman, 2003). Her earlier state of anxiety, which intensified as she struggled with the decision to commit infanticide, has now given way to an assured determination to fulfill her plans. Against the protests of the chorus, Medea murders her children and flees the scene in a dragon-pulled chariot provided by her grandfather, the Sun-God. Jason is left cursing his lot; his hope of advancing his station by abandoning Medea and marrying Glauce, the conflict which opened the play, has been annihilated, and everything he values has been lost through the deaths that conclude the tragedy (ibid.).

1.6 Medea as a Character

Protagonist of the play, Medea's homeland is Colchis, an island in the Black Sea, which the Greeks considered the edge of the earth, a territory of barbarians (Bloom, 2002). A sorceress and a princess, she used her powers and influence to help Jason secure the Golden Fleece; then, having fallen in love with him, she fled her country and family to live with Jason in Iolcus, his own home (ibid). During the escape across the Mediterranean, she killed her brother and dumped him overboard, so that her pursuers would have to slow down and bury
him. While in Iolcus, she again used her devilish cleverness to manipulate the daughters of the local king and rival, Pelias, into murdering their own father. Exiled as murderers, Jason and Medea settled in Corinth, the setting of Euripides' play, where they established a family of two children and gained a favourable reputation (ibid). All this precedes the action of the play, which opens with Jason having divorced Medea and taken up with a new family. The play charts Medea's emotional transformation, a progression from suicidal despair to sadistic fury. She eventually avenges Jason's betrayal with a series of murders, concluding with the deaths of her own children (ibid.). Famously, the pleasure of watching Jason suffer their loss outweighed her own remorse at killing them (ibid).

1.7 Cleverness of Medea

Euripides emphasizes Medea's cunning and cleverness. These traits, which should be admired, also cause suffering for Medea (Meltter, 2000). This theme is linked to the theme of pride and the theme of woman's position. Medea tells Creon that it is better to be born stupid, for men despise the clever. Part of her difficulty is that she has no real outlet for her gifts. Eleanor Wilner calls Medea "a Machiavel without a country to rule" (ibid.). Her force, her intellect, and her strength of will all exceed her station. The Greeks, though they have some respect for her, often treat her smugly because of her sex and her barbarian origins. She is surrounded by people less intelligent and resourceful than she, but social power and respect is theirs. Remember that Aristotle considered the "unscrupulously clever" woman as distasteful as to be a subject unfit for drama; his statement reflects typically Greek attitudes. Medea is despised for talents that should win her praise; she is also terrifyingly free. Because she is an outsider to normal order, she behaves without restraint or morality (ibid). Her genius denied an empire to build, will instead be used on the smaller playing field of personal revenge (ibid.).

1.8 Major Themes

1.8.1 Theme of Revenge in Medea

Medea's relentless pursuit of vengeance is legendary. She is driven by a passionate desire to right the wrongs done to her and sacrifices even her own children in the pursuit of satisfaction. Medea shows audiences the horror that can come when a person lets desire for revenge rule her life. Euripides's play helped pave the way for many later revenge tragedies, from the numerous Spanish revenge dramas to Shakespeare's Hamlet (Meltter, 2000).
1.8.2 Theme of Betrayal in Medea

All the violence and terror in Medea is caused by Jason's betrayal of his wife Medea. Her sheer rage at his unfaithfulness drives her to commit horrific acts of bloody revenge. Ironically, Medea's fury at her husband's betrayal drives her to the use of trickery and manipulation, which are really just another form of betrayal. Medea shows how and when one person betrays another, all may be corrupted.

1.9 Literary Criticism on Medea

Although the play is considered one of the great plays of the Western canon, the Athenian audience did not react so favorably, and awarded it only the third place prize at the Dionysia festival in 431 BC (William, 2000). A possible explanation might be found in line 264 of the play, which asserts that traditionally Medea's children were killed by the Corinthians after her escape; Euripides' apparent invention of Medea's filicide might have offended its audience just as his first treatment of the Hippolytus myth (ibid.).

In the 4th century BC, South-Italian vase painting offers a number of Medea-representations that are connected to Euripides' play; the most famous is a krater in Munich. However, these representations always differ considerably from the plots of the play or are too general to support any direct link to the play of Euripides. This might reflect the judgment on the play (ibid.).

With the rediscovery of the text in 1st-century Rome (the play was adapted by the tragedians Ennius, Lucius Accius, Ovid, Seneca the Younger and Hosidius Geta, among others), again in 16th-century Europe, and in the light of 20th century modern literary criticism, Medea has provoked differing reactions from differing critics and writers who have sought to interpret the reactions of their societies in the light of past generic assumptions; bringing a fresh interpretation to its universal themes of revenge and justice in an unjust society (Abrams, 1993).

Conclusion
Chapter One

The violent and powerful character of princess Medea and her double nature both loving and destructive that became a standard for the later periods of antiquity and seems to have inspired numerous adaptations thus became standard for the literal classes.
Chapter Two

Diary of a Mad Black Woman and the Postmodern Period
Introduction

This chapter deals with the postmodern period that attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. It tackles one of the most famous black writers of the time. Also, this chapter sheds light on *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, studying the major character Helen who tries to overcome her bad situation.

2.1 American Postmodern Movement

The term postmodernism is often applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of overpopulation (Abrams, 1988). Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Many of the works of postmodern literature, by Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes, and many others, so blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. And these literary anomalies are paralleled in other arts by phenomena like pop art, op art, the musical compositions of John Cage, and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and other directors (ibid.).

An undertaking in some postmodernist writings, prominently in Samuel Beckett and other authors of the literature of the *absurd*, is to subvert the foundations of our accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the meaninglessness of existence and the underlying
"abyss," or "void," or "nothingness" on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended (ibid). Postmodernism in literature and the arts has parallels with the movement known as post structuralism in linguistic and literary theory; poststructuralists undertake to subvert the foundations of language in order to show that its seeming meaningfulness dissipates, for a rigorous inquirer, into a play of conflicting indeterminacies, or else to show that all forms of cultural discourse are manifestations of the ideology, or of the relations and constructions of power, in contemporary society (ibid.)

2.2 Tragedy in American Cinema

Tragedy has always been a very controversial issue in the history of English literature and recent tragic figures in literature have only added fuel to the controversy so much so that whatever has an element of tragic illumination is nowadays labelled as a tragedy. However according to the Webster Dictionary; tragedy is a serious piece of literature typically describing a conflict between the protagonist and a superior force and having a sorrowful or disastrous conclusion that excites pity or terror(Abrams, 1988).

Tragedy in American literature sharply deviates from the traditional concept of a tragedy as defined by Aristotle (ibid.). The whole length and breadth of American literature throws up only as little as three literary creations worth being labelled as tragedies. These include Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea, Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby and Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. However, since we are talking of tragedy in dramatic parlance, we can take Death of a Salesman as our text of concern (ibid).

Unlike Aristotle, Miller does not believe that a tragic hero always has to be a monarch or a man of a higher status. A tragic hero, for Miller, can be a common person. A tragedy does not always have to end pessimistically. Rather, it might also have an optimistic ending. The play Death of a Salesman, by Arthur Miller, is a tragedy for the plain reason that its hero, Willy Loman, is a tragic figure who faces a superior source, being the American dream and the struggle for success. Lowman also excites pity in the reader because of his inability to secure a life worthwhile living for himself, his wife and his children (ibid.).

Also unlike the traditional concept of hamartia being a tragic flaw, Miller defines a flaw as “an inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what one conceives to be a
challenge to one’s dignity” (2006, p233). Willy Lowman fulfils many of the requirements of being a tragic hero. Willy is not “flawless” in his actions, which by Miller’s standards make him a tragic hero. It is not wrong for Willy to have flaws and it does not make him a weaker man but a tragic figure.

Besides, unlike the earlier tragic heroes who died in a fashion that usually eclipsed their lifetime achievements, Miller's hero dies a miserable death that makes his life look even more miserable. As Willy's wife says at the end that it is through her husband's death that they are finally freed, one wonders why Miller kept Willy alive for so long.

However, Miller retains at least one criterion laid down by Aristotle with regards to a tragedy that of unity of time. Thus, with fragments of past and improvisations for the future, Miller takes the genre of tragedy to its next level bequeathing to his successors the scope for further experimentation (ibid.). Death of a Salesman is undoubtedly one of the best tragedy plays written in American literature until date and remains a benchmark for American tragedies in the years to come.

2.1.1 The Tragic Mulatto

The tragic mulatto is a stereotypical fictional character that appeared in American literature during the 19th and 20th centuries, from the 1840s (Pilgrim, 2000). The "tragic mulatto" is an archetypical mixed-race person a "mulatto", who is assumed to be sad, or even suicidal, because they fail to completely fit in the "white world" or the "black world" (Pilgrim, 2000). As such, the "tragic mulatto" is depicted as the victim of the society they live in, a society divided by race. They cannot be classified as one who is completely "black" or "white".

The female "tragic octoroon" was a stock character of abolitionist literature: a light-skinned woman rose as if a white woman in her father's household; until his bankruptcy or death has her reduced to a menial position and sold (Gross, 2001). She may even be unaware of her status before being reduced to victimization (Davis, 2001) This character allowed abolitionists to draw attention to the sexual exploitation in slavery, and unlike the suffering of the field hands, did not allow slaveholders to retort that the sufferings of Northern mill hands were no easier, since the Northern mill owner would not sell his own children into slavery (Sollors, 2004)
The "tragic mulatto" figure is a woman of biracial heritage who must endure the hardships of African-Americans in the antebellum South, even though she may look white enough that her ethnicity is not immediately obvious. As the name implies, tragic mulattos almost always meet a bad end. Lydia Maria Child's 1842 short story "The Quadroons" is generally credited as the first work of literature to feature a tragic mulatto (Pilgrim, 1994), to garner support for emancipation and equal rights. Child followed up "The Quadroons" with the 1843 short story "Slavery's Pleasant Homes", which also has a tragic mulatto character (Pilgrim, 2000).

Writer Eva Allegra Raimon notes that Child "allowed white readers to identify with the victim by gender while distancing themselves by race and thus to avoid confronting a racial ideology that denies the full humanity of nonwhite women." The passing character in Nella Larsen's Passing has been deemed a "tragic mulatto"(ibid).

### 2.2.2 Types of the Tragic Mulatto

Generally, the tragic mulatto archetype falls into one of three categories (Pilgrim, 1994):

- A woman, who can "pass" for white attempts to do so, is accepted as white by society and falls in love with a white man. Eventually, her status as a bi-racial person is revealed and the story ends in tragedy.

- A woman who appears to be white and thus passes as being so. It is believed that she is of Greek or Spanish descent. She has suffered little hardship in her life, but upon the revelation that she is mixed race, she loses her social standing.

- A woman who has all the social graces that come along with being a middle-class or upper-class white woman is nonetheless subjected to slavery.

A common objection to this character is that she allows readers to pity the plight of oppressed or enslaved races, but only through a veil of whiteness, that is, instead of sympathizing with a true racial "other", one is sympathizing with a character who is made as much like one's own race as possible. The "tragic mulatto" often appeared in novels intended for women, also, and some of the character's appeal lay in the lurid fantasy of a person just like them suddenly cast into a lower social class after the discovery of a small amount of "black blood" that renders her unfit for proper marriage (ibid.).
2.3 Tyler Perry’s Works

It was a simple piece of advice from Oprah Winfrey that set Tyler’s career in motion. Encouraged to keep a diary of his daily thoughts and experiences, he began writing a series of soul-searching letters to himself. The letters, full of pain and in time, forgiveness, became a healing catharsis. His writing inspired a musical, I Know I’ve Been Changed, and in 1992, Tyler gathered his life’s savings and set off for Atlanta in hopes of staging it for sold out crowds. He spent all the money but the people never came, and Tyler once again came face to face with the poverty that had plagued his youth. He spent months sleeping in seedy motels and his car but his faith, in God and, in turn himself, only got stronger. He forged a powerful relationship with the church, and kept writing. In 1998 his perseverance paid off and a promoter booked I Know I’ve Been Changed for a limited run at a local church-turned-theatre. This time, the community came out in droves, and soon the musical moved to Atlanta’s prestigious Fox Theatre. Tyler Perry never looked back (David Rivera. Oprah,2012).

And so began an incredible run of 13 plays in as many years, including Woman Thou Art Loosed!, a celebrated collaboration with the prominent Dallas pastor T.D. Jakes. In the year 2000, I Can Do Bad All by Myself marked the first appearance of the now-legendary Madea. The God-fearing, gun-toting, pot-smoking, loud-mouthed grandmother, Madea, was played by Perry himself. Madea was such a resounding success, she soon spawned a series of plays, Medea’s Family Reunion (2002), Medea’s Class Reunion (2003), Madea Goes To Jail (2005) and set the stage for Tyler’s jump to the big screen (ibid.).

In early 2005, Tyler’s first feature film, Diary of a Mad Black Woman, debuted at number one nationwide. His ensuing films, Medea’s Family Reunion, Daddy’s Little Girls, Why Did I Get Married?, Meet The Browns, The Family That Preys, I Can Do Bad All by Myself, Why Did I Get Married Too?, For Colored Girls, Medea’s Big Happy Family, Good Deeds and Medea’s Witness Protection have all met with massive critical and commercial success, delighting audiences across America and around the world. Perry also helped release Academy Award-nominated Precious, a movie based on the novel Push by Sapphire, in conjunction with his 34th Street Films banner, Oprah Winfrey’s Harpo Films and Lions gate (ibid.).
Chapter two

2006 saw the publication of Tyler’s first book, Don’t Make a Black Woman Take off Her Earrings: Medea’s Uninhibited Commentaries on Life and Love, which shot to the top of the New York Times nonfiction bestseller list and remained there for eight weeks. It went on to claim Quill Book Awards for both “Humor” and “Book of the Year” (an unheard-of feat for a first-time author), and spread Tyler Perry’s unique brand of inspirational entertainment to a devoted new audience (ibid.).

It is a brand that quickly became an empire. In 2007, Tyler expanded his reach to television with the TBS series House of Payne, the highest-rated first-run syndicated cable show of all time, which went into syndication after only a year. His follow up effort, Meet the Browns, was the second highest debut ever on cable, after House of Payne. In late 2012, Perry teamed up with Oprah Winfrey in an exclusive deal to bring scripted programming to her cable network, OWN (ibid.). The hour-long drama, The Haves and The Have Nots and the half hour sitcom, Love Thy Neighbor, will debut on the network in May 2013.

Not one to rest on success, Tyler Perry and his 350 Atlanta-based employees has been hard at work. His latest film, Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor was released in March 2013 and will be followed by a production from his 34th Street Films banner, Peoples. Tyler was most recently seen in the title role in the Rob Cohen-directed Alex Cross, and will next be seen in A Madea Christmas, adapted from his stage play by the same name, in late 2013 (ibid.). In 2014, he will star in Single Moms Club, which he also wrote and directed (Heartyly, 2004)

2.4 The Story of Diary of a Mad Black Woman by Tyler Perry

Helen McCarter and her husband Charles, an attorney, had it all: money, success, and a fine home. Their lives were perfect, but they only looked perfect to the public. Helen is unemployed and Charles has been having multiple affairs. On their 18th anniversary, Helen awakens to find all of her belongings packed in a U-Haul truck with Charles kicking her out of the house in favor of Brenda, his young mistress, the mother of his two children (M.heartley, 2003)

Helen kicks the driver, Orlando out of his truck and heads off to see her loud, sassy grandmother Madea who takes her in and helps her get back on her feet, much to the dismay
Chapter two

of Medea’s brother Joe. Joe's son and Medea’s nephew Brian (Perry) acts as Madea and Helen's attorney at trial when Charles and Brenda catch the women breaking into and vandalizing the mansion (Madea rammed her car into the security gate, took a chainsaw to some of the furniture, and helped Helen tear up Brenda's clothes)(ibid.).

Since Madea is a repeat offender, Judge MableanEphriam places her under house arrest and sets a $5,000 property or cash bond for Helen; meanwhile, Brian gets to the last straw with his drug-addicted wife Debrah (Tamara Taylor) and kicks her out of their home. Helen learns to grow through her pain and is eventually ready to move on. Despite their rocky first encounter, she explores a second chance at love with Orlando (who was only driving that U-Haul as a favor for a friend).

Their relationship blooms over the course of many months. Meanwhile, Jamison Milton Jackson (Gary Sturgis) coerces Charles to be his attorney at his upcoming trial for shooting an undercover cop during a drug deal, and possibly bribe the judge in his favor. This forces the revelation that Charles received his money through drug deals and by buying off judges (ibid.).

During their divorce-court session, Helen decides to let Charles keep all the money and property provided that he pays Brian's attorney fees. She also wants Charles to pay for her mother's stay in the nursing home, since he was the one who forced her to put her mother there. Charles happily agrees (ibid.). But Charles loses the shooting case; the jurors find Jamison guilty. As the bailiff leads the disgruntled Jamison out of the courtroom, Jamison snatches up the bailiff's gun and shoots Charles for failing to get him acquitted.

Later, Orlando proposes to Helen, promising to take care of her and to love her forever. But before Helen can respond, she sees the shooting on the news and races to the hospital with Brian, where they run into Brenda (ibid.). The doctor informs them that Charles was shot in the spine and could be paralyzed for life. When he asks if they should resuscitate him, Brenda quickly chooses to let him die but Helen, who is still Charles' legal wife, tells the doctors to do everything they can.

Charles recovers returns home with Helen, and resumes his verbal abuse of her. But Helen has had enough and retaliates for years of abuse in a few days. It is revealed that during Charles' hospital stay, Brenda cleaned out his bank account and left him, taking the children.
Chapter two

The maid, Christina, left when Brenda didn't pay her, and all of Charles' friends turned their backs on him. Helen meets with Orlando and they argue when he learns she has moved back in with Charles and is looking after him; he angrily storms out of the diner.

Charles finally realizes his mistakes and understands that Helen was the only one who truly cared about him, and he apologizes sincerely to her. She tends him through the grueling process of his recovery, and eventually he begins to walk again...during an emotional scene in church, in which Debrah, now clean-and-sober, reconciles with Brian and rejoin her family (ibid.).

Charles hopes he and Helen can start over, but during a family dinner she hands him her wedding ring and signed divorce papers and tells him she will always be his friend. She goes in search of Orlando, asks him to propose to her again, and when he does, she accepts. Orlando picks Helen up and carries her out of the factory as the screen fades to black.

2.5 Theme of Forgiveness

Helen McCarter is a successful wife who has everything it seems she could possibly ever want- a fantastically beautiful home and a well-off husband. Her husband literally throws her out of the house when he admits to having an affair so that his mistress and her children can move in. She relies on her family, close friends, and God to help her through the ordeal.

When Helen's husband is ironically maimed in a car accident; she cruelly torments him, the way that he abusively tormented her throughout their marriage. In one scene, Helen torments her husband because he cannot bathe himself, and then literally throws him into a bathtub, rescuing him only seconds before he would have drowned (David Rivera. Oprah, 2012).

The film *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* depicts a fair amount of spousal abuse. In one of the opening scenes of the film, the husband (Charles throws his wife out of the car and tells her that he hates her (ibid.). Not only is this an extreme example of physical abuse, it is also an excellent example of the lesser known, and therefore lesser addressed verbal and emotional abuse (ibid.).
However, Helen is for some reason completely blindsided by this turn of events, although it seems as if she has been enduring this abuse for the past eighteen years of their marriage. It certainly seems as though her sense of self-worth has reached such a low that she could not even see how her husband leaving her was a possibility (ibid.).

2.6 Major Characters (Actors)

2.6.1 The Character of Madea in *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*

Madea is known in full as Mabel "Madea" Simmonsis a fictional character created and portrayed by Tyler Perry. The character is a towering, massive, and thuggishly tough elderly woman (Danial, 1997).

Vindictive in nature, Madea is quick to not only stand up for herself but get even in a bad way; in fact, when asked why she felt the need to get somebody all the time, Madea answered: "Well when you getting' got and somebody done got you and you go get them, when you get em', everybody's gon' get got." Adding to this, Madea is highly over reactive, willing to threaten the use of deadly weapons; destroy property; use physical violence; take on the law; and use any and all means necessary to show up an offending party. Incorrigible in her overreactive ways, Madea has repeatedly landed herself in court (usually before Judge Mablean), anger management classes, house arrest, and even prison (Tyler Perry, 2000).

Despite the way the character goes about it, she stands for what's right and has a nurturing side (ibid.). As examples, Madea is often seen officiously involving herself in circumstances in which others have been wronged, offering self-defense tips, instruction, or avenging them on her own; by her very nature, Madea is more than willing to "thug out" on some of the sassiest and brattiest of children and teens, but also shows to care about their well-being in the end. The character combines an unusual pronunciation style with her locutions, such as "Heller, how yadern?" or "Halleluyer praise da lort!" (ibid.).

Madea is based on Perry's mother, his aunt, and watching Eddie Murphy performs *The Klumps*. In Perry's own words Madea is "exactly the PG version of my mother and my aunt, and I loved having an opportunity to pay homage to them. She would beat the hell out of you but make sure the ambulance got there in time to make sure they could set your arm back"
Chapter two

There's currently an upcoming Madea film in the works: A *Madea Christmas* (conventional onsite film based on play version), slated for release on December 13, 2013 (ibid.).

### 2.6.2 The Character of Helen in *Diary of Mad Black Woman*

Helen, the central character in the film and stage play of *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, functions as an initial site of investigation of a historical trope in Perry’s films. After a long life of middle-class comforts, she must leave her lavish home in the Atlanta suburbs with no financial support from her husband Charles. In effect, she has no source of income or job (Tyler, 2005). Previous to her marriage, she has signed a stringent and unreasonable prenuptial agreement that cut her off should their marriage dissolve, leaving her no access to Charles’s money or spousal settlement (ibid.). In both the stage play and film Charles appraises Helen in a callous and vicious manner (Alter, 2006). He accuses her of being an ungrateful wife to him: “What makes you think you can question me about anything I do? Woman, this is my house. I pay the bills. You need to know your place” (Diary, 2002). Charles insists that Helen’s position as a woman correlates with his economic position as a Black man. He uses Helen’s female gender to oppress her position within the household: she is not allowed to work. He also scolds Helen for being lackadaisical because she “sits around Charles’s house,” instead of attending various social events and gatherings that would help him continue to rise in their class position (ibid.).

### Conclusion

Tyler tries to give a new model of woman who could fight back her problem and get her rights in new manners and behavior that reflects the elegant woman who has been shaped through time. Both, cleverness and faith gave her a strong step to go forward her dreams. *Madea* needs a strong push when she felt weak and powerless.
Chapter Three

Taylor’s and Euripides’ Feminism
Chapter Three

Taylor’s and Euripides’ Feminism

Introduction

Feminism is a body of social theory and political movement primarily based on and motivated by the experiences of women. While generally providing a critique of social relations, many proponents of feminism also focus on analysing gender inequality and the promotion of women’s rights, interests, and issues (Eagleton, 1983).

Feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality (ibid.). Feminist political activism campaigns on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination and sexual violence (ibid.). Themes explored in feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, sexual objectification, oppression and patriarchy. While generally providing a critique of social relations, many proponents of feminism also focus on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues (ibid.).

3.1 Feminism and Woman in Greek Mythology

In order to understand the feminist theory, we have to understand the notions that although myths are invented and that they involve fantasy, the concept of mythology does not necessarily imply that there is no truth of history in them. Some of the humans may have lived while some of the events may have taken place. Most importantly, the social customs and the way of life depicted in the myths are a valuable representation of Greek society (Eagleton, 1983).

In considering the relationship between the meanings of myths and their representation of women, we learned that the major role in shaping the narratives was played by men (ibid.). Myths reveal to us the experiences of women living in the patriarchal society and we gain the symbol value accorded to women and we came to realize what the term “Woman” meant to the ancient Greek man (Hopman, 2000).

Reading through the various stories on Goddesses and queens, monsters and
Princesses, we learn that there are three major levels of women in Greek Mythology. The first level is composed of the divine beings known as the goddesses (ibid.). The goddesses played a vital role in Greek society for they were responsible for many aspects of Greek life, i.e. birth, harvest, etc. Accompanying the 6 major goddesses (Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, Hestia, Demeter and Artemis) we have the lesser divinities such as the Muses, the Graces, the Fates, etc.

The second level of women used in Greek mythology is that of the human. Myths feature women from many different social classes depicting the different roles women play in society (Storey, 1996). Surprisingly, the only women with starring roles are queens and princesses, i.e. (Helen, Medea, Clytmnestra).

The third and final level of women in Greek mythology is that of the monster (ibid.). These monsters are part woman and part animal and mainly depict the fears of woman inside the head of the man, i.e. (ibid.). The Gorgons, Sphinx, harpies, etc. Although it may appear that the woman depicted in Greek Mythology are all held with less regard, usually depicted as the problems of society (Pandora, Helen), we can clearly say that some were there as benefactors to humanity (Athena, Hestia, Demeter) and have positive roles.

Ancient woman do not appear to have complained about the kind of lives they led. They regarded the customs and laws that governed their lives as suitable and natural (ibid.). No ancient author, male or female, fails to attribute to women their share of intelligence but none suggests that it is possible or desirable for women to adopt any pattern of existence other that those traditionally assigned to them, or to put it simply, to live in a society without men. Both men and women have their roles in life, and even in Greek mythology, but understanding the role of women in mythology ensures the better understanding of the fundaments of Greek Mythology (P. Mills, 1998).

3.1.1 Euripides’ Feminism

Euripides ranks as one of the great Athenian dramatists. A distinguishing feature of his work is his consistent use and development of female characters. Roche writes, “As to women, Euripides was obsessed with their plight. Out of his nineteen extant plays no fewer than twelve are about women” (Pucci, 1988). According to Zeitlen, Euripides’ “affinity for
the feminine” was noted by his contemporaries, and the debate between Aesychlus and Euripides in Aristophanes The Frogs, may be interpreted as the struggle between the “new intellectual trends that confuse and unsettle the older, simpler (hence more manly) values of the city...” (ibid.). Euripides’ use of the feminine was a deliberate and controversial move, understood by the Greeks as more than the revival of ancient.

Stories about the lives of women(ibid.).

Euripides’ handling of the feminine is a subject of on-going interpretation, and his plays are now read with a modern sensitivity to the notion of a “woman’s voice.” Vellacott, one translator of his work, summarizes three themes that appear repeatedly; “the destructive folly of violence; the sordid ugliness of revenge, and the subjection and suffering imposed upon the female by the injustice of the male” (ibid). Paul Roche goes even further, asserting that, “Medea and Alcestis are propaganda tracts for women’s liberation”. But Christine Downing observes that investigation of Euripides’ treatment of the feminine has resulted in claims that he was a misogynist (ibid).

We think that the concerns of modern day feminism are an overlay brought to the work by the modern reader, and the search for evidence of a “feminist” attitude is a tangent. That women suffered at the hands of men is not disputed, and Euripides may have been more sensitive than most of his peers(ibid.). But if one approaches his work with the intent to understand the struggles of the Greeks at a particular point in time, rather than extrapolate themes with contemporary applicability, then the concept of feminism as we know it must be held in abeyance. To use the lens of feminism in analysing these tragedies is to miss both the point of Euripides’ work, and the insight that his plays provide into the Greek notion of the “Other,” powerfully represented by “woman.” (Sorkin, 1993)

The Second Peloponnesian War lasted from 431-404BC, almost the entire length of Euripides’ adult life and career as a dramatist(ibid.). As a thoughtful and creative member of Athenian society, Euripides was primarily concerned with the meaning and consequence of this devastating war among Greeks(ibid.). The context for the war impulse is found in the Greek notion of heroism; the insistence on oppositions and construction of an “enemy,” brutality and revenge, the inhuman treatment of survivors and handling of women as “booty,” and the quest for fame, for death on the battlefield (Meltter, 1996) Euripides wrote about war.
for these heroic men, to educate men about male behaviour and to address questions debated in male society (ibid.). To the degree that treatment of women was brutal and part of the violence that Euripides condemned, his plays were about “women’s issues.” But in a real sense, his plays are not “about” the women portrayed as much as they are explorations of Greek questions about mind and madness, reason and their irrational, human and divine, virtue, civic order, and character (ibid.).

3.1.2 Woman in Eyes of the Greeks

Ruth Padel explains that, “In the Greek male worldview, anything female, dead, or wild is easily perceived as ‘other’ (Meltter, 2000). The female, the dead, and the wild were all distinguished by a lack of reason, and a passive reactivity that stood in contrast to the integrity of decisive, will-centered male action. Underlying this opposition were questions about the workings of the mind, and the relationships between body, emotion, and reason. The mind was conceived of as a vessel, flowing with liquid, prone to wander (Padel, 2000). One’s mind could be invaded, penetrated, and acted upon by outside forces, initially presumed to be the gods. The mind was enslaved by foreign emotions. Padel writes, “According to perceptions of the female in Greek culture, ‘mind’ suffers like a ‘female’” (ibid.). Greek ideas about the nature and source of virtue were tied to their concept of madness. Padel notes that Homer and tragedy had two nouns for madness, *ate* and *lysse*, both of which are feminine (ibid.). Greek men located their fear of the mind’s vulnerability in women, who, being more passive, less developed mentally, and of weaker character, were much more susceptible. Woman was therefore identified with the destructive passions that were the flipside of man’s virtuous reason (ibid.). “If inner violence is generally female and not-self,” explains Padel, “madness, its most extreme example, inevitably has a female form and source” (ibid.). The greater permeability of a woman’s mind kept her closely linked to uncontrollable chthonic forces. In the context of Greek tragedy, writes Zeitlen, “madness is the emblem of the feminine” (ibid.).

The behaviour of Greek women was strictly controlled by social convention. They were largely excluded from public life, limited to the roles of wife and mother. Men controlled the conditions under which they were married and lived (ibid.). “In Classical Athens, and in Greece generally,” writes Christopher Gill, “high-status activities such as athletics, warfare, politics, philosophy and rhetoric were exclusive to free men”. One almost
gets the impression that the average woman was, as the common saying goes, a necessary evil. Vellacott says, “The readiness of the Greek male to set the blame for everything upon a woman was a fact of which Euripides constantly, though nearly always ironically, reminded his contemporaries” (ibid.).

Euripides’ use of the feminine “Other,” as both a contribution to the debate on questions of concern to male society, and as a vehicle for criticizing the violence he condemned, will be examined by looking at three of his plays; _Medea, Andromache_, and _The Bacchae_ (ibid.). _Medea_ was Euripides’ second play, performed in 431 BC, the year that the Second Peloponnesian War began. _Andromache_ was written and performed as part of his Trojan War cycle, about ten years later (ibid.). _The Bacchae_ was performed posthumously, not long before the final defeat of Athens by Sparta, and the death of Sophocles (ibid.).

### 3.1.3 The Use of Feminism in _Medea_

Euripides was fascinated by women and the contradictions of the Greek sex-gender system; his treatment of gender is the most sophisticated one to be found in the works of any ancient Greek writer. _Medea’s_ opening speech to the Chorus is Classical Greek literature’s most eloquent statement about the injustices that befall women (Allan, 1996). He also recognizes that the position of women, and their subordination to men, is inextricable from the very core of social order in Greece (ibid.). Greek society functions thanks to injustice. Athens, a city that prided itself as a place freer than the neighboring dictatorships, was nonetheless a city that depended on slave labor and the oppression of women (ibid.). (The typical apology offered by admirers of Athens is that all ancient societies were sexist and dependent on slave labor; this generality is untrue. Many societies were more generous in their treatment of women than the Greeks were; and many societies functioned, even in the ancient world, without slave labor.) Euripides was aware of these hypocrisies, and he often pointed out the ways that Greek society attempted to efface or excuse the injustices it perpetrated (ibid.).

At the same time, _Medea_ is not exactly a feminist role model. Euripides shows the difficulties that befall women, but he does not give us tinny virgin heroines (Knox, 1998). He
Chapter Three

gives us real women, who have suffered and become twisted by their suffering. What we see is not a story of female liberation, but a war between the sexes in which all emerge scarred.

3.2 Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern Feminists have built on the ideas of Foucault, de Beauvoir, as well as Derrida and Lacan. While there is much variation in postmodern feminism, there is some common ground (Eagleton, 1983). Postmodern Feminists accept the male/female binary as a main categorizing force in our society. Following Simone de Beauvoir, they see female as having being cast into the role of the other (ibid.). They criticize the structure of society and the dominant order, especially in its patriarchal aspects. Many Postmodern feminists, however, reject the feminist label, because anything that ends with an "ism" reflects an essentialist conception. Postmodern Feminism is the ultimate acceptor of diversity. Multiple truths, multiple roles, multiple realities are part of its focus. There is a rejection of an essential nature of women, of one-way to be a woman." Post structural feminism offers a useful philosophy for diversity in feminism because of its acceptance of multiple truths and rejection of essentialism." (Olson, 19).

This is in contrast to some other feminist theoretical viewpoints. Feminist empiricism, or liberal feminism, sees equal opportunity as the primary focus. They are concerned with "leveling the playing field." It does not question the nature of the knowledge or the structure of human interactions, but rather the events that go on within that structure (ibid.). Accepting the idea that there is a single knowable truth has led liberal feminists to use the accepted methodologies in research, believing that they just need to be used in different ways (ibid).

Radical feminism has focused on how deeply entrenched the male/female division is in society. Women have been oppressed and discriminated against in all areas and their oppression is primary. Their focus has been to detail how the male dominated society has forced women into oppressive gender roles, and has used women's sexuality for male profit. Radical feminist proposals for change include creating woman-only communities to embracing androgyny. Criticism of radical feminism include that it suggests that men and women are two separate species with no commonality and that it romanticizes women and interactions between women (ibid).
3.2.1 Famous Postmodern Feminists

Three writers have been instrumental in the establishment of postmodern feminism as a philosophy: Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. There are many others who deserve mention but in this cursory treatment, they're not going to get it (Black, 1997).

Hélène Cixous is a writer of prose who built on Derrida's works to criticize the very nature of writing. According to Cixous, man's writing is filled with binary oppositions but woman's writing is scribbling, jotting down, interrupted by life's demands. She also relates feminine writing to female sexuality and women's body concepts. Her idea is that development of this kind of writing will change the rules that currently govern language and ultimately (remember what Levi-Strauss thought) the thinking processes and the structure of society (ibid.).

Luce Irigaray is a psychoanalyst whose primary focus is to liberate women from men's philosophies, including the ones of Derrida and Lacan, on which she's building. Irigaray takes on Freudian and Lacanian conceptions of child development, and is one of the thousands who criticize the Oedipal complex. However, since Western culture is not going to abandon Freud, Irigaray has three strategies for woman to "experience herself as something other than 'waste' or 'excess' in the little structured margins of a dominant ideology." (Cantanese, 2004):

1. Create a gender neutral language.

2."Engage in lesbian and autoerotic practice, for by virtue of exploring the multifaceted terrain of the female body, women will learn to speak words and think thoughts that will blow the phallus over;"

3."Mime the mimes men have imposed on women. If women exist only in men's eyes, as images, women should take those images and reflect them back to men in magnified proportions." (Tong, 2004). This means wear red high heels.

Julia Kristeva rejects the idea that the biological man and the biological woman are identified with the "masculine" and "feminine" respectively (ibid.). To insist that people are different because of their anatomy is to force both men and women into a repressive structure. Kristeva openly accepts the label of feminist, but refuses to say there is a "woman's perspective"."The belief that 'one is a woman' is almost as absurd and obscurantist as the
belief that 'one is a man.' I say 'almost' because there are still many goals which women can achieve: freedom of abortion and contraception, daycare centers for children, equality on the job, etc. Therefore, we must use 'we are women' as an advertisement or slogan for our demands (ibid.). On a deeper level, however, a woman cannot 'be'; it is something which does not even belong in the order of being." (Kristeva, New French Feminisms, as quoted in Rosemarie Tong)

Kristeva sees the problems of women as other similar to the problems of other groups excluded from the dominant: Jews, homosexuals, racial and ethnic minorities. Like other postmodern feminists, she viewed the use of language as crucial (ibid.). In her view, linear, logical "normal" writing was repressed, and writing that emphasized rhythm and sound and was syntactically illogical was unrepressed (ibid.).

3.2.2 Critics of Postmodern Feminism

A major critique of Postmodern Feminism is its seeming identification of women with the feminine and the biological body (Eagleton, 1983). Many view Postmodern Feminists as valorizing women and the feminine over male and the masculine (ibid.). To many feminists we have known the idea that we should embrace the feminine, or "mime the mimes men have imposed on women" (Irigaray) feels awfully similar to the pressure to be feminine from the dominant society. Some of us didn't want to wear feminine looking dresses when our mothers tried to make us to go to the patriarchal church and we don't want to wear them in graduate school either (ibid.).

However, most of the criticism in this vein simplifies Postmodern Feminism (ibid.). As we have seen, there are widely varying viewpoints within this theoretical framework. While this diversity is seen as empowering by some feminists, many are concerned with the potential loss of feminist community. With no essential philosophy accepted by all feminists, it is difficult to make political action (ibid.).

One of the most prevalent criticisms of Postmodern Feminism, and Postmodernism in general is its apparently nonsensical writing (ibid.). Much of the writing of Postmodernists reject linear construction in their writing (ibid.). And so accusations of eliticism have been leveled at the Postmodern Feminism as a whole. Critics contend that only few academics can participate because the jargon is so thick, and that "true" feminists address issues of political
import (ibid.). Considering that Postmodernist reject essentialist, there is an obvious lack of conceptual understanding of Postmodern Feminism reflected in these criticisms (ibid.). Also, because linear, syntactically normal speech and writing are viewed as part of the propaganda of the dominant order, breaking them down the linguistic power structure is, in their philosophies, an important part of undermining that power. So in fact, being obtuse and chaotic is their way of introducing change and therefore offering new meanings (ibid.).

Postmodern Feminism has resulted in some of the most ground breaking research in the last twenty years. Its major technique, discourse analysis has been used in many different fields to ask many different questions (ibid.). A logical progression of postmodern theory, it has revitalized feminism by questioning many assumptions that were previously unexamined. While as of yet it has not been a major presence in the field of library and information studies, the number of studies utilizing it is steadily increasing (ibid.).

3.2.3 Taylor Perry’s Feminism

Tyler Perry may be one of the most popular and successful African American playwrights and filmmakers of all time (Hearthly, 2004). He surfaced in the late 1990s from the underground theatre and music movement that Henry Louis Gates Jr. and others have called the Chitlin Circuit. To date, his repertoire of converted plays to films has grossed more than five hundred million dollars (Hodges, 2005). Despite his undeniable popularity with mainstream African American audiences, Perry has become a social and political scapegoat within academic circles for all that is supposedly wrong with black theatre, film, and television. Following AudreLorde's call in the opening epigraph, Perry has spoken what has been important to him. The stories of black women. Even with Perry's dedication and attention to many issues that black women face, his plays, films, and television shows have been largely "bruised and misunderstood" by many black elites. Indeed, a cadre of feminists, black popular critics, and/ or antifeminists, find fault with Perry's works (ibid.). To be sure, we are not using a broad brush to describe all critic's and/ or feminist's opinions of Perry's work(ibid.). Our intention here is to engage the arguments that animate the extant criticism against the director(ibid.). As such, this essay engages more ideologically driven accusations that revolve around his use of race and gender stereotypes, his centering of the heteronormative black church, and the cinematic quality, or lack thereof for some, of his films (ibid.). We argue that those debates involving his gender stereotypes and black women are
particularly problematic because they fail to account for the critical perspectives of his mostly black female and working-class audience and the salient feminist impulses within his work (ibid.). My chief aims, then, are to situate Perry as an organic black male feminist director and to create a forum that allows us to explore the attraction/repulsion toward Perry within and beyond the black intelligentsia (ibid.).

We create a conversation that allows Perry's work to "talk back," in the words of feminist bell hooks, to critics, feminists, and fans (ibid.). This dialogue is presented in the four-act structure of his many plays in an attempt to performativity mirror the call and response between artists, audiences, and critics (ibid.). Patricia Hill Collins tells us that dialogue is more effective in creating new knowledge than adversarial debate because the author can be present in the text, not necessarily lost to analysis. Perry's presence in this essay is effective in constructing new knowledge that can help us subvert the overlapping oppressions of race and gender mapped on the bodies of black women (ibid.). Perry's recognizable scenarios of black life, characters, and doable acts of feminism operate in fictional spaces of theatre, film, and television (ibid.). The director attempts to connect working-class and elite experiences of black women together instead of forcing them apart. These contradictions are the same ones that third-wave feminist Rebecca Walker contends we must face and embrace in order to identify new and important voices that can help us continue to shape a political force more concerned with mandating and cultivating freedom than with policing morality. Perry may very well be such a voice (ibid.).

Conclusion

Both Euripides and Taylor are feminist writers, where their feminist trend is clearly shown in their writings and their choice of principle characters. Euripides tried to convey a message through Medea. This gender choice is not random but precise due to Euripides’ aim and message. Perry too who uses Helen to show the hidden power inside woman whom she is veiled with tenderness and wise decisions that the audience are not used to see; this is for the sack of giving a new definition to a new power that women hold.
Chapter Four

Psychoanalysis of Medea and Helen
Chapter Four

Psychoanalysis of Medea and Helen

Introduction

Psychoanalysis seeks evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilts, ambivalences, and so forth within what may well be a unified literary work. The author's own childhood traumas, family life, sexual conflicts, fixations, and such will be traceable within the behaviour of the characters in the literary work (Eagleton, 1983). But psychological material will be expressed indirectly, disguised, or encoded (as in dreams) through principles such as "symbolism" (the repressed object represented in disguise), "condensation" (several thoughts or persons represented in a single image), and "displacement" (anxiety located onto another image by means of association)(ibid.).

Despite the importance of the author here, psychoanalytic criticism is similar to New Criticism in not concerning itself with "what the author intended."(ibid.). But what the author never intended is sought. The unconscious material has been distorted by the censoring conscious mind(ibid.).

4.1 An Introduction to Psychoanalytic Criticism

Sigmund Freud is the author of the structural model of personality (Eagleton, 1983). In this theory, Freud explains that each person’s personality is formed of three parts: the Ego, the Superego and the Id. Psychoanalysis is the process of using what we know about these three parts of someone’s personality to analyze the ways that person behaves (ibid.).

Literary critics sometimes analyze the actions of literary characters using the three personality structures that Freud identified. As critics explore the ego, superego, and id of characters in a work, they focus on the ways that these parts of the characters’ personalities influence the work as a whole. This process is called psychoanalytic criticism (ibid.).

In the next activity, you will use Freud’s theory to analyze the characters in The Cat In The Hat by Dr. Seuss. To help prepare you for this activity, read the following explanations for id, ego, and superego (ibid.).
4.1.1 The Id

The id is the part of the personality that contains our primitive impulses, such as thirst, anger, hunger, and the desire for instant gratification or release (Eagleton, 1983). According to Freud, we are born with our id. The id is an important part of our personality because as newborns, it allows us to get our basic needs met (ibid.). Freud believed that the id is based on our pleasure principle (ibid.). The id wants whatever feels good at the time, with no consideration for the other circumstances of the situation. The id is sometimes represented by a devil sitting on someone’s shoulder (ibid.). As this devil sits there, he tells the ego to base behavior on how the action will influence the self, specifically how it will bring the self-pleasure (ibid.).

4.1.2 Superego

The superego is the part of the personality that represents the conscience, the moral part of us. The superego develops due to the moral and ethical restraints placed on us by our caregivers. It dictates our belief of right and wrong (Eagleton, 1983). The superego is sometimes represented by an angel sitting on someone’s shoulder, telling the ego to base behavior on how the action will influence society (ibid.).

4.1.3 Ego

The ego is the part of the personality that maintains a balance between our impulses (our id) and our conscience (our superego). The ego is based on the reality principle (Eagleton, 1983). The ego understands that other people have needs and desires and that sometimes being impulsive or selfish can hurt us in the end. It is the ego’s job to meet the needs of the id, while taking into consideration the reality of the situation. The ego works, in other words, to balance the id and superego. The ego is represented by a person, with a devil (the id) on one shoulder and an angel (the superego) on the other (ibid.).

4.2 Character Psychology

A person’s character is the relatively enduring set of dispositions which are judged by others, and usually accepted by the subject, to be typical or, ‘characteristic’ of the character (Eagleton, 1983). It is usually acknowledged that there is an innate contribution in the form of ‘temperament’, intellectual endowment and other constitutional elements (ibid.). The
psychological foundation of character is however laid in childhood development through experience and socialisation. So-called ‘disorders’ of character are explained in terms of a disturbed developmental trajectory through an unfavorable environment and present in various ways: as social deviation, mental illness, or ‘difficulties in living’ (ibid.). Psychoanalytic treatment was developed as a way in which character can be modified so as to relieve the distress associated with disorder and psychoanalysis is probably the earliest psychology to cover both normal character and its disorders in terms of the same processes of development. The psychoanalytic thesis that character development rests on identifications with significant figures is broadly accepted, even if Freud’s specific explanation in terms of the resolution of the Oedipus complex is not (ibid.). With respect to moral character in particular, ordinary psychological understanding has absorbed the psychoanalytic thesis that there is a part of the self, the Freudian ‘superego’, which contains parental interdictions and permissions (ibid.).

The relation between reflection and character, and psychoanalysis, can be developed via the notion of self-interpretation (ibid.). Charles Taylor has argued that the capacity for self-knowledge through self-interpretation is essential to being human (ibid.).

4.3 Psychoanalysis of Medea

4.3.1 Avenging Spirit, Goddess

The beauty of Greek tragedy is that it allows for multiple readings. Instead of Medea as an ordinary woman, she could also be read as being quite extraordinary, for example, as an avenging spirit or alastor (Worth, 1988). Lora Holland (2003) argued that Medea occasionally makes reference to a curse on Jason’s family, for which she is a spirit of vengeance. At the start of the play, when Medea is screaming offstage inside the house, she addresses her sons as ‘accursed’ (Line 112) and wishes that ‘the whole house collapse in ruin’ (Line 114). After the departure of Creon, Medea speaks of Jason making a ‘Sisyphian marriage’ (Line 405). Holland argues that, at face value, these words refer to Creon being descended from Sisyphos; but Jason is also a blood relation to Sisyphos according to some genealogies, and it is creepy that Medea singles out the name of an ancestor most famous for his punishment in hell (he had to roll a stone uphill for all eternity), rather than his military
glory (ibid.). It also means that Jason and his new bride are distant cousins, which would make perfect sense in Greek dynastic terms (ibid.).

Jason accuses Medea of having laid unholy curses on Creon’s family (ibid.), to which Medea significantly replies, ‘Yes, and I happen to be a curse to your house, too’ (Line 608). At the end of the play, when the children are dead, Jason calls Medea a great evil (Line 331), but refuses to acknowledge that his actions were the ones worthy of being punished; instead, it is Medea who is:

Jason: …the betrayer of your father and the land that raised you. But the gods have visited on me the avenging spirit meant for you,

“For indeed it was after you killed your brother at the hearth
That you embarked the lovely-prowed skiff of the Argo.
That was just your beginning.”

(Medea 1332-36)

Here Jason attributes his misfortunes to the work of an avenging spirit, albeit one that should have descended upon Medea. But if we look at his misfortunes, they are the handiwork of Medea herself (ibid.). One could therefore easily read Medea as an avenging spirit taking due punishment on Jason both for a crime of his, and for a crime of his family (which, alas, is not made explicit, but may have been part of a greater mythical tradition that is now lost to us) (ibid.). Even beyond this role as an avenger, one tends to think of Medea as having immortal privileges, and therefore as a goddess.

At the very moment where a *deus ex machina* often appears at the end of Euripidean plays, it is Medea who appears on a machine, pulled by a chariot of dragons given to her by her immortal grandfather, the Sun god (Helios) (ibid.). *Medea* has killed her sons, as well as the king and his daughter, and she escapes any punishment from the people of Corinthos or Jason. She is, as it were, above the laws of men (ibid.). Gods are rarely punished for their crimes; Zeus commits adultery and rape constantly, gods kill the mortal lovers of other gods out of spite, but they all get away with it (ibid.). Medea, too, gets away with killing her own children, and will find sanctuary in Athens (yet another exile from her barbarian home) where she will marry Aigeus and bear new sons (ibid.). This is a hallmark of Euripides, in that
hedelights in exploring the possibilities of a universe where good people suffer and the wicked prosper.

4.3.2 Medea as a Sinner: Mother and Monster

What about these children? The fact that they exist at all requires an audience to consider Medea’s role as a mother. But what kind of mother is she? Many audiences have tried to exonerate her guilt by taking her words at lines 1236. at face value:

“Medea: Friends, the deed is decided upon, as quickly as possible
To kill the children and start away from this land,
And not, by making a delay, to give my children up
To be murdered by another hand less kindly.
From all sides, it is necessary that they die; and since they must,
We who gave birth to them shall kill them.
But arm yourself in steel, my heart; why do we hesitate
From doing wrongs which are terrifying and necessary?”

(Medea 1236-43)

Here at the final moment Medea believes that the children’s death is necessary, and that if she does not kill them, others will (Hooks, 1994). Certainly the messenger’s report of the death of Creon and his daughter implies that the Corinthians will soon come rushing in to kill Medea and her sons; and when Jason arrives at 1293, his main concern is to save the children’s lives from the dead king’s household. So is there a sense in which Medea kills the children to spare them being hurt by others? Perhaps, but we are not so quick to afford Medea the same sympathy as we might give the character of Sethe in Toni Morrison’s 1987 novel Beloved, to which Medea is often compared.

Sethe, an African slave in the ante bellum American South, slit her two-year-old daughter’s throat to prevent her from growing up in a life of slavery (Hooks, 1994). But whilst killing a child to spare it from pain or maltreatment or mutilation by others has a certain noble quality (a kind of test of the depth of one’s love), Medea’s motivations for killing her sons are much more varied (ibid.). Let us not forget that when she first thinks of murder as anoption, she couches the idea in terms of not wanting to be mocked by her enemies (797) (ibid.). And she explicitly tells the chorus women that murdering the children will be the best way to wound her husband (817) (ibid.). Even if sparing her children pain becomes the primary
Chapter Four

reason for the murder at the last minute when Korinthos is in an uproar, such a motivation is seriously (ibid.).

under cut by what follows, namely, the murder itself, and her interaction with Jason at the play’s end. The murder is quite horrifying; the voices of the boys from within the house are shouting:

“ Child A: Oimoi, what shall I do? Where can I flee mother’s hands?
Child B: I don’t know, dearest brother! We are done for!
Chorus: Do you hear, do you hear the children’s cry?
Alas, miserable one, oh ill-fated woman!
Shall I enter the house? It seems best to me

Child A: Yes, by the gods, ward it off! For (you will help where) there is need!
Child B: How close we are already to the snare of the sword.”

(Medea 1271-78)

Many modern productions and adaptations replace the children’s words with screams (Donald, 1988). But in Euripides’ play, Medea’s children shout brilliant poetry as they are being killed (ibid.). The first child can hear the chorus women’s deliberation about whether to intervene, and he begs them to do so, en deonti gar, the meaning of which is somewhere between ‘for you will be helping where there is need’, and ‘for it’s the right time’. (In other words, ‘help now!’) The second child uses the metaphor of ‘the snare/hunting-nets of the sword’, implying that he has been cornered and is close to being caught by Medea’s sharp blade. If Medea had chosen to kill her children gently and quickly, perhaps with a painless poison, the murder might have seemed more motherly, even forgivable (ibid.). Instead, the children’s panic as they flee the sword in their mother’s hands highlights the gruesome nature of Medea’s murderous intent (ibid.). It is interesting that she does not use any supernatural means to kill her children; no flesh-devouring garments or magic spells here. Nonetheless, the children do not think of their mother as wanting to spare them pain; if anything, her hand is no more kindly than the hands of others she had envisaged (1239) (ibid.).

Then in the very next scene, safe in her dragon wagon, with the dead boys’ corpses at herside, Medea essentially taunts Jason with them, saying ‘These boys are no more; (I say
this) because this will gnaw at you’ (1370), and ‘(I killed them), at any rate, to cause you pain’ (1398). And when Jason asks pointedly, ‘And did you judge it worthy to kill them for the sake of a bed?’ (1367), Medea does not deny it, but asks her own rhetorical question, ‘Do you think this is a small concern for a woman?’ (1368). Jason responds to his sons’ death by cursing.

At this horrible moment, when husband and wife are hurling abuse at each other because there is no longer any possibility of a reconciliation, Jason calls her “alianess”, not a woman, possessing a nature wilder than Skylla of the Tuscan sea’ (1342.), and once again ‘this hateful and child-murdering lioness’ (1406.) (Mellter, 2000).

Elsewhere Medea is compared to inhuman, inanimate things like rocks or steel; the Nurse describes the sorrowful Medea as motionless as a rock or the sea (1428), and the chorus women imagine that Medea must have been rock or steel in order to kill her own children with her own hand (1280-82) (ibid.). The monstrousness of her daring is linked, in Jason’s mind, to her barbarian origins when he claims, ‘There is no Greek woman who would ever have dared do this thing’ (1339). Ironically (ibid.), however, there is a chorus of Corinthian women standing by who initially saw nothing unjust in plotting the death of Creon’s daughter.

4.3.3 Medea as a Victim

This leads to the often-asked question, was Medea justified in killing her children? If it was in vengeance for a man who wronged her, was it OK? Can we read Medea as a victim? And a victim of what? A man? A Greek? Marriage? Society? Herself? And does being a victim make the murder of her children somehow understandable? Should we be happy that Medeagets away it? Well, not quite. The killing of the children is Euripides’ final gesture to show the topsy-turvies of the world he has created. And what kind of world is it? It’s a world in which women are the victims of a society created by and for men, and in which women are driven to commit acts against their own interest.

Euripides has over the centuries been analysed as a misogynist woman-hater, or as a feminist; but even if neither of these labels is quite accurate, there is no denying that Euripides is fascinated with issues of gender and power, and what happens when women are put into crises that demand that they take action. Euripides compels his audience to empathise with
those extraordinary circumstances that drive people to rash decisions (Kenneth, 1999). A scene from Jules Dassin’s 1978 film A Dream of Passion is most instructive (ibid.). A Greek film star named Maya (played by Melina Mercouri) has been preparing for the role of Medea, and is undergoing a mock interview:

“Interviewer: Do you think she can be justified in killing her own children?
Maya: Wrong question, BBC. Ask the right question. Ask what desperation brought her to kill what she loved most in the world.”

(A Dream of Passion)

The interviewer specifically asks Maya about Brenda Collins, an American woman in Athens who was imprisoned for murdering her children after her Greek husband abandoned her (ibid.). Yet the question is really about the character of Medea as well. Through her visits with Brenda, Maya has come to realise that Euripides’ play is most moving when we stop trying to justify Medea for killing her children, and begin asking instead what drove her to kill the persons she loved most. As Medea herself says, ‘Even though you kill them, nonetheless they were beloved, but I am a miserable woman!’ (1249).

4.4 Psychoanalysis of Helen

“I’m not bitter. I’m mad as hell.”

Helen, Diary of a Mad Black Woman

Diary of a Mad Black Woman chronicles the failure of Helen and Charles’s marriage. Appearances of contentment aside, Helen finds herself in an extremely unhappy marriage with Charles (Cantanse, 2004). On the night of their wedding anniversary Charles reveals that he has been having an affair with another woman (ibid.). Charles’s revelation forces Helen to pick up the pieces in her life when he proceeds to remove Helen from his life completely (ibid.).

Helen turns to her grandmother, the famous, gun-toting, no-nonsense Madea played by Perry in drag, to help heal the wounds inflicted by Charles’s betrayal (ibid.). While finding new meaning in her life, Helen meets Orlando, a working class man who treats her with kindness and respect, unlike Charles (Beaubouef, 2000). However, Charles interrupts Helen’s blissful relationship with Orlando when he becomes paralyzed. In the end, Helen must make a
choice of whether to stay with her current beau Orlando, a gentleman and symbol of Helen’s revived hope in Black men, or forgive Charles and return to him and salvage their marriage (Heartley, 2008).

Helen, the central character in the film and stage play of *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, functions as an initial site of investigation of a historical trope in Perry’s films. After a long life of middle-class comforts, she must leave her lavish home in the Atlanta suburbs with no financial support from her husband Charles (ibid.).

In effect, she has no source of income or job. Previous to her marriage, she has signed a stringent and unreasonable prenuptial agreement that cut her off should their marriage dissolve, leaving her no access to Charles’s money or spousal settlement. In both the stage play and film Charles appraises Helen in a cruel and vicious manner (ibid.). He accuses her of being an ungrateful wife to him: “What makes you think you can question me about anything I do? Woman, this is my house. I pay the bills. You need to know your place” (“Diary” 2002).

Charles insists that Helen’s position as a woman correlates with his economic position as a Black man. He uses Helen’s female gender to oppress her position within the household: she is not allowed to work. He also scolds Helen for being lackadaisical because she “sits around Charles’s house,” instead of attending various social events and gatherings that would help him continue to rise in their class position (ibid.).

### 4.4.1 Helen the Tragic Mulatto

Helen lives in what could be figured as a tragedy since she demonstrates in these moments that she faces a major fall and crisis in her own life. She does not have any sense of agency as Charles’s wife, despite the couple’s wealth and status (ibid.). Her situation could in fact be considered what Lisa Anderson and Judith Williams suggest of another stock Black female figure in circulation, the tragic mulatto: “One of the elements of the tragedy surrounding themulatto is her lack of access to power and her essentially female position. Her radicalised state puts her in a position that, in a racist culture, equals powerlessness” (Anderson, 1997). Skin colour plays a crucial factor in the tragic mulatto’s circumstance as it does for Helen. In the film version of the play, although Helen is not light-skinned enough to
“pass” for white, as is the case with the stock mulatto stereotype, she is not portrayed by a dark-skinned actress. Instead, the African-American actor/character’s skin colour hovers in the middle of this pigment spectrum, leaning more towards light (white) significations against the background of the film’s many darker-skinned Black actors (ibid.). Therefore, with these significations of whiteness, Helen has enough resonances to evoke sympathy about her mistreatment because of her somewhat “light skin.” (ibid.).

Whenever Helen refuses to fight and take some form of vengeance on her own behalf, she exemplifies what other characters consider a performativity of whiteness (ibid.). The film and play seem to suggest that Helen cannot lift herself out of her “tragic” plight as long as she continues to perform the actions of “white women.” In many ways, this contemporary version of the tragic mulatto shows that not only has she fallen from her state of grace but that she has been pushed out of Blackness for not behaving like a proper, perhaps more authentic “Black” woman (ibid.). She is not strong or outspoken, but instead residual, passive, and submissive. A Black audience appears to take pity on Helen because she cannot assert herself, perform, as a Black woman. In this, a Black audience therefore is urged to mark her as a white woman until she performs the qualities of a strong Black woman (ibid.).

As a result, Helen faces a primary challenge in the film and stage play that drives both of their stories: she must find her own voice, her role as a Black woman, to become an agent of her own change. In order to do this, she must take some sort of action to arrest Charles’ power over her as well as express the rage she has hidden and stored for the sake of middle-class propriety and wifely seemliness (Bogle, 2005). To accomplish this transformation, and thereby overcome her tragic state, she decides upon vengeance against her husband. Yet another tie to proper Black womanhood escapes Helen: her inability to conceive children. Charles constantly harasses her about her failure to produce children, and makes inconsistent references in the play and film that Helen has not reared him a son (ibid.). This failure allows him to subordinate her not only as inferior but also as incapable of performing her primary role as a woman. In the beginning of the film version of Diary of a Mad Black Woman, Charles accosts Helen, who pretends that their marriage can continue, and uses her failed sexuality to render her useless to him (ibid.). Charles blames his lack of sexual attraction to Helen to imply that her inability to have children has caused his disinterest in her.
Chapter Four

Helen’s biological incapacity to have a child furthers the “tragedy” of Helen’s representation as a tragic mulatto. Childlessness becomes an intense subject for Helen when she finally attains the opportunity to enact revenge upon Charles. In the film, Charles becomes disabled when a clientshoots him. Charles’s injuries leave him as a quadriplegic and confine him to a wheelchair. Furthermore, Charles can no longer provide for the lavish lifestyle of his mistress Brenda (ibid.).

Brenda leaves Charles, and Helen bears the burden of caring for her estranged husband at the expense of her new relationship with Orlando (Ariel, 2000). The situation of primary caregiver (ibid.). Charles has been abandoned by all his connections, presents Helen the opportunity to demonstrate her anger and enact a reversal that will eventually empower her, moreover, she will use this reversal to “become” a Black woman and escape her “tragedy.”

Helen arrives to the couple’s former home to serve as Charles primary caretaker, and she begins to abuse him: she doesn’t feed or bathe him regularly. As Helen tells Charles (in the filmversion of the play) Helen will now enact vengeance upon him in the same manner that Charles treated her (Lott, 1993). She also connects her childless state to his failure to act responsibly as a husband: “I wanted children, Charles, and had you not been with those whores, we would have them. You got me all stressed out, my hair falling out, my weight up and down, can’t keep anything down, TWO MISCARRIAGES. You took life from me, and you never even said „I’m sorry” (“Diary” 2005). This reveal, as well as similar actions that occur in the stage play, signifies Helen taking of power to surmount her hurt and pain (ibid.).

The cruelty and anger she expresses towards and enact over Charles allows the tragic mulatto to break out of powerlessness that is inhabited by the performativity of whiteness and transforms her into a strong Black woman (ibid.). Unlike the tragic mulatto of history, Helen does not die as a result of her frustrated state. Instead, she exacts revenge and, in this, gains agency to live (ibid.). In this reconfiguration of the stereotype, Perry confounds and complicates the representation of the tragic mulatto and creates a revised representation of Black women in direct contrast to the long-standing image found in whiterrepresentations (ibid.).

4.4.2 Reaction of Helen to the Topsy Figure
Chapter Four

The camera bolsters this conclusion as it focuses on Charles’s gaze to Brenda as well as Helen’s gaze to hint at an intimate interaction between the two (Black, 1997). Brenda attacks Helen in both versions, accusing her of not knowing how to “take care of her man.” In this accusation (ibid.). Brenda implies that Helen does not take care of Charles in a sexual manner (ibid.). Brenda also informs Helen that Charles talks with her about the way Helen treats him. In this display and manner, Brenda’s performance reads as the dangerous and disruptive sexuality of the Topsy figure, and thus Perry’s repetition of the Topsy figure’s stereotype suggests that the way to treat a Black man comes from how a Black woman primarily utilizes her sexuality for the achievement and control of a relationship (ibid.).

The sexual interaction between Brenda and Charles in the film and play calls into question the ways in which Black women are expected to perform for Black men specifically through this implementation of the Topsy figure (Cantanese, 2004). In the film, for example, Helen scolds Charles for his unfaithfulness to their marriage with Brenda, who she points out does not genuinely care for him, only for his wealth and status (ibid.). Brenda responds to Helen in anger: “I’m a woman who knows how to get and keep her man” (“Diary” 2005) (ibid.). Her response indicates that she believes that Helen has not done “enough” to please Charles with a strong implication that Brenda contains Charles through her fervent sexuality. In the play Brenda makes a similar comment to Helen about the proper way to care for a man: “Helen you don’t know how to treat this man” (David Rivera. Oprah, 2012).

Through this invocation of the Topsy figure, we believe that Perry attempts to denote the problematic patriarchal structure within the African-American community (ibid.). He uses Brenda as a configuration that suggests both women’s submissiveness and, in turn, the competitiveness between them is used to win the favour of Black men, which then damages and ultimately troubles relationships in the Black community (ibid.). Nevertheless resurrects this figure to evidence how hypersexuality confines and imprisons the representation of Black women (ibid.). The jezebel or Topsy figure, as rendered through Brenda, uses her position as the hyper sexualized Black woman to exert power over both Charles and Helen as well as define a problematic Black womanhood and manhood (ibid.). Charles’s revelation forces Helen to pick up the pieces in her life when he proceeds to remove Helen from his life completely (ibid.).
Helen turns to her grandmother, the famous, gun-toting, no-nonsense Madea played by Perry in drag, to help heal the wounds inflicted by Charles’s betrayal (Beauboeuf, 2000). While finding new meaning in her life, Helen meets Orlando, a working class man who treats her with kindness and respect, unlike Charles (ibid.).

However, Charles interrupts Helen’s blissful relationship with Orlando when he becomes paralyzed. In the end, Helen must make a choice of whether to stay with her current beau Orlando, a gentleman and symbol of Helen’s revived hope in Black men, or forgive Charles and return to him and salvage their marriage (Alter, 2006).

The characters of the play and film consistently comment upon Helen’s powerlessness, most especially Medea (ibid.). They note that Helen handles her situation in a different manner from that of a “Black woman.” For example, in one scene from the play, Charles yells at Helen and tells her to go to her room, and Helen proceeds to do so obediently. Daddy Charles comments on Helen’s frightened and subordinate response: “Girl you run up the stairs like a white woman. A Black woman would’ve run to the kitchen for a butcher knife” (“Diary” 2002). Daddy Charles’s thoughts about how a white woman acts in comparison to a Black woman’s response affirm how Helen’s performance of whiteness reverses the expectations of the performativity of Blackness (ibid.). As in the tradition of the tragic mulatto’s performance, Helen’s situation is not only tragic but her actions of response are weak (ibid.).

Whereas white culture portrays Black women as weak, helpless, or as victims, African-American cultural production equates the performativity of whiteness in any sense as weakness (Cantanese, 2004). Thus, in African American cultural production, the portrayal of a Black women’s strength is placed in opposition to the negative portrayals of Black women by white people (ibid.). Whenever Helen refuses to fight and take some form of vengeance on her own behalf, she exemplifies what other characters consider a performativity of whiteness. The film and play seem to suggest that Helen cannot lift herself out of her “tragic” plight as long as she continues to perform the actions of “white women.” (ibid.).
In many ways, this contemporary version of the tragic mulatto shows that not only has she has fallen from her state of grace but that she has been pushed out of Blackness for not behaving like a proper, perhaps more authentic “Black” woman. She is not strong or outspoken, but instead residual, passive, and submissive. A Black audience appears to take pity on Helen because she cannot assert herself, perform, as a Black woman. In this, a Black audience therefore is urged to mark her as a white woman until she performs the qualities of a strong Black woman (ibid.).

In the film Diary of a Mad Black Woman while talking to her nephew Brian about his reluctance to allow his daughter to sing in the church choir out of fear that it will lead her to drugs in the same manner that his wife was Madea explains to him, “Brian you using them children like a crutch, you understand what I’m telling you? Any fool could see that you love that woman with all you might, you need to help her and at the same time it might help you. Listen you take your daughter on down there and let her sing in that church choir that is contractual what she’s doing she needs to do something contractual. Love is stronger than any addiction baby, hell it is one” (Diary of a Mad Black Woman, 2005). Here Madea is expressing a sense of compassion and understanding while giving advice to her nephew about a serious issue influencing his family.

4.5 Madea as a Good Person

Scholars have said that when Black women display behaviours of strength and competence it is interpreted as controlling, manipulative, or aggressive behaviour (Tyler, 2012). Instead Madea is viewed as a leader and her opinion is valued by other characters. While in a meeting in prison in the film, ‘Madea Goes To Jail’, Madea is shown listening to other prisoners discussing the matter of forgiveness and not being able to forgive people who have done you wrong (ibid.). Madea complains about listening to the people’s stories and when the minister questions her about it she states how the choices that people make in life cannot be blamed on others but instead responsibility must be accepted by the individual. In this instance although she is somewhat sassy in her statements Madea is giving advice to an individual that she doesn’t know and still chose to give her guidance (ibid.).
In the film ‘Diary of a Mad Black Woman’ while talking to her nephew Brian about his reluctance to allow his daughter to sing in the church choir out of fear that it will lead her to drugs in the same manner that his wife was Madea explains to him, that it would be beneficial for his daughter to participate in the church choir and that he needs to come to terms with his wife’s drug addiction (ibid.). Here Madea is expressing a sense of compassion and understanding while giving advice to her nephew about a serious issue influencing his family (ibid.).

Scholars have argued that in response to limited employment opportunities caused by racism, Black women assume the role of a provider and are the glue that holds the black family and community together (Tyler, 2012). Madea reflects this role by acting as a disciplinarian towards children. In ‘Madea’s Family Reunion’ while Madea is talking to her new fosterdaughter after she hits the child for being disrespectful Madea exclaims, “I don’t know what’s wrong with these children today but oh I’ll set them straight, you don’t know me I’m from the old school and I will beat the hell out of you first and ask questions later! If you don’t know how to get in line I will get you in line!” (Madea’s Family Reunion, 2007)

As a reaction to the young girls’ disrespectful attitude towards Madea she disciplined the child in order to let her know that she is unwilling to accept any disrespectful behaviour or actions. Later in the film the young girl, Nicki, arrives home from school late. Madea questions her about where she has been, and after beating her with a belt for lying about her location Madea again steps in as a disciplinarian and talks to the girl (ibid.). Madea states, “Why weren’t you in school today?” Nicki replies that she went to the park, Madea replies, “What were you doing in the park you supposed to be at the school house” Nicki doesn’t respond and Madea says, “Lil Girl I’m not gon ask you no more” finally Nicki explains that she doesn’t like being at school because she doesn’t feel smart like the other kids and her last foster mother told her that she wasn’t good for anything (ibid.). Hearing this Madea explains while holding her hand on her hip, “The best revenge you can have on somebody that done told you something like that is to prove them wrong (ibid.). Now I went down to that school and I got your homework, talked to your teacher and she said this you need to work on now go upstairs and get it done.” (Madea’s Family Reunion, 2007)
After examining this scene, Madea acts again in the form of a disciplinarian to the young girl. Though she does strike her with a belt her intention is not to harm the girl but she showed genuine concern for the girl’s education and helping her out (Bloom, 2002). She acts as a disciplinarian by first scolding the young girl for lying and disobeying Madea, and then giving her support and encouragement that she has the ability to succeed in life (ibid.).

There is a relationship between Madea and the existing literature on the influence of stereotypes. It was seen that Madea possesses characteristics of all three stereotypes as well as independent traits of her own. Though she has behaviours reflective of the Mammy these traits were not perceived as negative in spite of the literature. The Sapphire character was consistent in Madea’s characteristics throughout all four of the films (ibid.). She acts in aassy and angry manner but it was determined that her behaviour is present as the result of feeling disrespected. The Jezebel was not as prevalent in Madea as the other two stereotypes. Instead of utilizing her sexuality, Madea instead attempts to manipulate others in order to obtain what she wants. The other theme showed that Madea does display behaviours and characteristics independent of the stereotypical behaviour that includes being a disciplinarian (ibid.). These results show that though Madea does possess these behaviours she is not a character that consists of entirely negative behaviours that can influence audiences in a harmful manner (ibid.).

**Conclusion**

*Medea* is the principal character of the Greek play. This character showed a lot of anger of her husband’s behaviour. This behaviour leads to a bath of blood where at the end of the story everybody dies even her own children. She couldn’t hold her anger and behave in a modern way because of many reasons that pushes her to take every memory of her past with Jason. This rage and is due to a her to her level of thinking where she used to solve any problem she faces by taking away spirits without taking in consideration her beloved ones. Jasons action that awaken the monster inside Medea doesn’t give Medea the wrights to do what she does.

Helen, the principal character in *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, she faces almost the same betrayal that Medeadoes. The depth of the pain was indeed deep inside. But Helen with the help of Madea, her mother and the era that she is living prevents her do a bad thing that
doesn’t satisfy God or other people who loves her. She was there when Charles needed her; she helped him not because she wanted to but to forgive him and release herself of the pain he did to her.
General Conclusion

In one hand, there is no analysis of Medea’s character would be complete without appreciating her as a performer. Throughout the drama, Medea is a clever actor, speaker and manipulator, who always say the right thing at the right time to the right people. It is as though she looks at the list of aspects we have just outlined, and decides which one is appropriate for whoever comes to her doorstep. She manipulates the chorus by appealing to them as a woman to women, and gets them to keep silent about all her murderous plans; but in the end they are another one of her victims, as Corinthos collapses around them. Medea wins Aigeus’ favour by appealing to his sense of outrage at her abandonment, and by bribing him with the promise of children (and, presumably, the promise of sexual passion). She appeals to Creon as a parent to another parent, winning one extra day to provide for her children; and in the end, it is his own natural affection for his daughter which brings him into contact with the fiery poison that kills both of them. Medea convinces Jason that she has changed her mind, and with crocodile tears in her eyes persuades him to take the fatal gifts to Creon’s daughter. Medea is even in control of the ‘other woman’ that she never meets, Jason’s new bride, in that she anticipates correctly that the young princess will delight in the deadly garments disguised as gifts. Medea even manipulates us, the audience, making some of us believe that she really is a victim or a heroine rather than a monster. Finally, she manipulates herself, convincing herself that she is compelled by ananke or ‘necessity’, that she has no other choice but to kill her sons, and that is the ultimate tragedy.

In the other hand, there is this second story, Diary of a Mad Black Woman; the themes that emerge immediately are obvious: how to deal with relational pain and betrayal, and how wounded people can heal in a healthy emotional space somewhere between pained acceptance and soul-destroying rage before eventually learning to trust again.

Helen suffered of being homeless and jobless. She lost her way when she was kicked of her fancy life with she was with her husband Charles. After a long time of thinking Madea, could not stand up watching her nephew standing in the cross roads with nothing to do. So she decided to help her overcome her situation. Helen the Christian girl that gave a new definition to revenge. She takes that bad energy in her soul because she sees that the more it keeps it inside the more the enemy has a power on herself. She has done nothing but being a good wife till the last moments on her marriage, not because she is weak but to show him that she could hurt him more than he did but instead she does not.
Woman in nowadays changed a lot of what she has been before, she tries not just to be elegant in her appearance but even in the way of treating her own problems. Medea’s anger drives her to hurt a lot of people even the closest to her without any pity, unlike Helen who stands next to her husband when he was in need of someone to take care of him where everybody give up on him even Brenda (his mistress). This forgiveness gave life to Helen. But Medea has no life after killing her own sons thinking she will be happy to erase every memory of Jason.

We suggest for the teachers of literature to give the student the chance of doing a comparative literature. This type of study makes the students active. They can know and in large their knowledge about many stories in the same time. Comparative literature is the occasion to open a window out of his small box that he is living in where there is nothing but learning by heart and getting everything readymade. This study is a small sample that may give the student a desire to such works in comparative literature that motivates the way they study literature.
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تتناول هذه الدراسة التحليل النفسي لكل من الشخصيات الرئيسية : ميديا من قبل يوروبيديز و هيلين في يوميات امرأة سوداء غاضبة من قبل تايلر بيري. تدور هذه الدراسة في كلا القصتين حول طريقة النساء في الانتقام في الانتقام. لكل أعمال العنف والإرهاب في قصة ميدياحدثت بسبب خيانة جايسون لزوجته، إذ دفعها غضبها الهائل على خيانته لها لارتكاب أعمال مروعة من الانتقام الدموي. ومن المفارقات، غضب ميديا على خيانته دفعها إلى استخدام طرق الجيل والتلاعب، التي هي في الحقيقة مجرد شكل آخر من أشكال الخيانة عندما شخص يخون آخر. ومع ذلك، تعطي قصة هيلين في يوميات امرأة غاضبة للنساء رؤية جديدة حول كيفية التعامل مع الهزيمة والخيانة في العلاقات وكيف يمكن للأشخاص المتألمين أن يشفوا من جراحهم في مساحة عاطفية صحية في مكان ما بين تقبل الألم وتدمير النفس الغاضبة قبل أن يستعيدوا في نهاية المطاف الثقة من جديد.

Résumé

Cette étude traite la psychanalyse de chacun des principaux personnages : Médéa d’Euripides et Helen dans La vie quotidienne d’une femme noire folle par Tyler Perry. Cette étude concerne la façon dont les femmes se vengent dans les deux histoires. Tout la violence et la terreur dans Médéa est causée par la trahison de Jason a sa femme. Sa rage absolue à son infidélité l’a poussé à commettre d’horribles actions de vengeance sanglante.

Ironiquement; la fureur de Médéa à la trahison de son mari l’a poussé à utiliser la ruse et la manipulation. Tout peut être corrompu. Toutefois, Helen dans la vie quotidienne d’une femme noire folle donne aux femmes une nouvelle vision sur la façon d’agir dans les douleurs et la trahison relationnelle et comment les gens blessés peuvent être guéris dans un espace émotionnelle et sain quelque part entre l’acceptation peiné et la rage abrutissante enfin avant d’apprendre à faire confiance à nouveau.