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## Resilience and Ruin: Exploring the Multifaceted Women of Greek Tragedy Amidst Trauma

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### Abstract

Portraying women in Greek tragedies is a complex issue with many nuances, including reflecting both the cultural mores of ancient Greece and the dramatic intentions of playwrights. While women's rights in Greek society often meant their relegation to the domestic sphere, the plays themselves often placed women in the centre, endowing them with powerful multidimensional roles. In Greek tragedy, the women characters frequently exhibit complex responses towards trauma-the intricate entanglement of resilience and vulnerability. Their personalities reflect experiences of suffering individually and collectively in dimensions from the sturdiest strength to the absolute fragility. The paper explores how women in Greek tragedy could be understood from the perspective of their characterization in terms of trauma, and how such personal challenges and crises can also be seen to illustrate some gendered dimensions of suffering and survival in ancient literature. This focuses on key plays such as *Medea*, *Antigone*, and *The Oresteia* in texts that show how these female figures wrestled with their grief-and-betrayal-displacement community while remaining true to, or diverging from, accepted patriarchal standards. Trauma theory and feminist criticism are all involved in showing these characters as very psychically involved figures of great interest for current gender-versus-adversity debates. By emphasizing the victimized characters and those who possess agency, it further highlights the two aspects, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their role as a collective pain and as individuals. Thus, this paper is an extension of the broader discourse of gender, trauma, and literature between which Greek tragedies are to be seen universal, as representing anything underneath the sun, especially in the human sense.

**Keywords:** Greek Tragedy, trauma, gender, fragility, stereotypes, Greek society.

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## Resilience and Ruin: Exploring the Multifaceted Women of Greek Tragedy Amidst Trauma

### Introduction

Greek tragedy can be considered as one of the most important literary and theatrical genres in the Western cultural heritage. It emerged in ancient Greece during the 5th century BCE. Since it derives from religious rites and societal values, it examines deep human experiences and dealt with universal themes, such as fate, justice, and morality. The position and treatment of women in Greek tragedy are fundamental to the understanding of the genre's essence within its societal structure. Women in the tragedies would tend to be the victims of society while being very active in the shores of action, instrumentality of themes such as, power, morality, vengeance, and justice. The plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, give evidence to their female characters' complexity and the values they hold in the patriarchal society. The ancient Greeks expected women to be emotionally weak, fragile, and submissive, with their power restricted to households. Actions of revenge, violence, and, power were restrained to the male domain.

Greek tragedians presented women, who broke gender norms as unlawful, and, a threat to the society. Each story, though different in content, and, characters, suggested the notion that female conditions create chaos when left in negligence by male power. Characters like, Electra and Iphigenia suggest that continued exposure to trauma may express itself as grief, or hopelessness-engaged in perpetual actions like an obsession. Their fragility is humanly a powerful response to the measure of loss and suffering, not necessarily weakness. Greek tragedies always reflected gender-specific themes that the ancient Greeks practiced, expected from each other, and struggled within themselves. Their plays usually probe questions of power and family ties in relation to moral issues linked with gender. Women have mostly been recognized as being suppressed by patriarchal norms; however, they also are capable of dramatic extensions of agency. For example, there is Antigone, who defies the male authority and honour divine law in Sophocles' *Antigone*; and there is Medea, who goes against her husband's betrayal in Euripides' *Medea*. The male forms often go hand in hand with the ideals of bravery, strength, and honour, as seen from works like Sophocles' *Ajax* (5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE) and Euripides' *Heracles* (13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE), which portray just how difficult it is for men to assimilate into heroic ideals, and what happens when one cannot. Marital dynamics are often a microcosm of larger gender battles. In *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus, Clytemnestra's killing of Agamemnon to avenge his sacrifice of their daughter represents the tension between masculine power and feminine independence.

Plays frequently focus on parental responsibilities, as in Euripides' *Hecuba* (425 BC), where Hecuba's mourning and retribution are a product of her motherhood. Disruption is a key feature of women's lives, as seen in their breach of the gender-prescribed roles. Medea, for example, disrupts the normal propriety by killing her own children. On the other hand, women like Antigone tend to honour rather moral and divine laws, thus defying those created by men. Gods and goddesses often embody and enact the expected behaviour according to assigned gender roles in Greek tragedies. For example, Aphrodite incarnates feminine desire in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC), while Athena endorses male authority and rationality in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (458 BCE). The resulting reflection of societal norms was the articulation of individual desires against communal expectations, on most occasions heightening dramatic stakes. Aeschylus is also regarded as the "Father of Tragedy" in Greek literature. He was among the earliest and greatest of antiquity's tragedians, followed successively by playwrights such as Sophocles and Euripides. Using innovations in drama, he contributed significantly to the development of that genre. He introduced concept of second actor on the stage, in order that there might be room for an extended counterpart and dimension to his speeches. All drama before him had had to content itself with one performer and the chorus. The latter, however,

still played a crucial role in a production, albeit a relatively peripheral one in terms of the brilliant action unfolding on stage, which is how one would approach Aeschylus' production. He is famed for his extravagant embellishments of the spectacle of theatre: elaborate costumes, stage designs, and choreography. In his works as he viewed, Aeschylus broached such momentous themes as justice, divine will, human suffering, and the afflictions of hubris. Aeschylus; he wrote *The Oresteia* which actually constitutes a trilogy of Greek tragedies in 458 BCE. This is indeed one of the oldest works in the surviving portion of Western literature and is also the only complete trilogy of ancient Greek plays having survived. The trilogy highlights justice, vengeance, family loyalty, and the transition from personal revenge to the legal system as its underlying subject matter. The cycle of vengeance is here at its centre with a strong advocacy for having a legal system replace personal retribution. The characters frequently find themselves torn between fulfilling divine commands and the agony of moral dilemmas. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were the three first great tragedians in ancient Greece. Sophocles is regarded as one possible source of inspiration whereby the human being explores emotions and moral dilemmas deeper. More than 120 plays were written during his lifetime, but only seven of them remained complete. His work depicts a close relationship between the character and moral complexities he had. He introduced such advancements to the Greek theatre as a third actor and many more members-cast for chorus. Such wonderful and cherished tragedies of Sophocles are Antigone's tragedies, which were written about 441 BCE. It dates to the end of the Theban Cycle, but is the earliest of the three. The basic issue dealt with in the tragedy is that of moral conflict, individual versus state, divine law versus human law.

Antigone is for individual morality and family loyalty while Creon represents the authority of the state and its laws. The key between the immutable laws of gods and the mutable decrees of human rulers is examined by the play. The end of real gender roles is epitomized in Antigone's challenging defiance of Creon, thus asking for one end of the societal expectations in women's attitude. Euripides is known for his emphasis on psychological realism, if not the depth of the characters' inner lives. He delves into themes debatable, usually presents flesh-and-blood characters, and strains perfectly all in the line of the epic hero. *Medea* is one of his well-known plays. This is truly a deep psychological and complete tragedy dealing with the themes of love, betrayal, revenge, and women's roles within society. Medea challenges gender roles by acting as an agent and refusing to quietly accept betrayal. The revenge that comes from Medea shows the malignant consequences of broken allegiance. The play mainly deals with the terrible destructive force of uncontrolled emotions. Love becomes jealousy and hate and leads to the most absurd and extreme acts. The paper delves into the details of female characters as presented by the major Greek tragedians. The then Greek society portrayed women as either weak, and fragile, or, as mean, manipulative, and disruptive. Both extremes in the character traits are noted and studied. Female characters of the masterpiece work of the three great tragedians are considered to note the general presumption of women in Greek society, which in turn is mirrored in the plays. Gendered trauma can be studied in consideration.

### Literature Review

In Greek tragedy, one among some of the major contributions to Western literature, treat themes of fate, justice, and morality very seriously, women in such narratives tend to have the most important roles with quite a variegated and ambivalent representation of power, defiance, victimization, and transgression. This literature review works through discussions regarding the depiction of women within Greek tragedy, especially looking into Aeschylus' *The Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Euripides' *Medea*, as commented upon by scholars discussing gender roles, power dynamics, and societal order expectations. Foley (2001) and Zeitlin (1996) contend that tragedy itself sets up a counterpoint to these structures by exploring the liminal spaces between the public and private, law and kinship, order and chaos by utilizing female characters. Therefore, women tend to transgress the boundary of social norms and thus embody

all the anxiety that surrounds female autonomy and the serious consequences of female transgression within patriarchal paradigms.

Whereas in Aristotle's *Poetics* (4th Century BCE), the ideal tragic hero is male, placing female protagonists in the limelight, such as Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Medea, directly negates this view. In modern feminist discussions, figures like Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz (1993), cast these female figures as agents of subversion: a simultaneous complicity with and interrogation of the classical Athenian gendered order. *The Oresteia*, an Aeschylus trilogy comprising *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*, depicts a Clytemnestra who pervades the work. She is portrayed as a queen and an avenger of her daughter Iphigenia, where she comes to pose a challenge to traditional gender roles by taking over male authority. This theme of women portrayed as capable-yet-demonized ones exists in Clytemnestra. Scholars such as Edith Hall (1989) and Simon Goldhill (1986) argue that Clytemnestra's intelligence and rhetorical skills paint her as an ambiguous character: both a powerful political actor and a hazardous lawbreaker. The act of Agamemnon's murder is tarred with various scenarios: it looks out for scenes of justice, revenge—the narrative punishes her in the end to reinforce patriarchal views.

The shift from her rule to the restoration of male authority by Orestes in *The Eumenides* indicates some passage from matriarchal vengeance to a male social force: the figurative closure of female power in further of order in the city (Zeitlin, 1996). Judith Butler (2000), in *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, regard Antigone as a proto-feminist figure who contests the systemic constraints on women in civil life. However, it is a portrayal with nuance: While Antigone is also intelligent and fearless, her destruction also suggests that a show of strength through defiance carries tragic consequences in a patriarchal world.

Classical readings—all the way up, but not only, to Bernard Knox (1983), in *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy*, argue that Antigone simply embodies tragic excess and thus hubris, reinforcing the ideal in which women who step beyond the confines of their socially constructed domain face destruction.

*Medea*, the ultimate transgressor—Euripides' *Medea* is one of the most radical portraits of a woman in all of Greek tragedy. As a foreigner and a former princess, Medea exacts savage revenge upon the unfaithful husband Jason by killing their children. Whereas Clytemnestra's revenge is based on maternal grief, Medea's vengeance embodies extreme agency, a challenge brought to patriarchal and maternal ideals alike. Scholars like P.E. Easterling (1997) and William Allan (2002) have looked at Medea as both a victim and a villain. Some see her as a figure of tragedy, resorting to violence in a world that offers her no other means for recourse due to having been abandoned and betrayed. Others, such as Mary-Kay Gamel (1999), argue that Medea's actions defy conventional ideas of femininity, making her, thus, a distinct force of disruption in Greek drama.

### **Comparative Analysis of Women and Power in Greek Tragedy**

Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Medea were intelligent and willful women who dared to defy male authority. Yet their fates vindicated the restraint upon women in Greek society. While Clytemnestra's power is dismantled, Antigone's challenge brings her death, and although Medea wins, yet she is left an outcast. Feminist scholars argue that these portrayals show both the fears and the possibilities of female agency within a patriarchal world. Zeitlin (1996) and Foley (2001) suggest that Greek tragedy provides a context for consideration of the consequences of infringing on the regulations of femininity, from necessary yet dangerous disruptors of order. These ancient Greek tragedies battled with their presentation, viewing female power and autonomy with deep-seated ambivalence. Although the women characters of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are confirmed as strong, at the core the narratives seem to reinforce patriarchal structures. However, readings informed by this new understanding of feminism turn to examine the ways in which these protagonists trouble gender norms, elaborate

expositions on internal and external resistance of women. From exploring *The Oresteia*, *Antigone*, and *Medea*, scholars to this day contest how far each play criticises or supports restrictions that were heaped upon females during classical times.

### Methodology

The research will take a qualitative approach in examining female representation in Greek tragedies, using *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus, *Antigone* by Sophocles, and *Medea* by Euripides as its main context. The approach is textual-interpretative, based upon the methods of feminist literary criticism, classical studies, and contextual history for the analysis of representations of women. It will compare and situate, through close reading and thematic explorations, this literary analysis to the representation of gender roles, power structures, and expectations therein in Greek tragedy.

In addition to these, it will involve academic research on:

- Books and journal articles regarding Greek tragedy and gender studies (e.g. Helene P. Foley, Froma Zeitlin, Judith Butler)
- Classical commentaries that provide historical and cultural background
- Feminist and structuralist critiques that explore how female characters comply with or rebel against gender conventions.

Each play will be analysed to obtain an insight into its core thematic preoccupations of female agency, resistance, and societal roles represented as follows:

1. **Power and Authority** – The various ways in which female characters emphasize authority.
2. **Transgression and Punishment** – Their defiance and punishment by society.
3. **Gender and Justice** – The place of law and morality in the fates of women.

By juxtaposing these three plays, the study seeks to accentuate the inherent similarities and differences in representations of female figures as voices of each playwright on female agency within the area of tragedy. The study is bound by the trams of these three plays; it will not lay claim on any exhaustive treatment of representations for all female characters in Greek tragedies. This method, hence, provides a detailed analysis of Greek tragedies with a focus on women through close reading/scrutiny, feminist theory, and historical perspectives. With the help of *The Oresteia*, *Antigone*, and *Medea*, the study aspires to contribute toward the ongoing dialogue in classical Literature on issues of gender, power, and tragedy.

### Objectives

This paper intends to study women in Greek tragedies with reference to *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus, *Antigone* of Sophocles, and *Medea* of Euripides. The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the image aspects of female characters in *The Oresteia*, *Antigone*, and *Medea* in terms of depictions of their roles, agency, and importance in the tales.
2. To discuss themes of power, resistance, and transgression as manifested in the lives of Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Medea, and how these women act within the expectations of their society.
3. To investigate the relationship between gender and justice and how the identified women are used to either support or contest the structure of patriarchal societies.
4. Besides drawing comparisons between the representations of women in the three plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; checking how alike are they but also how different.
5. Mastering such portrayals into cultural, social, and philosophical contexts concerning the construction of women in classical drama within Greek society.
6. The views of feminism and classical criticism are applied to inform the meaningful and contemporary interpretations of these women's lives while contributing to debates on power and gender.

### The Oresteia by Aeschylus

To begin with, Aeschylus' *The Oresteia* is noted for the character of Clytemnestra. She is the Queen of Argos, wife to Agamemnon, and mother of Orestes, Electra, and Iphigenia. Clytemnestra can be considered as ambitious, intelligent, vengeful, and authoritative. However, within *Agamemnon* the woman most boldly defies gender roles—subject in that play is Clytemnestra. She easily challenges the very notion of the home and the modest retreat of a married woman, since the husband is away at the Trojan War. Here was this high sovereign in charge of Argos, and she exercised her political art quite brilliantly. She is far from typical for a devoted wife; indeed, she makes proud proclamations of her control of household and kingdom. It is, of course, revenge for what he has done to her daughter, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis by Agamemnon. Clytemnestra is the raging fury of a mother transformed by loss, with a true blend of personal agony and moral rightness. Her killing of Agamemnon is an act that honoured highly as fulfilment of justice, besides being personal revenge act. Clytemnestra is depicted as a powerful yet vilified figure who challenges traditional gender roles by seizing political authority and enacting vengeance. Scholars argue that her intelligence and rhetorical skill position her as both a strong political actor and a dangerous transgressor (Hall, 1989; Goldhill, 1986). Her downfall in *The Eumenides* reflects the transition from matriarchal vengeance to a male-dominated legal order, symbolizing the suppression of female power (Zeitlin, 1996). Clytemnestra is both a heroine, a grieving mother and an antagonist, a treacherous killer. Her cunning, with the chorus, or her false welcoming of Agamemnon, emphasizes her intelligence but also barbarity. This is the perspective that Aeschylus chooses for use in interrogating the contrast among personal vows and the public law.

On the other hand, Iphigenia, is the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. She is sacrificial, innocent, and symbolic. In so far as the stage action is concerned, she does not appear in *The Oresteia*; however, one can easily sense her everywhere in the trilogy. Through her death, much action that unfolds—the killing of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra. An innocent victim in this respect, Iphigenia represents the cost of war and the destructive consequences that result from patriarchal domination. She exemplifies the old Greek values that held the individual in servitude to the common goal—the Greeks' expedition to Troy, in this case. At the same time, it is a condemnation of these values, as death was such an ethical and emotional toll of such decisions. Iphigenia's memory haunts the narrative, shaping the motivations of other characters, especially Clytemnestra and Electra. She becomes a symbol of the broken familial bonds and the blood debt that defines the House of Atreus.

Cassandra is the Trojan princess, Agamemnon's concubine, and the priestess of Apollo. She is prophetic, powerless, and tragic. Cassandra is both gifted and cursed by Apollo: she can see the future but is doomed never to be believed. Her prophetic insights make her a deeply tragic figure, as she foresees her own death and the murders of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, yet can do nothing to prevent them. As a prize of war and victim to Agamemnon's conquest, Cassandra symbolizes women's suffering at war-time and post-war time. Her enforced slavery and assassination highlight the brutal truth behind collateral damage in war. Unlike Clytemnestra, Cassandra is powerless. While Clytemnestra takes revenge for her pain, Cassandra can only testify to her fate. Such a contrast highlights the contrasting reactions to victimhood and suffering in the play. It is poignant because it is not just unfair but also that it reminds the futility of human foresight before inescapable fate.

Electra is loyal, and vengeful. She is the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, sister to Orestes and Iphigenia. Electra, in *The Libation Bearers*, is a devoted daughter who mourns the killing of her father. Her loyalty toward Agamemnon brings her to side with Orestes for revenge on Clytemnestra. Though she does not commit a murder, yet Electra plays a very significant role in the play of vengeance. At least, her mutterings and doings gave Orestes enough moral justification and support to commit murder of his own mother along with her husband, Aegisthus. She is the sign of continuing a family blood feud. Electra's character is the

encapsulation of the emotional struggle of the trilogy: loyalty to one parent, Agamemnon, requires the betrayal and murder of the other, Clytemnestra. It reflects the wider theme of *The Oresteia* about cycles of violence and the difficulty of achieving justice. Like her mother, Electra is possessed by vengeance, but the actions of the daughter are justified in the context of the patriarchal values of the time. The contrast between mother and daughter highlights the intricacies of justice and family obligation. The women of *The Oresteia* are part of the work's themes of justice, vengeance, and human consequences. Clytemnestra defies traditional gender roles through her power and agency, while Iphigenia and Cassandra represent the victimization of women in patriarchal societies. Electra bridges the gap between victimhood and agency, playing a key role in perpetuating the cycle of violence. These characters together show the complex experiences of women in a world dominated by masculine ideals of power and justice.

### **Antigone by Sophocles**

Sophocles' *Antigone* is a tragedy that takes the form of a confrontation between individual morality and the state law, with female characters playing pivotal roles to discuss themes of loyalty, duty, and agency. Antigone is loyal, defiant, courageous, and principled. She is the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta, sister of Ismene, Polynices, and Eteocles. She's identified as duty and obligations that define her both to family and to gods. This makes her defying the edict pronounced by Creon banning burial of brother Polynices, a divine right rather than that of the law of mortals. Therefore, she comes as the most powerful sign of the forces of rebellion against tyrant. Antigone challenges traditional gender roles by exhibiting strength, determination, and independence. Unlike her sister Ismene, who embodies conventional femininity through obedience and caution, Antigone boldly confronts authority, embodying a proto-feminist spirit. Her act of defiance gets her arrested and eventually leads to her death, thus making her a quintessential tragic heroine. Her downfall is not due to any flaw in character but due to her uncompromising principles and refusal to yield to Creon's authority.

Antigone's tragedy lies in the clash between her individual conscience and societal constraints. Antigone's death is not for nothing. Her actions unveil the weaknesses of Creon's strict governance and kindle the tragic chain of events that result in the downfall of his family and authority. She is a martyr for justice, loyalty, and divine laws. Ismene is another prominent female character. She is cautious, loyal, submissive, and conflicted. She is sister to Antigone, Polynices, and Eteocles. Ismene is the antithesis of Antigone as she represents the stereotypical female role in Greek society. She does not want to assist Antigone in burying Polynices because she cannot go against the authority of men and that Creon's decree is impossible to defy. Her timidity and submissive nature are representative of the constraints placed on women in a patriarchal world. Although she was unwilling at first, love for her sister is present in Ismene. When Antigone was taken away, Ismene was willing to suffer the same punishment, although she did not do it. This shows loyalty to her sister and her internal conflict between fear and doing something for her family. Ismene's pragmatic and submissive stance serves as a foil to Antigone's defiance and idealism. This contrast deepens the tragedy by highlighting the spectrum of responses available to women in oppressive societies and emphasizing the extraordinary nature of Antigone's resolve.

Unlike Antigone, Ismene survives the play, left to grapple with the aftermath of her sister's death and the destruction of their family. Her survival underscores the cost of inaction and the enduring pain of loss. Another female character that Sophocles presents include Eurydice. She is the wife of Creon and mother of Haemon. Eurydice is silent, grief-stricken, and tragic. She makes an entrance only late in the play, yet plays a crucial role in its resolution. Eurydice is a mother; her loss of son Haemon, who, believing Antigone is dead, kills himself, puts all her pain into highlighting human loss due to Creon's hubris and dogmatic adherence to authority. Eurydice's role is relatively passive compared to Antigone and Ismene, reflecting the limited agency of women in the public sphere of ancient Greece. However, her silence carries symbolic

weight, representing the unspeakable pain of a mother's loss and the destructive consequences of Creon's decisions. In the end, Eurydice kills herself, cursing Creon for his role in the deaths of their son and Antigone. Her suicide is a powerful, indirect indictment of Creon's tyranny, highlighting the devastating impact of his inflexibility on his family. While Antigone dies for what she believes in, Eurydice's death is a response to a cause of overwhelming grief.

Such contrast underlines different ways in which women experience and respond to the play. The characters in *Antigone* have distinct female personas and empowerment amidst patriarchal restrictions. Antigone is a symbol of resistance and moral courage, Ismene is a symbol of caution and loyalty, and Eurydice is the silent yet powerful grief of those caught in the wake of tragedy. Together, these characters highlight the roles women play in the moral and emotional fabric of the play, amplifying its themes of justice, loyalty, and the human cost of pride and authoritarian rule.

### **Medea by Euripides**

Euripides' *Medea* is a tragedy that unfolds with themes of love, betrayal, vengeance, and the complex roles of women in ancient Greek society. The female characters Medea and Glauce provide contrasting representations of womanhood and agency. Medea is yet another integral character in Greek tragedy. She is Jason's wife, mother, and a sorceress. Medea is presented as intelligent, vengeful, passionate, manipulative, and defiant. Medea is presented as one who has sacrificed everything for Jason, including betraying her family and homeland, murder, and exile. Abandonment by Jason for Glauce constitutes a deep betrayal, sending Medea into a descent of vengeance. Medea's pain is very personal but also symbolic of the vulnerability of women in patriarchal societies.

Medea's revenge against Jason's betrayal is well-calculated and devastating. She plans each revenge step with care, murdering Glauce, Creon, who is Glauce's father, and, most horribly, her own children. Her actions, though immoral, highlight her power and refusal to be a helpless victim. She wants to destroy Jason not only physically but emotionally, making sure his legacy is erased. Medea is a master manipulator. She pretends to submit to Jason but actually takes advantage of the indulgence of Creon to allow herself time to act in order to fulfill her vengeance. She uses her fine minds to survive in such an unyielding society by males and achieve their needs at any cost. Euripides' *Medea* presents a radical depiction of female autonomy, as Medea defies patriarchal and maternal norms through her calculated revenge. Some scholars view her as a tragic victim abandoned in a society that offers no justice, while others interpret her as a subversive force who disrupts gender expectations (Easterling, 1997; Allan, 2002).

Medea challenges traditional gender expectations. She is against the idea that women should be submissive and forgiving, instead of independent and powerful. Her famous speech about the plight of women in marriage highlights the systemic oppression of women in Greek society. She is both victim and villain. Her conduct evokes both compassion, at her suffering, and terror, at her revenge. Euripides creates her as a deeply moving character, challenging the audiences to confront the subtleties of justice, revenge, and moral absolutes.

Creon's daughter, princess of Corinth, is another important female character. She is Jason's new bride. She is young, innocent, privileged, and vulnerable. She was the embodiment of Jason's ambition and betrayal of Medea. By marrying Glauce, Jason sought better social standing and political advancement, stepping over his obligations to his wife, Medea, and their children. Glauce is depicted as an inactive character, with no freedom or character. She seems to accept Jason as her husband, probably due to her father's influence and the enticement of a powerful husband. Her youth and naivety make her susceptible to Medea's trap. Glauce's tragic fate is sealed when she accepts Medea's poisoned gifts, a beautiful gown and crown which kill her in a gruesome and painful manner.



Her death, though brutal, symbolizes the collateral damage of Jason and Medea's toxic relationship. She becomes a pawn in Medea's vendetta, her innocence offering a stark contrast to Medea's cunning and wrath. Glauce is the antithesis of Medea in every respect: young, passive, and powerless. Where Medea is experience, intellect, and agency, Glauce is a victim of circumstance. This contrast heightens the tragedy, emphasizing Medea's destructive capabilities and the vulnerability of those caught in her path.

The women in *Medea* represent two opposing ideals of femininity and power: Medea, the very powerful figure who frees herself through violent acts of revenge from oppressive societal norms, and Glauce, the victim of Medea's revenge and Jason's ambition, representing powerlessness and the vulnerabilities that accompany privilege. These three characters thus point to all the ways in which betrayal, justice, and the terrible results of unchecked emotions and ambitions were being explored in the play.

### Conclusion

The female characters of Greek tragedy project rich material for assessing the expectation of society and treatment of women in ancient Greece. They would be seen most of the time created by gendered trauma, that serves as a standing mirror and critic of the patriarchal set-up of their time. Their seeming weakness or disruptiveness are mostly not from personal disposition but the other outcomes from traumas afflicted upon them and their harsh societal oppression. In the example of Medea, Antigone, or even Clytemnestra, we see quite complicated intertwines between societal role and personal freedom. Women, instead of being merely called "weak" or "mean," bring disarray to lives that tend to make them be construed in such limited categories. They are not exempt from the double standards that Greek society established and expected from women for virtue as well as submission but punishes those who dare to challenge these confines.

In conclusion, Greek tragedies have definitely been a deep rooting of how misogyny and gendered violence bred a norm of perceiving femininity and morality. An inference made from reading such texts reveals the oppressive system through which women lived in ancient Greece, as well as some outstanding relics of gendered trauma and societal expectations that inform women's narratives.

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