

How does *Medea* explore the positive and negative power of human passion?

Many individuals within society are impelled by their passion to uphold their pride, and this can offer a positive contribution to society, or can be a detriment. This is explored throughout Euripides' play *Medea*, where Medea's immense passion to uphold her dignity allows and enhances the women's voice within Ancient Greek society, yet also leads to the breakdown of society and immense suffering. Similarly, men which govern Corinth are those that allow their passion to overtake any morals, and hence, these are those whom suffer from Medea's crimes.

Euripides' "Medea" challenges the expectations and lack of power that women had in ancient Greek society, and rather portrays Medea as a very powerful and strong-willed protagonist in which defies these expectations and norms, asking the audience to consider how these views could be opposed. In ancient Greece, women lived in a patriarchal society in which they had minimal rights and power to voice their opinion, access to education, and were seen as inferior to men. '*Medea*' challenges these beliefs that women did not have the right to be heard or be powerful, as she talks back to and criticises Jason, which was seen as disrespectful by women, sarcastically asking "And do you think that a thwarted bed is trifling to a woman?". In ancient Greek society, women mostly only received power through their husbands' status and rights, however, Medea challenges Jason in implying through her sarcastic tone that lack of loyalty and betrayal is not triviality (contrary to Jason and society's beliefs). Medea not only defies norms not only for herself but the female population, defying these expectations and norms of women to just be submissive and voiceless. Euripides challenges these societal expectations and norms of women in order to shift the perceptions of women's rights and lack of power and significance, and to empower the audience to assist in defying these expectations of women in all centuries. It is in this way that Medea's passion for upholding and maintaining her dignity in the eyes of men allows women in Corinth to have a voice and to not be perceived as "the worst treated things alive".

While Medea's passion for her vengeance and pride did have a positive influence on the defiance of women's roles, however can also be described as unnecessary, as her uncontrolled emotions and passions lead her to conduct irrational actions of proicide and murder. While these actions were only performed by Medea, the protagonist symbolises the ways in which this patriarchal society may make individuals to act irrationally. Fueled by her malicious desire for vengeance, Medea was subject to the pressures and expectations of her society, which resulted in a great demise in Corinth society. Medea's emotional irrationality saw that her pursuit of vengeance was aimed directly not at Jason, yet rather those that Jason loved. Euripides explores the ways in which those whom have not been granted power in society can react to the corruption of society and lead to rebellion and suffering of society.

The eponymous protagonist was not the only figure to have immense desires to maintain their pride, and Medea's downfall is ultimately due to this. Euripides explores how the abuse of power as fueled by desires of pride has led to tenuous social cohesion. Jason is one male who demonstrates the ways that men were taught to perceive women. Jason's lack of sympathy, sensitivity and loyalty toward Medea symbolises the treatment of women in ancient Greek society. "Medea" not only explores the poor treatment of women as performed by Jason, but reflects the materialistic views that all males had in this time, and the lack of respect for women that was shared within society. The play's denouement saw Medea committing murderous acts, in which Jason lacks to acknowledge how his actions hold him accountable for such acts. Jason claims that he would "rather them[children] have never been born[...] Than had seen [Medea] destroy them". Jason's unrepentance and inability to foresee how his actions may have emotionally harmed Medea symbolise the way that men in this society were taught to treat women. Rather than taking responsibility and holding himself partially accountable for the events that occurred, Jason believes that it would have been more convenient for his children to not have been born, thus not meeting Medea, whilst not mentioning once that he wished he had never betrayed Medea, therefore holding Medea completely accountable. The relationship between Medea and Jason, and the actions of Jason are symbolic of the way that women were treated by men in ancient Greek society, in which the women lacked respect, sensitivity, and empathy from their partners. This mistreatment of women as upheld by men not only lead to Medea's breakdown but also Corinth's, as it resulted in the corruption of society.

While Medea's pursuit of vengeance fueled by her passion and pride did evolve the rights of females within Corinth, however largely resulted in the breakdown of society. Similarly, the corrupt society as created by the abuse of power and neglect of women fueled by their desire for power and pride saw that social cohesion became tenuous and caused individuals to rebel, thus, Euripides conveys the ways in which abuse of power can negatively impact society.

