

Script Analysis

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THEA 250

Given Circumstances

Setting

Continent, country, city-The play takes place within Corinth, a city state on the Isthmus of Corinth, which connects Peloponnese to the rest of mainland Greece

Physical Areas-" Outside the home of Jason and Medea in Corinth" (Euripides 2)

Environments-Nothing specified in script about the environment of the play.

Climate and Light-The scene is presumably lit by sunlight being outside of Jason and Medea's house. Most likely afternoon

Time

Year, Season, Time of Day- The play's first performance was in 431 BCE, but the play, being based on a well known myth and with the presence of an Athenian King in a time where the Peloponnesian War was beginning or was about to begin, seems to take place before then. The time of day starts in the daytime, maybe afternoon, with the children returning to the house with their tutor after playing. (Euripides 3). Season Unknown

Length of Time Covered-The play takes place over one continuous period, with the chorus filling in any time where there is no other character on stage. There is nothing to say that more than one day has passed over the length of the play.

Logic of Time Movement- Time moves in a linear fashion. There are many references to past events but there is no switching of time periods. The play does not stop and start in time after it begins. The action of the play is seamless, taking place over one continuous period. The chorus fills in any period that has no other character on stage.

Class Structure

Classes-Corinth, like many Greek city states, had a ruling class, which in Corinth, consisted of the royal family, most importantly the King, and the advisors to the monarch. There was a middle class, filled with merchants and other well off citizens, as well as a lower farming/working class, with slaves residing at the bottom.

Economic Health-Corinth is an especially important city state because of its location and its importance in commercial and strategy. It had control of two important ports, and as such became a dominant trade center, making it a rich city. Corinth was known for its pottery, which was a significant source of income for the city in its beginnings, allowing it to grow into the powerful city state it became. With the construction of the Diolkos, a paved path that allowed ships to be moved overland, Corinth enjoyed an even greater influx of money.

Characters in Each Class-Creon and Jason, by virtue of his marriage, are part of the ruling class. Aegeus is also part of the ruling class, but of Athens, and therefore is therefore treated as the foreign ruler he is. Medea, her children, and the Chorus are of the same class, in the lower-middle class. The Nurse, Tutor, attendants, and servants are of the lower class.

Government and Laws

System-In Corinth there was a monarchy, ruled by a King, Creon. Corinth's government consisted of the King and his advisors, who held power of their own.

Relevant Laws-The average woman did not have power on her own. A woman could not hold property, and any children that she bore was not hers but her husbands.

Restrictions/Freedoms-The average citizen was unable to speak against Creon, the king, as it would invite retribution.

Participation/Environment-Men and Women would meet to share and discuss the latest news and goings on. It is this space which the Chorus occupies in this play.

Social Circles

Family and Friends-Jason and Medea are husband and wife. Jason is also married to Creon's daughter. The Tutor and the Nurse work for Jason and Medea. The children are the sons of Jason and Medea. The Messenger works for Creon. Creon and Aegeus are both Kings of powerful city states. Aegeus and Medea are friends of a sort. The Chorus and Medea are friends as well.

Community-A residential area occupied by many families is community Jason and Medea reside in. Male dominated, but occupied by women all the time.

Media-Because of the lack of technology to spread news, news was spread through, with messengers used by the powerful and/or rich to spread important information to relevant persons word of mouth to spread the rest of the news.

Restrictions/Privileges-Women are expected to be subservient to men, not acting out or showing their intellect too much. They are expected to tend to the household, whether in a lower class family by being a "housewife" or in an upper class family by managing the household and those working for them.

Religion

Institutions-The religion of Greece at this time is polytheistic. Different gods hold different domains, and are known to have mortal offspring.

Beliefs-One of the often talked of beliefs is that the gods are constantly watching over mortals and will enact retribution for wrongdoing.

Restrictions/Privileges-The Gods of the Greek Pantheon do not allow wrongs to be committed without consequences. Blessings of the Gods will take one far while the anger of a god will destroy ones life.

Marriage vows are taken in front of the gods.

Previous Action

The crew of the Argo set off to retrieve the Golden Fleece from Colchis on the Orders of Pelias, King of Iolcus. (Euripides 3)

Because of her love for Jason, Medea helped him use Pelias' daughters to kill their father. (Euripides 3)

Due to being exiled, the couple then settled with their children in Corinth, where they were well liked by the community. (Euripides 3)

Jason married the princess of Corinth, daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth. (Euripides 3)

Medea has stayed in her house crying out to the gods in agony over Jason's betrayal. (Euripides 3)

Medea abandoned her homeland to be with Jason and can no longer return. (Euripides 3) In escaping her homeland Medea killed her brother. (Euripides 9)

Medea saved Jason's life when he was pitted against the fire breathing bulls, the field of death, and the dragon that guarded the golden fleece. He would not have survived to complete his quest without her. (Euripides 20)

Aphrodite is responsible for Medea's love of Jason. She told Eros to shoot Medea with one of his arrows. (Euripides 22)

This is a World in Which

Glory can be even more important than one's life, and leaving a legacy is important to the Greek man, wanting to be remembered for their great deeds.

Family can turn on family for the best or the worst intentions.

You cannot erase your deeds in the past, and even a fresh start does not guarantee a good ending.

Glory often leads to great rewards.

Love can be the best and the worst thing to happen to a woman.

Passion can drive people to do a great many things, and can easily keep you from realizing what is important.

Women are not as powerless as men often believe. Do not underestimate them.

The gods are not afraid to interfere where they think is best, and it does not always end up well for everyone.

Structure

<i>Scene</i>	<i>Unit Title</i>	<i>Nurse</i>	<i>Tutor</i>	<i>Medea</i>	<i>Chorus</i>	<i>Creon</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Aegeus</i>	<i>Messenger</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Attendants /Servants</i>
1	Prologos	x	x	X (in house/off stage)						x	
2	Parados	x			X						
3	Episode 1	x		X	X	X					x
4	Stasimon 1			X (onstage but no dialogue in this scene)	X						
5	Episode 2			X	X		X				
6	Stasimon 2			X (onstage but no dialogue in this scene)	X						
7	Episode 3	x		X	X			X			
8	Stasimon 3				X						
9	Episode 4	x	x	X	X		X			x	x
10	Stasimon 4			X (onstage but no dialogue in this scene)	X						
11	Episode 5		x	X	X					x	
12	Stasimon 5				X						
13	Episodes 6			X	X				X		
14	Stasimon 6				X					X (in house/offstage)	
15	Exodos			X	X		X				

Character-Medea

Physical

(What does the playwright tell us about the physicality of the character, if anything?)

She is “wasting away”, due to a period of not eating, just lying in bed and weeping. (Euripides 4) Her children are said to have golden hair, though it is not stated whether it comes from Jason, Medea, or both of them. There is a good chance that Medea could also be blonde, a feature of her lineage that her grandfather Helios passed down. She is described by the chorus as still being young (Euripides 8).

Psychological

(What is the character’s mental state? Are they in any way balanced, neurotic, psychotic, or deluded?)

She begins the play distraught at her husband’s betrayal, and is off balance because of it. Her anger at Jason begins to bleed over to everyone else, including her children. (Euripides 3-4) She is so distraught at having lost her husband that she feels she has lost everything in her life and has nothing more to lose. (Euripides 8) She understands that Jason is done with her, and knowing she will not get him back, she

Intellectual

(In what ways has the character’s mind developed [schooling, environment, self teaching, street smarts]?)

Medea is very often referred to be clever by most of the characters in the play. She has developed a reputation as being ruthless and clever. It is not said in the play how much of her cunning was developed in her life as a princess or if she is naturally very clever or if she is self taught. Her cunning is focused on more in regards to making plans and executing them well, with the amount of knowledge she had not being talked about much. Women did not have formal education at the time, and the play does not speak of any education she received in her time as a princess. The origin of the name Medea actually comes from the Greek word Mēdeia, meaning cunning or ponder.

Social Class and Job

(Within what social class was the character raised, what class are they throughout the play, and how would you describe their job or career path?)

Medea was born and raised as a princess of Colchis. In killing her brother and fleeing her homeland with Jason, she loses the status she used to have, although she becomes famous. She is living with Jason as a

Greek wife would, until he marries another and she is to be exiled once again to find her way on her own.

Family and Friends

(Where were they born and raised, and how has this shaped their identity? How did their family influence their religious, political, and ethical beliefs? To what degree is the character surrounded by friends and family or isolated?)

Medea was born and raised as a princess of Colchis. Often seen as a place inhabited by “barbarians”, others can have less respect for her as a princess because of the place she held power. Because of her power as a princess, she has picked up an independence and sense of self many women are forbidden by civilized society to have. She also worships Helios often as he is not only an important god of the pantheon, but also her grandfather. (Euripides 55). She has been cut off from her homeland due to the circumstances of her leaving it (Euripides 4). In killing her brother, she will never be able to go home to her father and the rest of her old world. Now she is living in a world of Greeks and feels foreign and isolated because of her homeland.

Relationship Blueprint

Generic Relationship-Jason-Episode 2

What is the type of relationship? (Ex) Husband and Wife. There is argument in academic communities on whether or not Medea's marriage to Jason was legitimate, especially because her father did not approve, an important part of the marriage customs of ancient Greece. But Medea makes reference multiple times to vows that Jason made to her and the gods CITATION, implying that they were married in the eyes of the heavens and any ways that should have mattered between the two. It is also unsure whether Medea and Jason are married after Jason's second marriage, if marrying a second woman invalidates the first marriage.

What are the characters' social positions? Jason occupies a royal status in both in Iolcus, where his late uncle was the King, and in Corinth due to his recent marriage with its princess. He holds the ear of the King through Jason's power as his son in law (Euripides 19). Medea was also a princess, but the circumstances of her leaving Colchis have not left her with the same kind of power she once held. Jason, as a man, also has significant power over Medea just by virtue of his sex and his power over her as her husband.

How does the location of the scene affect the relationship? They are arguing in public, in view of the chorus. Both are justifying their actions their audience, the chorus of the women of Corinth. Jason tries to take advantage of his societal power as man and Medea's husband by making

Specific Relationship-Aegeus-Episode 3

What is the relationship between the characters at the start of the scene you are examining? Aegeus is a friend of Medea, greeting her by wishing her happiness, there being "no better way to greet one's friends"

What is the primary subject matter of the scene, and how does that affect the relationship? The primary subject matter of this scene is Medea telling Aegeus about her troubles with Jason, Aegeus responding with his problems conceiving a child, and Medea asking Aegeus for sanctuary, getting it with a vow from Aegeus to the gods to allow her into Athens in exchange for her help in conceiving an heir. This is an extension of his friendship in Aegeus' mind, but Medea is exploiting their friendship to guarantee a safe place to live out the rest of her life.

Specific Relationship-Creon-Episode 1

What is the relationship between the characters at the start of the scene you are examining? Creon is the father of the woman Jason marries while being married to Medea. Creon is also the king of Corinth, the area they are both residing in at the moment.

What is the primary subject matter of the scene, and how does that affect the relationship? Creon has come to tell Medea that he is going to exile her from Corinth because he is aware of her reputation and has heard she is plotting against him and his daughter. She becomes hostile and unrelenting in her response, and this is lowering her respect for him as her ruler beyond him helping Jason marry another woman.

Specific Relationship-Nurse-Parados

What is the relationship between the characters at the start of the scene you are examining? The nurse has served Medea faithfully.

What is the primary subject matter of the scene, and how does that affect the relationship? The parados has the Nurse giving the exposition for the play, but also making note that because of the years spent serving Medea, she is aware of her vicious side and has made the Nurse somewhat doubt Medea's intention, going as far as to be scared of them.

Environment

Whose Space is it? The space is public, outside of the house, but the house that many characters enter and exit from belongs to Jason (and Medea, but Jason is the man who owns the house).

How does the environment affect relationships? Some of the characters, mainly Creon and Jason, are using the public forum as a way to give themselves face in regards to what they have done to Medea, making her into the instigator instead of a victim. Medea is using the public space as a way to air her grievances, uncaring that what she is saying is against the way women are supposed to act according to the society of the time. The Chorus is watching everything that is happening and making their own judgements according. The environment right outside the house allows for a play in which characters talk about the morality of actions without having to show much on stage. The environment becomes a place to air dirty laundry, but does not show the laundry being dirtied. The house provides a private space for the actual actions the characters take, such as Medea killing her children. The offstage palace also serves the same function.

How does the environment define the pattern created by the structure of the scene? The entrance and exits of certain characters determine traditional scene structure of ancient Greek Theatre.

How does the environment raise the stakes of the action? Both Jason and Medea are looking for the public to give them validation. Jason wants to believe Medea is not a victim, and Medea is looking for an audience to watch as she restores her honor after Jason's betrayal. The two of them, looking to occupy the moral high ground, need the judgment of the audience.