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The Multifront Battle Waged Against Female Autonomy: A Comparative Study of Ancient Medical and Literary Texts

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By Leah Montello

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Introduction

> In a man there are both female semen and male semen, and the same in a woman. And as the male sex is stronger than the female, it must follow that it is engendered from stronger semen. The matter is like this: if stronger semen comes from both parents, a male is engendered, if weaker, a female. Whichever sex exceeds in amount is engendered: for if weaker semen is much greater in amount than stronger semen, the stronger is overcome, and being mixed with the weaker is brought around to become a female. But if stronger semen is much greater in amount than weaker, the weaker is overcome and brought around to become a male.
>
> The Hippocratic author[1]

Origin stories from Hesiod's Pandora to the Biblical Eve have long accused women of weak-willed nature and susceptibility to vices. These women are fictitious characters created by educated male elites and are reflections of these men's biases. Society at large has internalized this association with women because these educated male elites have imposed their biases onto people and control cultural perspectives. As a result, women must work harder to prove their strength and worth simply because men deflect their insecurities and vulnerabilities onto women. Men seek to control women to achieve control over themselves.

Male authors have long waged a multifront campaign against female independence. In this thesis, I focus on two specific fronts: literary and medical texts of the Classical Greek period. This thesis intends to explore the varying strategies in a selection of works, employed to reinforce prescribed gender norms. I approach this with a feminist lens to critique attempts made by elite educated Greek men to define what a woman ought to be like. I do not, however, explore every single tactic a medical and literary writer has applied to uphold patriarchal norms. This is

[1] *Generation* by the Hippocratic author, 6.

not an exhaustive thesis. Instead, each of my two body chapters revolve respectively around two texts: the Hippocratic Corpus and Euripides' *Medea*. I, of course, draw upon scholarly sources to strengthen my argument, and I also include other *Medea* texts from the Classical period to illustrate the consistent anxiety toward an autonomous, active woman.

1.1 Methodology

I have decided to approach this thesis comparatively to expose the multifront battle against women. I am focusing on a literary text that contains magical elements and a medical text because they are viewed as two distinct discourses. I offer a new comparative feminist approach to show that though magic and medicine are different they are nevertheless deployed in the same battle: to uphold prescribed gender norms. The flaw in focusing on these two written discourses is that my evidence is limited; however, I intend to prove that though my thesis is not exhaustive it reveals societal perceptions of women. Furthermore, I go on to explain some medical and Medea texts that were written after Euripides and the Hippocratics to show that this battle is continuous. Again, my research of later texts is limited, but I wish to show that even though I do not draw upon an overwhelming amount of texts, the intentions and themes remain. Marital expectations, *pharmaka*, and hysteria/*hysterika* are constantly used to position women in conventional roles. I hope that through this thesis, readers will approach other literary texts with the same critical, feministic approach to scrutinize patriarchal conceptions and revolutionize the way we see women.

This thesis revolves around the question: what are the different strategies that magical and medical texts employ to uphold gender roles? And: what is the educated male elites' goal in doing this? Lastly, within this written discourse, what are the continuities between our modern

age and the Greek Classical period? I want to reveal these strategies intended to endorse the patriarchy so that readers can detect recurrences in contemporary male educated elite texts. All of these questions I attempt to answer. I proceed to identify some of the key themes and my thesis and explain why I have selected them.

1.2 Classical Greece

I focus on the Classical Greek period because of its outsize influence on the Western imaginary, thereby transmitting gender roles and the strategies used to enforce them. However, Ancient Greece and Rome in general are crucial for the very same reason, but the Classical Greek period is particularly important. It was valorized by later time periods, and an extensive amount of literature from Classical Greece has been copied and taught. We can see, for example, the large-scale reproduction of Medea's story after the Classical period, even permeating into our modern era. I have chosen Greek texts instead of Roman because much of Roman authors' inspiration stems from Classical Greek literature. Furthermore, I found it especially interesting to focus on Greece instead of Rome because women were more restricted overall in Greece than in Rome. Roman women could hold more positions and had more social flexibility.[2] Though the autonomy of women in Classical Greece was much more limited than that of our more American liberal society, we can see the evidence that the same sexist core values remain despite being applied in different ways.

Though there are benefits in studying Classical Greek texts, there are challenges, too. I am not fluent in Greek, nor have I lived in Classical Greece, obviously. My lack of Greek

[2] "From Goddess to Hag: The Greek and the Roman Witch in Classical Literature" by Barbette Stanlt Spaeth in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, edited by Kimberly B. Strattpn and Danya S. Kalleres, p. 53.

knowledge forces me to be reliant on other translators. Additionally, many contemporary translations cannot capture every nuance of Classical Greek words the same way they were articulated in that period. Sometimes, there is no modern definition to fully define Classical Greek terms. Therefore, there is a linguistic and temporal barrier. *Hysterika* exemplifies this. When translating the Hippocratic Corpus, Littré defined *hysterika* in the context of his time. As a result, he translated the word as hysteria, which connotes a different meaning now in contrast to Classical Greece. Though I assert the sexist connection between hysteria and *hysterika*, they have different meanings. Littré asserted that every disease of the womb listed in the Corpus, which was identified as the majority of womanly diseases, was hysteria, subsequently connecting femininity with excessive emotionalism. Littré's application of hysteria remained undisputed for a long period of time.

Another issue I have come across is the iterations of female medical professionals: ἀκεστρίς (female healer), ἰητρεύουσα (healing woman), and ὀμφαλητόμος (cordcutter). I have seen scholars blanket these names with the word midwife, but I do not think that appropriately categorizes these women. In Chapter 1, I go into more detail about varying definitions of ἰητρεύουσα. It seems that this word is a female derivative of *iatros* (male physician). By limiting this word to midwife, we in turn devalue the female medical professional's expertise. As I said above, regarding *hysteria*, people read and define words in the context of their society and subsequently a sexist lens. I intend to provide as much context as I am able to Classical Greek terms, offered by other scholars but, as I often emphasize, this thesis is not exhaustive. I also present themes that are central to my topic.

1.3 Gender

Gender plays a fundamental role in this thesis. According to Judith Butler, "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed."[3] Butler argues that gender is a construct that is upheld through continuous performance. She explains: "That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex, a true or abiding masculinity or femininity, are also constituted as part of the strategy by which the performative aspect of gender is concealed."[4] I argue that the Hippocratics perpetuate gender performance. They make a distinction between what a woman ought to be and what she ought not to be. Medea also deploys gender performance. However, she does so to deceive Jason and King Kreon in order to avenge herself. The need to sustain gender performance crosses into the modern age, which is apparent through scholars, such as Butler, who continue to discuss the implications of gender and its role as a construct.

As a woman in a patriarchal society, I have a stake in this thesis. People always say, "Oh, at least you weren't living as a woman then," referring to the past. Sure, things have changed. We live in a more progressive period, but it is all relative. Yes, things are better, but how can we truly perceive our reality if we do not reflect upon the past? Sexism is ingrained in our society. Most of the time, sexist acts go unnoticed because they are normalized. It is hard to visualize sexism when a person doesn't experience it personally. For this very reason, I wanted to discuss gender and highlight less well-known strategies that are saturated with sexist connotations.

[3] Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" by Judith Butler, p. 527.
[4] P. 528.

Gender discourse is obviously not a new phenomenon, but I hope this thesis contributes something new to it.

1.4 Medicine

Because medicine is one of the fronts that I discuss in my essay, I need to establish what I mean by medicine. I apply medicine in the context of the Greek Classical period, which differs in a way from the modern notion of medicine. The Hippocratics play an important role within this essay because they stood at the forefront of Classical Greek medicine. The Hippocratic texts describe a variety of medical practices and subjects, thus making it hard to pinpoint a specific definition of medicine. Totelin explains, "Broadly, it is a *techne*, in which dietetics and prognostication play important roles, and in which diseases are considered to have natural causes."[5] *Techne* is translated as 'art.' The Hippocratic Corpus is a collection of medical treatises that "covers all aspects of the health of the individual, minds as well as body; it goes beyond mere chance; it believes in a logical causation that is independent of any divine intervention, for good or ill; it offers new ideas about the physical body; it avoids chants, charms and exorcisms; and it claims a basis in empirical fact and sound practice that rejects flimsy philosophical hypothesis."[6] Here, we can see a distinction between the magical and the medical, the mystical and the practical.

I have chosen medicine because it was and still is a tool for educated male elites to assert their right over the female body and dictate what it needs. According to "Drugs and Medical Devices," "Between 1997 and 2000, eight of the ten drugs withdrawn from the market posed a

[5] "Hippocratic Corpus" by Totelin, Laurence.
[6] "Hippocrates, the Hippocratics Corpus and the Defining of Medicine" in *Ancient Medicine* by Vivian Nutton, p. 71.

greater health risk for women either due to unanticipated gender-prescribing trends or sex-specific adverse drug reactions."[7] Four of the drugs were more often prescribed to women, including Pondimin, Redux, Rezulin, and Lotronex.[8] The other four drugs posed greater health risks for women even though they were prescribed to both men and women equally; these drugs are Posicor, Seldane, Hismanal, and Propulsid.[9] There is insufficient medical knowledge about the female body due to the prioritization of research into male health, and assumptions are made by clinicians about it without the necessary research on the female body. These assumptions have a deep-rooted history, and I seek to unearth them by examining gynecology in Classical Greece.

1.5 Magic

I have chosen to approach the multifront battle against female autonomy through literature because, similar to medical texts, literature is a tool used by educated male elites to impose their own beliefs and anxieties onto other people. For this reason, I chose to not focus on magical texts, such as the Greek Magical Papyri and instead selected Euripides' literary text *Medea*, which highlights Medea's magical abilities and application of *pharmaka*. Through these skills, she is able to assert agency, posing a threat to the patriarchy. But what specifically is magic? What is *pharmakon*? I seek to define the two in this following section.

Faraone defines ancient Greek magic. He explains:

[7] "Drugs and Medical Devices: Adverse Events and the Impact on Women's Health" by Jennifer L. Carey, Nathalie Nader, Peter R. Chai, Stephanie Carreiro, Matthew K. Griswold, and Katherine L. Boyle, p. 3.
[8] "Drug Safety: Most Drugs Withdrawn in Recent Years Had Greater Health Risks for Women" by Department of Health and Human Services, p. 2.
[9] Pp. 2-4.

> "By "magic" I mean neither the illusions and parlor tricks of a Houdini nor "magic" in the more diffuse literary sense of "fantastical" such as one finds in the so-called magical realism of recent Latin American writers. Rather, I mean a set of practical devices and rituals used by the Greeks in their day-to-day lives to control or otherwise influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals, or other human beings. This type of magic was traditionally mundane and unremarkable to the ancient Greeks."[10]

Magic is a source of power for whoever wields it, and a *pharmakon* is a type of magical application. Faraone identifies it as a "drug, poison, or incantation."[11] The inherent duplicity of the word elicits fear within men regarding the possibility of a woman poisoning him. Due to this anxiety, men sought to establish women's incapability of wielding it, arguing that women's ignorance could potentially cause a man harm rather than heal him. One of my chapters revolves around a woman who possesses magical abilities because Classical Greek literature, especially that which includes magical elements, sought to reposition women in their gender roles and prevent women from wielding such magical power.

1.6 Medicine and Magic

I have explained why I have chosen medicine and magic separately, and now I will proceed to discuss why I have decided to analyze them in conjunction with one another. As detailed in subsection 1.1, the Hippocratics have defined medicine in sharp contrast to magic. I do not deny that they have differences, but they do have a commonality: they reinforce prescribed gender roles. Certain elements within both medical and literary texts, that include

[10] *Ancient Greek Love Magic* by Christopher A. Faraone, p. 16.
[11] P. 176.

magical elements, align to do just that. I discuss them separately in each chapter and then put them in dialogue with one another in the conclusion.

Both Euripides' *Medea* and the Hippocratic Corpus uphold marital expectations. In Chapter 1, I explore how the Hippocratics uphold this notion, which coincides with womanly duties. In brief, their medical advice coerces women to marry and reproduce via fear mongering. In doing so, the Hippocratics define what a woman ought to be like, persuading women to conform. In Chapter 2, I specifically apply the word *philia* to emphasize the wife's obligation to her husband, which is a concept that I like, like Schein, read into the text *Medea*. Schein defines *philia* in Classical Greece as,

> A relation or attitude of solidarity or affection between members of the same family, community, social club—even the same business partnership or occupation. *Philia* allows, even requires, that one person think of another as someone on whom he or she can rely and who can rely on him or her in return, in contrast to those who are "outsiders" (ἀλλότριοι) or "enemies" (ἐχθροί, *echthroi*).[12]

Philia is an oath. I use it to describe the oath made between husband and wife, Jason and Medea. I argue that a wife is more bound by *philia* than the husband due to societal expectations. Medea has fulfilled her wifely role in every way imaginable. She has supported him, killed for him, broken the *philia* between her and her male family members, and reproduced heirs. Despite all of this her husband abandons her for another. Medea can only survive this betrayal because of her ability to cross gender, mortal, and animal boundaries while a conventional woman cannot do so. Through this, Euripides highlights the wife's tetheredness to her husband. She cannot function in Classical Greek society without a husband. Euripides, in doing so, may give warning to women

[12] Philia in Euripides' Medea" by Seth L. Schein, pp. 57-58.

who do not fulfill their marital obligations. He is sympathetic to the fact that achieving marital expectations may not be enough, but he offers no solution. In this way, he upholds marital expectations and defines what society requires of women.

Pharmakon offers another intersection between medicine and magic. As defined before, it can harm or kill. In Chapter 1, I examine the omission of female employment of *pharmaka*. The Hippocratics do not mention any female medical professional using *pharmaka*. In doing so, the Hippocratics limit the prescription of *pharmaka* to men and subsequently assert the male expertise over female knowledge. As a result, the Hippocratics implicitly designate the prescription of *pharmaka* as beyond the capacity of women. Within Chapter 2, I identify *pharmaka* as a means to discern the conventional woman from the unconventional woman. Euripides presents Medea using *pharmaka* to, most importantly, kill Glauke, her husband's new wife. This scene illustrates the unconventional woman destroying the conventional woman and wreaking havoc on an entire city. Euripides portrays the dangerous consequences that would occur if women handled *pharmkama*, thus upholding gender norms.

Female weakness and vulnerability are also a hinge between medicine and magic. In Chapter 1, I apply it as the Hippocratic excuse to reinforce prescribed gender roles. The Hippocratics believed that womanly diseases stemmed from the womb, thus labeling much of women's diseases as *hysterika.* This presents women as biologically weak. To relieve *hysterika*, a husband must perform intercourse on his wife. I specifically use 'husband' because Classical Greek female citizens had to marry to have intercourse. If not, they were shamed and isolated from society. *Hysterika*, subsequently, reinforced gender roles. In Chapter 2, Medea takes advantage of female stereotypes and uses the male presumption of female weakness as a tool to outwit and trick Jason and King Kreon. Medea performs what is expected of her gender. She

presents herself to both Jason and Kreon as weak and vulnerable after losing her husband to another. She expresses that she fears for her children because she cannot protect them without a husband. As a result, Jason and King Kreon pity Medea's role as a female, allowing her plan to commit a masculine revenge to unfold. Medea is not a conventional woman but her feigned helplessness highlights qualities that define female conventionality: weakness and vulnerability. In this way, Euripides emphasizes societal norms but again does not offer a way for women to escape the patriarchy. Medea can only get away, as I have said multiple times, by taking advantage of societal perceptions of femininity to deceive her husband and King Kreon because of her mobility across gender, divine, and animal boundaries. A normative woman does not hold this capability in Classical Greece. Therefore, the only thing she can do is succumb to societal perceptions.

1.7 Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I discuss two categorizations of women in medicine and their subcategories, all of which pose a threat to the patriarchy. There are the female patients and the female medical professionals. The subcategories for the female patient include: the g*ynê* (wife), *parthenos* (virgin), and *andrógunos* (literally meaning man-woman). The inclusion of the first two terms - g*ynê* and *parthenos* - reflects the importance I attach to the work of Helen King.[13] The Hippocratics often suggest that married women should have intercourse to supposedly prevent womanly ailments, but King asserts the Hippocratics' real intention behind their facade of concern: to control women's sexuality and, as a corollary, to prevent their regression to the position of the *parthenos*. The *parthenos* is a wild female who has no husband to control her

[13] For more, see *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* by Helen King.

sexuality. Due to the fear of the *parthenos*, the Hippocratics intertwine pregnancy with good health, confining the woman to the household as her duties as mother and wife would be limited to the house. I argue that in doing so, the Hippocratics define the parameters of the conventional woman, persuading other women to conform. According to the Hippocratics, women are susceptible to diseases *hysterika* (of the womb), and men are the knights in shining armor who can take away their pain and potential diseases via intercourse and serial pregnancy.

I have adopted the word *andrógunos*, which Penrose discusses in "Gender Diversity in Classical Greek Thought," to describe women whom the Hippocratics describe as having stopped menstruating and having subsequently formed masculine features. My employment of this word is informed by feminist scholars' discussion of gender in other fields as well.[14] Penrose highlights the use of *andrógunos* in *Regimen* by the Hippocratic author. The text states, 'if the man's secretion be female, and the woman's male, and the female gain the mastery, growth takes place after the same fashion, but the girls prove more daring than the preceding, and are named "mannish."[15] The Greek word to describe those who are 'mannish' found in the Loeb version of the text *Regimen* is ἀνδρεῖαι. Pinrose goes on to explain that the term *andrógunos* was applied to a woman in Ancient Greece not only for their masculine attributes, but their masculine boldness, strength, and possibly intelligence.[16] I, however, apply this term to women who are described in the Corpus as having developed masculine physical features, spawned by their inability to menstruate. The Hippocratic author of *Regimen* reports that, shortly after their conditions were diagnosed, these women died. By documenting these rare cases, the Hippocratic author asserts

[14] For more, see "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." by Judith Butler and "Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex, and Jean-Paul Sartre"* by Dorothy Kaufman McCall.
[15] *Regimen* by the Hippocratic author, 1.29.
[16] "Gender Diversity in Classical Greek Thought" by Walter D. Penrose, Jr in *Exploring Gender Diversity in the Ancient World*, edited by Allison Surtees and Jennifer Dyer, p. 34.

that these women are unnatural and cannot function in this world. He uses this as a tactic to instill fear within women so that they remain in their conforming roles and do not cross gender boundaries.

This strategy confirms Judith Butler's argument in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." She explains:

> In effect, gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control. Performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all. That this reassurance is so easily displaced by anxiety, that culture so readily punishes or marginalizes those who fail to perform the illusion of gender essentialism should be sign enough that on some level there is social knowledge that the truth or falsity of gender is only socially compelled and in no sense ontologically necessitated.[17]

The Hippocratics make it seem as though gender is ontological rather than a social construct. As I show in greater detail in Chapter 1, the Hippocratics set expectations for women, and if they do not conform, then they face consequences. This aligns well with Butler's claim that those who do not perform gender perfectly will face consequences. The Hippocratics suggest that failure to conform leads to disease or even death, particularly for the *andrógunos*.

To further emphasize that gender is socially constructed, Butler refers to Simone de Beauvoir's statement in *The Second Sex* that "'woman,' and by extension, any gender, is an historical situation rather than a natural fact."[18] Beauvoir argues, "one is not born, but rather

[17] Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" by Judith Butler, p. 528.
[18] P. 520.

becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine."[19] In this thesis, I argue that this gender construct is constantly reinforced to place women in their prescribed, inferior roles and bolster men's status as superior. My application of *andrógunos* is to show that gender fluidity poses a threat to the patriarchal institution, and male educated elite writers use fear mongering to prevent female mobility across gender lines. Studies by Butler, Beauvoir, and other feminist scholars inform my approach on this topic.

The category female medical professionals is subdivided into the ἀκεστρίς (female healer), ἰητρεύουσα (healing woman), and ὀμφαλητόμος (cordcutter). Helen King, Ann Hanson, and Laurence Totelin have informed my perspective on these categorizations.[20] They discerned specific instances in which the Hippocratics reference iterations of the word midwife. Though female medical professionals seem to have a modest presence due to their rarity in the Corpus, they actually had a larger presence in reality. The information I discover by examining these instances reinforces this claim. I also analyze the specific context in which these terms appear and discover that they were applied to strip women of agency and reinforce gender norms. Further, I highlight the Hippocratic practice, which reflects the educated male elite, of asserting male expertise over women by almost omitting female medical practitioners from the Corpus. Through this practice, the Hippocratics reveal their anxiety toward women who assert agency. These categories, of both female patients and medical professionals, are not exhaustive. I have

[19] "Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex, and Jean-Paul Sartre"* by Dorothy Kaufman McCall, p. 211.
[20] For more, see "Motherhood and Health in the Hippocratic Corpus: Does Maternity Protect Against Disease?" by Helen King, *A Division of Labor: Roles for Men in Greek and Roman Births* by Ann Ellis Hanson, and *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece* by Laurence Totelin.

specifically focused on these two categorizations of women to reveal the war within a war waged against female autonomy by educated male elites via medical texts.

In Chapter 2, I explore who Euripides' Medea is and what Euripides' account reveals about gender hierarchy. Euripides offers a sense of sympathy toward Medea's grim reality as a woman left to survive alone in a patriarchal society after her husband abandons her. However, Euripides does not offer a solution. Euripides positions Medea as victorious in the end only to prove that women cannot achieve this reality. She only succeeds due to her fluidity across animal, gender, and mortal lines. In addition to Euripides' text, I discuss other Medea texts of the Classical period. I contrast and connect elements at play within these texts, but my major goal is to reveal the common sentiment to reinforce gender norms.

I conclude by discussing the overlapping themes within Chapter 1 and 2 that reinforce patriarchal notions. I also analyze the aftermath of the Hippocratic Corpus and Euripides' *Medea*. Through this, I highlight the continuities and discontinuities within the 1st to 3rd c. CE and the 17th to 20th c. CE. I specifically focus on medical texts and Medea texts, including those by Seneca and Ovid. In doing so, I present the overall sustained multifront campaign waged against female autonomy. Through the strategies to do so vary, the same core sexist values remain.

Chapter 1: Women in Medicine

The Hippocratic Corpus has long been influential specifically among the educated male elite and perhaps the Hippocratics' female patients, in their understanding of the female body.[21] It asserted men's right to write about and diagnose the female body. Subsequently, the educated male elite used these texts also to define and constrain women to prescribed gender roles. In this chapter, I discuss two categorizations of women in medicine in the Hippocratic Corpus.[22] First, I establish the kinds of female patients: the g*ynê* (wife), *parthenos* (virgin), and *andrógunos* (literally meaning man-woman).[23] By *andrógunos*, I mean a woman who is described as suffering from a medical affliction that results in her looking more like a male and becoming incapable of menstruation. The *andrógunos* is important because she represents a woman who does not biologically conform to societal standards, specifically in the Classical period. The next category is types of female medical professionals. This includes the ἀκεστρίς (female healer), ἰητρεύουσα (healing woman), and ὀμφαλητόμος (cordcutter). All of these women, female medical professionals and patients, pose a threat to the male hierarchy, and I examine the Hippocratic response, which reflects the broader educated male elite consensus. Male anxiety toward the female is deeply embedded in gynecology, thus making it crucial to study it.

The Hippocratic authors construct a category of the g*ynê* that links women's health to fulfilling marital expectations. I would like to add, however, that Classical Greek men had different expectations for women of different classes. The *hetairai* and prostitute collective

[21] In Chapter 3, I go into more detail on the longevity of Hippocratic texts and what authors reproduced the core ideas that upheld the patriarchy.
[22] Throughout this essay, I use Paul Potter's Hippocratic translations from the Loeb Classical Library Editions.
[23] I use the term *andrógunos* to describe women in Classical Greece to describe masculine women who were identified in contrast to the feminine woman. For more information on the *andrógunos* refer to "Gender Diversity in Classical Greek Thought" by Walter D. Penrose, Jr.

constituted the alien and enslaved population. They made themselves sexually available to men, which was socially acceptable for a noncitizen but not a citizen. Nevertheless, my claim remains: Classical Greek men intended to control women's sexuality. I will now turn to the Hippocratic author of *On the Generating the Seed and Nature of the Child* to reveal the intersection between women's health and fulfillment of marital duties. He declares:

> If they have intercourse with men their health is better than if they do not. For in the first place, the womb is moistened by intercourse whereas when the womb is drier than it should be it becomes extremely contracted, and this extreme contraction causes pain to the body. In the second place, intercourse by heating the blood and rendering it more fluid gives an easier passage to the menses.[24]

The Hippocratic author insists that relative dryness of the womb causes women to feel pain. The Hippocratic writer suggests that a citizen woman should have intercourse with her husband to increase moisture and subsequently quell any pain. Through this solution, the Hippocratic author introduces the g*ynê* who assumes her prescribed role as a wife as well as procreator. The Hippocratic author of *Diseases of Women* goes on to imply that marriage is insufficient. He asserts, "A woman who has not borne children becomes ill from her menses more seriously and sooner than one who has borne children. For when a woman has given birth, her small vessels allow a freer flow for her menses, since the lochial cleaning makes them fluent."[25] Simply put: the g*ynê* who fulfills her duty as a woman by procreating will not suffer from afflictions that are innate to females as severely as a woman who does not. In fact, "only the birth of a child gave her full status as a *gyne*, woman wife."[26] Thus, the Hippocratic author instills fear in the female,

[24] *On the Generating the Seed and Nature of the Child* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 4.
[25] *Diseases of Women* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 1.1.
[26] *Birth, Death and Motherhood in Classical Greece* by Nancy H. Demand, p. 17.

forcing her into the role of the positive, conforming female, who is both a wife and mother.

The role as simply a wife is insufficient for the Hippocratic author because the role of a mother completely confines her to the *oikos* (household). According to Demand, "Women in classical Greece underwent an average of 4.5 childbirths and their average age at death was thirty-five years."[27] Once a child was born, the mother dedicated her time ensuring the baby's survival. Further, "at least half of all newborns failed to survive until maturity."[28] This lifestyle coalesced with the already limited role women had in most of Greece, solidifying the mother's role in the *oikos*. In fact, in most of Ancient Greece, a woman could not hold any property or governmental position. Additionally, she rarely left the household since she was typically not invited out along with her husband and kids, shopping was a man's duty, and slaves took on other errands. The only acceptable reason for her to leave the *oikos* was to attend festivals, sacrifices, and funerals.[29]

The need for the wife to reproduce reflects the male fear of her potential regression to a *parthenos.* As Helen King argues, "the reproductive *gynê* used to be a wild *parthenos*, and this raises the fear that she may become one again…Every *gynê* was also once a *parthenos*, and may return to the infertility of that category if struck by disease."[30] This threat to the male control over the female's sexuality is apparent within an Athenian law, commissioned by Pericles in 451 BCE. It states that for a child to assume Athenian citizenship, both parents must be Athenian. This established the state's "control over the lives and reproductive bodies of women."[31] This

[27] P. 20.
[28] P. 22
[29] "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behavior" by K.J. Dover, p. 21-22.
[30] *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* by Helen King, p. 88.
[31] "Mother, Gender and Identity in the Athenian *polis*" by M. Dolors Molas Font in *Motherhood and Infancies in the Mediterranean in Antiquity,* edited by Margarita Sánchez Romero, and Rosa Cid López, p. 123.

stresses and legitimizes the male anxiety about controlling his wife's sexual life. The Hippocratics' assertion that regular copulation can prevent female diseases, offers temporary relief for men. As a result, men consistently seek to reassert their superiority and women's inferiority, which is evident through the Pericles' law.

To understand this male anxiety, I would like to turn to Penelope's speech to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus reveals his identity to her, Penelope says:

> I have been shuddering all the time through fear that someone might come here and deceive me with a lying story; for there are many very wicked people going about. Jove's daughter Helen would never have yielded herself to a man from a foreign country, if she had known that the sons of Achaeans would come after her and bring her back. Heaven put it in her heart to do wrong, and she gave no thought to that sin, which has been the source of all our sorrows.[32]

Penelope upholds the image of the virtuous wife in contrast to Helen who gives into her emotions. Breitweiser articulates, "This speech that Penelope gives to Odysseus also suggests that women often do not think about what they are doing and fall victim to their emotions and sexual desire. They are weak in the presence of men and gods."[33] Penelope represents the loyalty that a wife should have, especially when her husband is not around. Simultaneously, she signifies the flip side: the male fear that his wife will not uphold her virtue. Penelope is also established in contrast to Clytemnestra, who with her new lover kills her husband Agamemnon. Throughout the *Odyssey*, Homer renders the reading wondering whether Penelope will succumb and become like Clytemnestra. Odysseus' fear of this is evident in Athena's words. Murnaghan translates, "Any other man coming happily home from such wandering would be eager to see his children and

[32] *The Odyssey* by Homer, edited and translated by Samuel Butler, Book XXIII.
[33] "Gender Dynamics in Classical Athens" by William Breitweiser, p. 70.

wife in his house. But it doesn't suit you to expose yourself by asking questions until you test your wife, but she, as always, stays in the house, and always bitter nights and bitter days waste away for her as she weeps."[34] Murnaghan argues that one of the possible reasons for Odysseus' wariness to return home is the fear of Penelope's betrayal.[35] However, Penelope maintains her role as a faithful wife. Pericles' law demonstrates this male fear of his wife's betrayal. Women were thought to be susceptible to throes of lust since they were presumed to be naturally weaker beings.

The Hippocratic texts reveal male anxiety about the *parthenoi* by employing images of madness to control women's sexuality. The Hippocratic author of *On Girlish Matters*, for example, uses fear mongering to compel *parthenoi* to marry and procreate as soon as possible to avoid symptoms of madness produced by the Sacred Disease. He explains the *parthenoi's* reaction: "When the situation is such, from the acute inflammation the woman rages, from the putrefaction she becomes murderous, from the darkness she is frightened and afraid, from the compression around their heart they are desirous of throttling themselves, and from the bad state of the blood the mind, being distraught and dismayed, tempts them to evil."[36] The Hippocratic author offers the only solution, "I urge young women suffering from a condition of this kind to cohabit with men as soon as they can: for if they become pregnant, they recover. If not, then either at once in puberty or a little later she will be seized by this disease, if not by another one. Among married women, some barren ones suffer these things."[37] Men sought to tame young women who reached developmental maturity to control their sexuality. King references the

[34] Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey by Sheila Murnagham, p. 93.
[35] P. 93.
[36] *On Girlish Matters* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 1.35-41.
[37] *On Girlish Matters* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 1.49-54.

Hippocratic author's *Diseases of Virgins*[38] and upholds my argument, saying, "The text has been seen as 'medical terrorism' and as an 'instrument of socialization', designed to scare women into acting as society requires, by marrying and giving birth at the ages seen as socially appropriate."[39] Through fear, the Hippocratics compel women into conceding to their prescribed gender roles.

The Hippocratics convey a direct link between menstruation and female health. As a result, they reveal that women who do not perform female bodily functions suffer poor health and subsequently die. I identify these women individually as *andrógunos*. In doing so, they use medicine to impose societal notions of femininity. The Hippocratic author of *Epidemics 6* offers a case study of women, or *andrógunoi*, who do not menstruate and assume masculine features:

> In Abdera, Phaëthusa the wife of Pytheas, who kept at home, having borne children in the preceding time, when her husband was exiled stopped menstruating for a long time. Afterwards pains and reddening in the joints. When that happened her body was masculinized and grew hairy all over, she grew a beard, her voice became harsh, and though we did everything we could to bring forth menses they did not come, but she died after surviving a short time. The same thing happened to Nanno, Gorgippus' wife, in Thasos. All the physicians I met thought that there was one hope of feminizing her, if normal menstruation occurred. But in her case, too, it was not possible, though we did everything, but she died quickly.[40]

The Hippocratic author claims that Phaëthusa and Nanno's lack of menstruation led to their masculinization. In both cases, the women die promptly. This case illustrates the interconnectedness of menstruation and femininity. This relationship is further highlighted by

[38] King specifically refers to this text as *Diseases of Virgins*, which is the same as *On Girlish Matters*. It is simply a different translation of the title.
[39] Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece by Helen King, p. 79.
[40] *Epidemics* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Wesley D. Smith, 6.32.

King who explains, "In Hippocratic gynaecology, to be a woman is to menstruate. This poses the problem of women who do not menstruate: they may be ill, in which case drugs or mechanical procedures can be used to induce menstruation."[41] Furthermore, the case also exemplifies that there is a connection between good health and a healthy uterus. As Linda Persson highlights, "The Hippocratics believed that regular menstruation and a stable uterus was key to women's health."[42] Taking all of this into consideration, it is logical to come to the conclusion that femininity and good health go hand in hand, according to the Hippocratics.

While the uterus signified being biologically female, the Hippocratic doctors also asserted that it was the source of women's ailments to confine women to the *oikos*. According to the Hippocratic author of *Places in Man*, "The uterus is the cause of all these diseases" within women.[43] Consider the Hippocratic author's claim in juxtaposition with the definition of the Greek word *hysterikos*: "from the womb."[44] Therefore, we can deduce that most womanly diseases were identified as *hysterika*[45] in the Classical Period. The uterus was supposed to prompt illnesses because of its movement within the body. This alleged uterine movement gave rise to the term the "wandering womb." Interestingly enough, the wandering womb theory persisted over 5 centuries after Plato's death despite human dissections proving it false. The womb was found to be attached and immobile in 297 BCE give or take.[46] *Diseases of Women* implies that the cure for the wandering womb is intercourse. The Hippocratic author states:

[41] *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* by Helen King, p. 76.
[42] "Women and Their Bodies in Classical Greece: The Hippocratic Female" by Linda Persson, p. 14.
[43] *Places in Man* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, p. 93.
[44] *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* by Helen King, p. 208.
[45] I employ the use of the medical term hysterika, used by Hippocratic authors as a blanket term for womanly illnesses assumed to have come from the womb.
[46] Magical and Medical Approaches to the Wandering Womb in the Ancient Greek World by Faraone, p. 6.

> If a woman's uterus leans against her liver, she suddenly becomes speechless, clenches her teeth, and her skin becomes livid—she suffers these things suddenly while in a healthy state. This happens most often to old maids and widows who have been widowed while still young and fertile. It also occurs frequently in women who have no children at all and are barren, due to their exclusion from childbirth, since they have never had any lochial cleaning, swelling and softening of their uterus, or regurgitation from it.[47]

The uterus leaning against the liver refers to the uterus' movement. The Hippocratic author explains that women who are excluded from childbirth experience this painful movement of the uterus. I argue, thus, that the theory of the wandering uterus had sustained despite evidence disproving it because it was a tool to keep women in their gender roles.

To further emphasize the necessity for men to subdue the wandering womb via intercourse, the Hippocratic authors cast the wandering womb as a demonic force. Faraone explains, "[The Hippocratic authors] say, for instance, that the womb can 'leap upon' (emballein and epiballein), 'fall upon' (prospiptein), 'rush (towards)' (thein) and 'urge on' (parotrunai) various other internal organs and parts of the body: the heart, the liver, the lungs, the bladder, or even the head…these kinds of sudden, violent movements are often attributed to demons who attack the body externally."[48] The wandering womb represents a demonic force that can only be overcome through intercourse with a man**. T**he Hippocratic texts at large assert that the weak female needs a male savior to combat the uterine threat through intercourse. In doing so, the Hippocratics control female behavior and impose patriarchal norms, such as marriage and serial pregnancy.

[47] *Diseases of Women* by the Hippocratic Author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 2.18.
[48] "Magical and Medical Approaches to the Wandering Womb in the Ancient Greek World" by Christopher Faraone, p. 4.

The Hippocratics consistently recommend that women have intercourse, yet they fear female sexuality as did the greater male population within Classical Greece. Educated male elites saw women as baby makers but also wish to eliminate female sexual desire. If women did not experience sexual pleasure, then there was no reason for them to commit adultery. These men sought to eradicate two things that go hand-in-hand. King discusses this tension while alluding to Pandora. Pandora is perceived in Greek myth as the first woman.[49] While contemplating her description in Hesiod's *Works and Days* as having the mind of a bitch, King considers, "Which of these aspects is Pandora's bitch-mind supposed to evoke? Insatiable sexual desire, or desirable fecundity: or, perhaps, the fear that one cannot achieve the second without experiencing the demands of the first?"[50] To combat female sexual desire, the Hippocratic author of *On the Generating of the See and Nature of the Child* argues that women receive less pleasure from intercourse than men. He articulates, "A woman feels much less pleasure in intercourse than a man, but for a longer time than he does. The reason a man feels more pleasure is that the secretion from his moisture occurs suddenly as the result of a stronger agitation than in a woman."[51] This reflects the axiom of Classical Greek society that "young women have a psychological need for intercourse but no conscious desire for it or knowledge of what it is they need."[52] Subsequently, "the Hippocratic model [also] allowed a husband to have intercourse with his wife whenever he wished without taking her desires into consideration, literally 'for her own good.'"[53] Serial pregnancy is a byproduct of this standard, which further limits women to the *oikos* as discussed before.

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[49] *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* by Helen King, p. 23.
[50] P. 25.
[51] *On the Generating Seed and Nature of the Child* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 4.
[52] "The Politics of Pleasure: Female Sexual Appetite in the Hippocratic Corpus" by Lesley Dean-Jones, p. 60.
[53] P. 64.

The Hippocratics' present women as weak when it comes to insatiable lust, yet the author of the *Hippocratic Oath* hints at men's vulnerability to female bodies. The *Hippocratic Oath* states, "I will not abuse my position to indulge in sexual contacts with the bodies of women or of men."[54] Women's bodies, specifically, represent men's propensity for sexual indulgences and an alluring temptation for male doctors. This quote is interesting when considering the context that men of the Classical period thought of women as weak in terms of self-control. Oftentimes, the woman is to blame for the man's lust, but here, it seems like the oath is almost admitting to men's vulnerability to lust. King underscores the Hippocratic writer's comment in *Physician*, which necessitates self-control when treating women.[55] King argues: "Doctors may prefer not to examine their female patient, but instead to use an intermediary or to ask the patient questions about her self-examination."[56] The intermediary may suggest that the midwives may have played a greater role in medicine than the Corpus makes it out to be.

Though the Hippocratic authors discuss women frequently within the Corpus, they less readily describe female medical professionals. Totelin reveals, "the word μαῖα [midwife] does not appear in the Corpus, and there are only three occurrences of words that can be translated as 'the midwife'."[57] I will go into detail about these three instances.[58] These rare cases demonstrate a tension between the Hippocratics' degradation of female knowledge and grudging acknowledgement of it; however, this tension is resolved to an extent by the assertion that male expertise is better in all of these cases.

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[54] *Hippocratic Writings* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by John Chadwick, G.E.R LLoyd, and W.N. Mann, lines 22-24.
[55] "Women and Doctors in Ancient Greece" by Helen King, p. 47.
[56] P. 47
[57] *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece* by Laurence Totelin, p 117.
[58] A large part of this examination is contributed by Helen King's "Motherhood and Health in the Hippocratic Corpus."

I will first explore the ἀκεστρίς who the Hippocratic author of *Fleshes* gives credibility. King notes that the male form of this ἀκεστρίς comes from the word healer.[59] The sentence that contains this word is the following: "If anyone wishes proof, the matter is easy: let him go to the midwives that attend women who are giving birth and ask them."[60] In this instance, the Hippocratic author suggests that the patient consults with a midwife or ἀκεστρίς if a patient needs proof that a child can be born in seventh months. This quote is particularly interesting because it gives medical credit to the midwife. The Hippocratic writer asserts the patient's lack of trust toward his words and confidence in a midwife's. The patient's inclination to accept the midwife's words more readily than the physician presents a threat to men and the primacy of their knowledge; therefore, to sustain dominance over the woman and hide her expertise, the Hippocratic author, I argue, neglects to often include instances of female intervention in medicine.

The application of ἰητρεύουσα (healing woman) in *Diseases of Women* is very similar to the ἀκεστρίς in the way that the Hippocratics reluctantly accept the female's knowledge. Potter translates, "The midwife should gently open the cervix, doing this carefully, and draw the fetus evenly with the contractions."[61] Potter translates ἰητρεύουσα as midwife. "Ann Hanson, however, translated as «the woman who doctors», arguing that the choice of this word…means that she «possessed medical ability or training."[62] Potter and Hanson's definitions of the word grants agency to the woman because both of them imply her medical knowledge. In this case, the

[59] "Motherhood and Health in the Hippocratic Corpus: Does Maternity Protect Against Disease?" by Helen King, p. 54.
[60] *Fleshes* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 19.
[61] *Diseases of Women* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 1.68.
[62] "Motherhood and Health in the Hippocratic Corpus: Does Maternity Protect Against Disease?" by Helen King, p. 55.

Hippocratic author once again gives credit to the female intervention in medicine. Yet because the Hippocratics seldom mention her position as a female medical professional, the gravity of her role is reduced and superimposed by males' greater expertise.

The ὀμφαλητόμος performs the same medical tasks in child delivery as the ἀκεστρίς and ἰητρεύουσα but occupies a different social role than the others do. Instead of highlighting a female medical professional's expertise, the context that which ὀμφαλητόμος is included in *Diseases of Women*[63] suggests female ignorance. The Hippocratic author employs the word ἡ ὀμφαλητόμος, meaning "the cordcutter; the feminine form of the definite article means that this is a woman, which would otherwise not be clear."[64] The translated version states, "If a woman's placenta is left in her uterus, this happens in the following way: if the navel is torn as the result of violence, or the midwife through ignorance trims the child's umbilical cord before the placenta has been expelled from the uterus, the uterus takes the afterbirth, which is slippery and moist, up, and retains it inside itself."[65] The quote highlights the midwife or cordcutter's role in the delivery process, granting her agency. However, the direct placement of blame on her undermines this. It is interesting that in these three instances of referencing female professionals in medicine, the ὀμφαλητόμος who is depicted in a negative way is an anomaly. It is also important to note that we don't know enough about female involvement in Classical Greek medicine and what we know is limited to what I have presented. This information leaves us with more questions, such as why is ὀμφαλητόμος an anomaly if the Hippocratics intended to discredit female knowledge? In the same vein, why do two out of the three references expose female expertise if men sought to define women in contrast to men? Why not fully exclude

[63] P. 54
[64] P. 54.
[65] *Diseases of Women* by the Hippocratic author, edited and translated by Paul Potter, 1.46.

female medical professionals in the Corpus? What we do know, however, is that there are only three references to female professionals in medicine throughout the entire Hippocratic Corpus. This evidence suggests the need to dismiss or hide females' capability and assert males' superior knowledge.

There is no reference to any female medical professional administering *pharmaka* (drugs) in the Corpus,[66] asserting that it was reserved for male practitioners and once again dismissing her capabilities. Though there are not any medical instances of females in medicine handling *pharmaka*, there are instances in Greek Classical myth and literature, and they are often depicted in a negative light. Totelin explains:

> In tragedies and comedies, 'real women' are often represented concocting love philtres and poisons— Greek women, it seems, only use their pharmacological knowledge to negative ends, whereas men are pictured preparing healing medicines. However…the reading of the Greek magical papyri suggests that men were as likely as women to prepare and purchase philtres and charms.[67]

Winkler identifies this as "a cultural habit on the part of men to deal with threats of eros by fictitious denial and transfer."[68] A widely known example of a woman administering *pharmaka* in myth from Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* about Herakles' wife Deianira.[69] In this story, a centaur named Nessus, dying from Herakles' arrow, suggests to Deianira that she take some of his blood, which can be used as a love *pharmakon*. She accepts the offer and later uses it. Fearing that Herakles would leave her for another woman, she soaks Herakles' shirt with the

[66] *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece* by Laurence Totelin, p 117.
[67] Pp. 117.
[68] "The Erotic and Separation Spells of the Magical Papyri and *Defixiones"* by Eleni Pachoumi, p. 295
[69] For more see, *Women of Trachis by Sophocles*, edited and translated by Rachel Kitzinger and Eamon Grennan.

pharmakon. However, Herakles ends up dying from what was perceived as Deianira's ignorance. There is much debate about whether Deianira acted upon ignorance or agency and rather intended to kill him. I do not wish to get to the bottom of what was true or not. Instead, it is more crucial in my argument to emphasize the social concern that is embedded within this story and many others. There is fear surrounding women handling *pharmaka*, specifically due to the possibility that the *pharmaka* could be a remedy or poison.[70] As a result, she is deemed too ignorant to administer *pharmaka*. Through this, men stake a claim to the correct use of *pharmaka*.

To this day, society stresses the urgency for female reproduction. As a result, there is a stigma toward women becoming pregnant at an older age, specifically at the age of 35 or older. This is bolstered by hard science. Studies from "The risks associated with pregnancy in women aged 35 years or older" show that the most apparent risk that older women face is stillbirth.[71] However, a 2018 article reveals, "the absolute risk of stillbirth among women of AMA [advanced maternal age] remains low (35–39 years: 0.61%; 40 years or more: 0.81%)."[72] Due to medical and cultural attitudes toward older women experiencing pregnancies, women feel pressure to reproduce as soon as possible. One person in the same article expresses, "It was a point where whether I was ready or not, it was, you know, something that if I didn't do at the time, then my chance might be over."[73] The article goes on to explain the tendency for women to feel selfish for choosing to delay childbearing for career aspirations or other reasons.[74] Women

[70] *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece* by Laurence Totelin, p.1.
[71] "The risks associated with pregnancy in women aged 35 years or older" by M. Jolly, J. Harris, and L. Regan, p. 2437.
[72] "'It's now or never'—nulliparous women's experiences of pregnancy at advanced maternal age: A grounded theory study" by Clara Southby, Alison Cooke, and Tina Lavender, p. 1.
[73] P. 4.
[74] P. 4.

who become pregnant at a later age find themselves feeling "inadequately supported in the first trimester when they may experience anxiety about miscarriage or having a baby with a chromosomal abnormality."[75] This identifies the need for AMA support as well as informing these women of the apparent risks, especially since studies show that this coupling may improve the chances of a successful pregnancy.[76] Women have the right to decide what to do with their bodies. Upholding the negative connotation surrounding women who become pregnant at a later age is archaic and coincides with the Hippocratic intention to position women at a young age within their prescribed role as babymakers. Women have the capacity to do incredible things beyond childbearing yet the stigma surrounding AMAs dismisses women's capability.

[75] P. 6.
[76] P. 7.

Chapter 2: Women in Magic

The Medea portrayed in Euripides' *Medea* is not universal as the texts on Medea between the 5th and 3rd century BCE depict widely divergent characterizations. She is in fact a very fungible character. The character Medea features in so many different adaptations, leading to the following question: why is Medea such an important character to have been told and retold so many times? Medea, for one, represents the male fear of their wives. As Dolores M. O'Higgins describes, "For the Greeks all women were no less than a race apart. Medea most fully exemplifies the potential disloyalty present in all wives, living as necessary but suspect aliens in their husbands' houses."[77] She demonstrates the male fear of women who pose a threat to male superiority. While this fear resonates in all versions of the Medea story, I will focus primarily on Euripides' Medea. Through this text, Euripides asserts a sense of sympathy for females, for they are constrained by a male-dominating society. However, in doing so, he offers no relief for females but rather depicts a grim reality that they cannot escape. In conjunction with his text, I will use a wide range of pieces on Medea during the 5th to 3rd century BCE to explore male anxiety toward the active female and the means by which society constrains females to a passive role.

To begin, I will analyze the focus text of this chapter - Euripides' *Medea*. The play opens in the kingdom of Korinth, where Medea and Jason find solace after wreaking havoc on King Pelias' kingdom. To ensure further protection, as he explains to Medea, Jason marries King Kreon's daughter Glauke. Medea is floored and enraged by the news of this marriage. Her emotional response is encapsulated by the chorus' following description: "We hear her cry, a

[77] *Medea*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Isles Johnston, p. 122.

mournful dirge;/ she calls out shrilly, wailing in distress/about her bed betrayer, her wicked husband."[78] Medea is evidently overly emotional, portraying her as weak because she cannot compose herself. Jason argues that her anger was provoked by jealousy over him choosing another woman. He says:

> You women have reached a point where you think
> that if things are right in bed you have everything.
> But if any misfortune happens to the marital bed,
> you consider the best and finest as the worst.
> Mortals should have another way to father sons
> and no need for the female race.
> Then mankind would have no trouble.[79]

Jason reproduces the notion of the stereotypical, emotional woman. However, he is not privy to the fact that she is not a typical woman or dare I say fully a woman. She is enraged that Jason has violated *philia* by failing to keep his oath to her, and she now seeks a masculine revenge as a result .[80] Rajor defines *philia* in the introduction of *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* as a kinship bounded by affection or oath, and the oath is often made between men of equal status or amongst the female and male members of the household.[81] According to Schein, *philia* also "allows, even requires, that one person think of another as someone on whom he or she can rely and who can rely on him or her in return."[82] In other words, it is a transactional relationship that was very important for Greek society in the Classical Period.[83] For this reason, Medea,

[78] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 205-207.
[79] Lines 569-575.
[80] "Philia in Euripides' Medea" by Seth L. Schein, p. 60. Euripides does not apply this term in *Medea*, but I use it to explain Medea's reaction and actions taken after discovering that her husband has taken another wife.
[81] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, p. X.
[82] "Philia in Euripides' Medea" by Seth L. Schein, p. 58.
[83] "Greek Friendship" by David Konstan, p. 72.

exasperated by Jason's betrayal of *philia*, says, "Trust in oaths has vanished."[84] Medea has done and lost everything for Jason to uphold this oath but fails to realize that she lives within a man's world, a world where an oath between a man and a woman is binding for a woman but can be broken by a man. Medea rejects this female position. She plots a masculine revenge in a society that condemns gender nonconformity, placing her outside female conventions.

Medea resorts to deception to achieve masculine revenge. To manipulate, she draws upon societally conceived female vulnerability. She says to Kreon:

> Allow me to remain for this one day
> to fully consider the means of our exile
> and a refuge for my boys, since their father
> does not care enough to plan at all for the children.
> Pity them – you, too, are a father,
> so naturally you would favor children.
> If we go into exile, I have no thought for myself,
> but I weep for their lives in disaster.[85]

Medea explains that as a mother, she must consider the fate of her children, who have been deserted by their father. She draws upon her role as an abandoned mother so that King Kreon will pity her. She is presented as a woman who is weak and no longer under the protection of a strong man. This tactic compels King Kreon to acquiesce and allow her to stay for one more day, believing that she could not commit the evils he fears if granted one more day.[86] As we will see,

[84] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 488-492.
[85] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 340-347.
[86] Line 356.

Medea actually employs this strategy so that she is seen as a weak, fragile woman, underestimated by men to achieve masculine revenge.

Medea performs another act for Jason: crying.[87] Both women and men cry, but women are more prone to do so due to their supposed emotional behaviors. Medea confronts Jason with deceptive sobs. Jason questions why she cries during their conversation, and Medea responds, “A woman is female and prone to tears.”[88] She pleads with him to save their children, arguing that she cares not for her fate but only theirs. She employs a very similar strategy when convincing King Kreon to let her stay. She is presented as a vulnerable woman who does not want her weakness as a woman to affect her children. She cannot protect them without a husband. Sympathizing with her, Jason accedes to her request, but he says that it is not he that must be convinced but his new bride. Knowing this, Medea reveals to Jason that she intends for their children to bring his new wife “a delicate dress and a golden tiara.”[89] Jason does not know, however, that Medea declares, "The evil girl must die an evil death by my poisons (*pharmaka*).[90]" Medea cleverly exploits Glauke’s stereotypical qualities of a female by bestowing beautiful gifts upon her, knowing that she will concede and touch the pretty objects. Medea is able to obscure her intention to poison Glauke by convincing Jason to sympathize with her as a woman who is vulnerable and weak and learning to accept her abandonment.

However, Medea is neither weak nor vulnerable. In fact, she is smart and powerful, which is explicitly expressed through her knowledge of *pharmaka*. In the gift-giving scene,

[87] *Medea*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Isles Johnston, p. 135.
[88] *Euripides’ Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, line 928.
[89] *Euripides’ Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, line 786.
[90] Line 804.

Euripides' explicitly highlights Medea's magical prowess. Euripides does not shy away from the gruesome descriptions of Glauke's horrible death and says:

> The shape of her eyes and noble face
> distorted, as blood mixed with fire
> dripped down from the top of her head.
> Her flesh melted away from the bones, weeping
> like pine resin from the poison's unseen jaws,
> a terrible sight.[91]

Within this scene, Medea, the embodiment of dangerous, nonconforming femininity, literally melts away Glauke, the image of positive, conforming femininity. This scene reveals that the dangerous, nonconforming woman will achieve victory over the positive, conforming woman, instilling great fear of the dangerous, nonconforming woman. Distraught at this dreadful scene, Kreon tries to embrace his fallen daughter and finds himself stuck to the dress that then "ripped his old flesh from the bones."[92] Foreseeing the dreadful events to come, Medea continues with her plan to avenge all Jason's wrongdoings against her and commits a crime that ancient and modern societies have deemed especially evil when perpetrated by a woman: she kills her own children. She stabs them with a sword, and then proceeds to flee to Athens for refuge after promising Aigeus to help him reproduce through the *pharmaka* to which she is privy.[93]

After discovering the deaths, Jason sought justice; however, Medea reveals that he cannot extract vengeance due to her grandfather's gift, highlighting her divinity. She says, "Your hand will never touch me./Helios, father of my father, gave me this chariot,/a defense against an

[91] Lines 1197-1202.
[92] Line 1217.
[93] Lines 717-718.

enemy hand."[94] This scene positions Medea as a deus ex machina and subsequently an undefeatable force by mortal standards. This suggests that Medea is a god-like figure, for the deus ex machina device is typically reserved for gods in tragedy. Paul G. Johnston states, "A god appears suddenly above the stage at the end of a play and issues proclamations about the future, which was sometimes staged with the mechane, a crane of some kind used in the late-fifth-century theatre for lifting actors above the stage."[95] Medea crosses gender and mortal boundaries to gain an advantage. Before leaving, Jason declares:

> No Greek woman exists who would ever
> dare this, yet I picked you to marry
> – a hateful, destructive marriage for me
> – a lioness, not a woman, more savage
> than the Etruscan Scylla.[96]

Jason accuses Medea of being more monstrous than Scylla, or a lioness, and unlike any woman. He villanizes her unwomanly and inhuman characteristics and places her outside of the mortal world because of her horrifying and nonconforming character. Unwilling to give Jason the last word, Medea prophesizes to Jason, "You will die badly, as a bad man deserves:/struck on the head with a timber scrap from Argo,/having seen the bitter end from my marriage."[97] Medea embraces her unconventionality and draws upon her magical and god-like knowledge to convey Jason's grim fate.

To further highlight Medea's resistance toward conventional norms, I will offer more examples of references to Medea as animal-like in Euripides' *Medea*. As a matter of fact, Medea

[94] Line 1320-22.
[95] "Rethinking Medea and the Deus Ex Machina" by Paul G. Johnston, p. 125.
[96] Lines 1339-1342.
[97] Lines 1385-1387.

is referred to as a lioness three times and a bull twice. This repetition should not be undervalued. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, Jason calls Medea a lioness after killing their sons and his new wife and father-in-law.[98] Soon after, Jason calls her a "child-killing lioness."[99] Before all of this unfolds, right from the start, Euripides makes a connection between Medea and animals. The Nurse, fearful of what the Medea might do to her children after discovering her husband's disloyalty, says to the Tutor, "Do not let them near their ill-tempered mother./I have seen her eye them like a bull,/as if she has something in mind."[100] This image casts Medea as a male animal. Immediately, Euripides positions her outside societal conventions and portrays her as a liminal character that is not fully female nor human. In another instance, Euripides coalesces the image of Medea as a bull and lioness. The Nurse explains to the Chorus, "Although she glares like a bull,/like a lioness with newborn cubs, /whenever a slave approaches to have a word."[101] The two quotes are very different from one another. The nurse fears that Medea will hurt her children in the first quote while in the latter, the nurse expresses Medea's bestial ferocity but in defense of her own children. These descriptions further highlight Medea's complexity. She is not a singular being. She is a character who breaks the normative mold yet also a woman, nevertheless. Medea can cross mortal, animal, and gender boundaries to successfully avenge Jason's violation of *philia* with her. She can succeed because of this complexity. If she were simply a female, this victory would not be possible. She asserts her feminine side to convince others that she is weak and vulnerable,[102] and in doing so, people overlook her power that is not confined by societal norms. In what follows, I place other Classical texts about Medea alongside Euripides to prove

[98] Line 1341.
[99] Line 1407.
[100] Lines 91-93.
[101] Lines 187-189.
[102] "The Madness of Suppression" by Carley Tsiames.

that though they portray different Medeas, they all have a common purpose that reflects societal norms.

One question arises due to the disconnect between all the different Medeas: is Medea passive or active? Her degree of agency varies throughout the texts in the Classical Period, revealing the educated male elite response to active women. In *Pythian* 4, "Aphrodite of Cyprus brought the maddening bird to men for the first time, and she taught the son of Aeson skill in prayerful incantations, so that he could rob Medea of reverence for her parents, and a longing for Greece would lash her, her mind on fire, with the whip of Persuasion."[103] In this version of the story, Medea is forcefully stripped of agency by magic. She betrays her parents, thus abandoning a virtue that is most cherished by the Greeks: a daughter's loyalty to her father. This act further casts her as a villainous foreigner. Continuing with *Pythian* 4, the magic that consumes her compels her to aid Jason whom she anoints with a magical ointment (*pharmakon*) in order to protect him from the fire that he must evade to capture the golden fleece.[104] It is not through her own agency that she acts but rather through magical control, placing her within the role of a subjugated, outwitted witch who is under the governance of a man. *Pythian 4* constructs the image of the positive, conforming feminine character. She has power, yes, but it is used to aid a man who governs over her. Therefore, I argue that Pindar articulates the importance of women helping men, their superior. Additionally, Fritz Graf further highlights Medea's passivity in *Pythian 4* through the following quote: "Jason successfully abducts the fleece--and also Medea---'with her consent.' With this phrase, Pindar built tension into the character of Medea by refusing to give a simple answer to an important question: does Medea herself make the decision to flee

[103] Pindar, *Pythian 4*, edited and translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien, lines 216-220.
[104] Line 223.

with Jason or is she influenced by Aphrodite?"[105] The very portrayal of Jason's ability to usurp Medea's agency reveals male superiority. The fact that Jason can outwit Medea who possesses unearthly magical abilities emphasizes that men can always outmaneuver and subdue women, even witches. Through this, Pindar suggests the inescapability of the gender hierarchy.

The *Argonautica* also represents Medea as a woman made submissive by the magical influence of Eros. In this text, Hera sends Eros to shoot his arrow at Medea so that her love is strong enough to convince her to help Jason in his journey. "The arrow burned deep down in the girl's heart like a flame. She continually cast bright glances straight at Jason and wise thoughts fluttered from her breast in her distress. She could remember nothing else, for her heart was fluttering with sweet pain."[106] A similar madness and loss of loyalty to her parents apparent in *Pythian 4* is once again displayed in the *Argonautica* through the image of her heart aflame and her loss of memories. With this arrow, Hera and Aphrodite's plan can proceed and Jason can reclaim his throne. It is important to note that despite the grave importance of Medea in Jason's accomplishments, Jason is called a hero after killing Medea's brother.[107] Additionally, unlike Euripides' *Medea* where Medea commits fratricide, Jason exhibits agency and kills her brother instead. Jason plays the role of the active hero while Medea serves as an aid. Apollonius suggests the importance of a woman relegating her power to men to serve them. In doing so, men offer women protection via marriage. Both the *Argonautica* and *Pythian 4* offer a set of guidelines for the conventional woman.

[105] *Medea*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Isles Johnston, p. 29.
[106] *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius, edited and translated by William H. Race, Book 3, lines 288-290.
[107] Book 4, line 477.

In contrast, Euripides' Medea constantly attempts to establish her own agency. Upon hearing that her husband has married another, Medea is hurt by her husband's betrayal of their oath, especially after all that she did for him. She argues:

> I saved you – as all the Greeks know
> who sailed in the Argo with you –
> when you were sent to tame and yoke fire-breathing
> bulls, and sow the field with a deadly crop.
> I killed the sleepless dragon that kept
> the Golden Fleece safe in its tangled coils
> and so held up the light of salvation for you.
> After I betrayed my father and my home,
> I went with you to Iolkos,
> more eager than wise. There I killed Pelias
> in the most dreadful way to die, at the hands
> of his own daughters, destroying his whole house.[108]

However, Jason offers a rebuttal:

> I consider Aphrodite alone the savior
> of my expedition – of all gods and humans.
> You do have a subtle mind. Yet to detail the whole story
> of how Eros compelled you with his inescapable arrows
> to save my skin would cause resentment.[109]

Jason attempts to strip Medea of her agency and transfer it to Aphrodite; therefore, throughout the rest of the play, Medea relentlessly tries to assert her own agency. Subsequently, she uses

[108] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 476-487.
[109] Lines 527-531.

deception and knowledge of poisons to avenge herself. The turning point when she claims agency is highlighted when she says, "Let no one think me simple, weak,/or passive, but the opposite:/hard on my enemies and kind to my friends."[110] The quote includes a heroic undertone. Medea assumes the position of a hero that is often portrayed in Classical literature where glory is one of the most superior positions and to achieve it one must fight to the death. Medea overcomes Eros's control, presenting her as a heroic man, and rights the wrong committed against her. Once again, we can see that Euripides' Medea can cross gender and mortal boundaries.

Neophron further emphasizes Medea's agency in his tragedy *Medea*. Only fragments remain from his play, but what has survived epitomizes Medea's power, especially within the scene where she reveals Jason's inevitable end. Medea prophesizes, "In the end you will do away with yourself in a most shameful death drawing a noose for hanging about your neck. Such a destiny awaits you for your evil deeds, instruction to others for countless days telling mortals never to exalt themselves above the gods."[111] Matthew Wright in "Making Medea Medea" discusses the feminization of Jason and the masculinization of Medea within this fragment of Neophron.[112] Suicide was often a shameful act associated with the mournful widow in the Classical period. Suicide presented women with a source of freedom, but even that freedom was subjected to societal confines. "[Women] are free to kill themselves, but they are not free enough to escape from the place to which they belong, and the remote sanctum where they meet their death is equally the symbol of their life -- a life that finds its meaning outside the self and is

[110] Lines 807-809.
[111] "The Fragments of Neophron's Medea," translated by Celia Luschnig.
[112] "Making Medea Medea" by Matthew Wright in *Female Characters in Fragmentary Greek Tragedy*, edited by P. J. Finglass and Lyndsay Coo, pp. 229-232.

fulfilled only in the institutions of marriage and maternity, which tie women to the world and lives of men."[113] Without a husband, a woman is without protection, which is what the husband promises his wife in *philia*. After his death, her only escape from reality and societal pressures is through suicide. Through this, in both life and death, she is governed by men. By associating Jason with this widow suicide, Neophron strips Jason of agency and positions him in a feminine position inferior to the masculine Medea.

Further, the supernatural nature of Medea's prophecy places her in control of his fate, and she is once again presented as a god-like figure. Similarly, in Euripides' *Medea*, before Medea rides off as a dea ex machina in Helios' chariot, Medea reveals Jason's fate, as I noted before. She says that he will die by being struck by a scrap of timber. As the myth details, Jason fulfills this destiny, suffering an unheroic death while Medea conversely assumes the role of a hero, slaying her enemies and righting the wrongs. Additionally, Medea's knowledge of oracles grants her knowledge above other humans. Through this, Medea possesses agency and superiority. Both of Jason's deaths reveal a victory for Medea. She avenges herself and her children later in the story. Further, as Melissa Mueller argues, "Medea is clearly the one who is in control at the end, when she denies Jason the only favor that he asks of her, to be able to touch the dead bodies of his children."[114] This control over Jason and the others highlights Medea's refusal to conform to gender roles. The Medeas of Neophron and Euripides, I argue, parallel one another insofar as they claim agency but only through their ability to transcend gender and mortal boundaries.

This agency that Medea possesses in some versions is at the root masculine. Medea's masculine, and thus active, behavior is identified through her reaction to Jason breaking the oath

[113] *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman* by Nicole Loraux, p. 23.
[114] "The Language of Reciprocity in Euripides' *Medea*" by Melissa Mueller, p. 474.

they made to one another. In this context, I use the word *philia*. As mentioned before, one definition of this entails an agreement between men of equal status. For a woman and man to practice *philia* to one another, the stipulations are different. Various texts suggest that society will grant a man the liberty to break his oath while a woman on the other hand does not. Medea and Jason's *philia* is often highlighted in texts on Medea. In exchange for Medea's help in *Pythian 4*, "They agreed to be united with each other in sweet wedlock."[115] This illustrates a type of transactional relationship. A similar instance occurs in the *Argonautica*. Jason says, "Let Olympian Zeus be witness to my oath and Hera too, goddess of marriage and sharer of Zeus' bed, that I shall truly establish you in my home as my lawfully wedded wife when we reach the land of Hellas on our return."[116] Sophocles also highlights this moment of *philia* exchange in the *Women of Colchis*. Medea asks Jason, "Do you swear that you will return one favour for another?"[117] Wright argues that Medea suggests marriage in this question, offering her services to aid him in return for marriage. Medea upheld her promises and is outraged that Jason does not do the same in Euripides' *Medea*. Medea broke the exchange of *philia*[118] between her and her family. Jason initially granted her security, but his latest move has left her in great danger. For the time being, she had nowhere to go. Medea illuminates her grief by sharing with the women of Korinth: "My story, though, is not the same as yours./You have this city and your father's homes/and advantage in life and company of friends."[119] As I have said before, a woman who breaks *philia* is subjected to far worse repercussions than a man. The advantage Jason received

[115] *Pythian* 4 by Pindar, edited and translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien, lines 224-225.
[116] *Argonautica* by Appolonius, edited and translated by William H. Race, lines 95-98.
[117] "Women of Colchis" by Sophocles in *Sophocles Fragments*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, fragment 339.
[118]As mentioned before, *philia* is not only bound by oath but also by affection. This is the type of *philia* that is shared amongst family members. It is of greater importance that a woman maintains *philia* for her brother/s and father.
[119] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 252-254.

from his oath to Medea diminished, and she proved useless to him. Thus, he sought out a new wife. Unlike Medea, Jason has the mobility to escape his oath because society grants him agency and independence. However, Medea is able to escape the fate of an ordinary woman because she is not fully woman nor human.

In the Classical period, Greeks valued a woman's *philia* for her father and brother/s because it subjects her to the patriarchal society. Jan N. Bremmer analyzes this relationship but omits the word *philia*; however, what he examines coincides with the term. Bremmer specifically discusses how heinous Medea's crime against her brother was. He describes, "Brother and sister were imagined to be especially close…but their closeness arose in part from the fact that the brother was responsible for the sister, and she was dependent upon him. He was expected to defend and yet also discipline his sister, particularly after the death of her father; she was expected to conduct herself in a way that would bring no shame upon him."[120] The same holds true for the father's relationship with his daughter, and this dynamic stands firm until she is married. However, Medea was not yet married when she either killed or helped kill her brother and betrayed her father.

Bremmer extrapolates that both Apollonius and Eurpides portray this fratricide in the most heinous way, for they take place in religious contexts.[121] For Euripides' *Medea* text, Medea kills her brother near the hearth while in Apollonius', this scene takes place in a temple. Both places are religious and offer protection to people, dramatizing Medea's heinous and sacrilegious crime. Medea encapsulates all that is evil in these contexts. However, as Bremmer reveals, Apollonius seems to make the fratricide less extreme by characterizing her brother as the son of a

[120]*Medea*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Isles Johnston, p. 100.
[121] P. 85.

concubine rather than Medea's full-fledged brother.[122] I argue that Apollonius takes a step further to make the murder more digestible. He attributes this murderous act to Jason, not Medea. Though she is the very reason Jason was able to accomplish this, it was not she who pierced her brother with a sword. Instead, "the girl immediately averted her eyes and covered them with her veil, so as not to see the blood of her brother when he was hit."[123] Apollonius removes agency from Medea and presents her as a passive, frightened woman while in Euripides' *Medea*, she is empowered and not simply a petrified bystander. Medea more actively betrays the *philia* between her and her brother in Euripides' version nor is this the only time Euripides has her break *philia*. Medea commits infanticide after performing fratricide, making herself even more worthy of fear. However, she is only able to have agency because she can cross animal, mortal, and gender boundaries.

Not only does Medea sever the bonds of *philia* within her own family, but she also manipulates others to do so. Christian Collard and Martin Cropp offer a description in the beginning of their translated and edited version of *The Daughters of Pelias* that details Medea's manipulation of Pelias' daughters. According to Collard and Cropp, "Medea assured the daughters of Pelias that she could rejuvenate their elderly father if he was dismembered and boiled in a magic cauldron, and she demonstrated her power to do this by rejuvenating an aged ram in the same way."[124] However, once the daughters complete the boiling process, Medea does not rejuvenate Pelias. Similarly, Collard and Cropp explain in their version of Euripides' *Aegeus* that Medea attempts to convince Aegeus to kill his own son whom he does not recognize:

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[122] P. 100.
[123] *Argonautica* by Apollonius, translated and edited by William H. Race, lines 463-465.
[124] "Daughters of Pelias" by Euripides in *Euripides Fragments*, edited and translated by Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp, pp. 60-61.

"Medea warned Aegeus that the heroic stranger was a dangerous rival and persuaded him to offer Theseus a poisoned cup, but at the last moment the king recognized the sword his son was carrying and dashed the cup from his lips."[125] Medea fails to break the exchange of *philia* between Aegeus and his son, but her attempt to do so, and her success in *The Daughters of Pelias,* illuminate her complete disregard for societal values. She sees herself above mortal conventions.

I will now explore the different approaches to Medea's magical power between the 3rd and 5th century BCE. Euripides is a bit evasive when it comes to Medea's magical prowess. He discusses her application of certain *pharmaka*, such as the one she uses to anoint Glauke's dress and tiara[126] as well as the remedy to help Aegeus procreate.[127] Regardless of this covert method, the inclusion of these *pharmaka* is crucial. *Pharmaka* often implies a magical intervention.[128] A woman's knowledge of *pharmaka* or magic at large was particularly unsettling for a man in the Classical Period, for it demonstrates a woman's potential to wield power over a man.[129] The association of Medea with the use of magic resonates with a husband's fear of his wife. I'd argue this further believing that Medea illustrates a general male fear of any female with power and knowledge. Medea's representation as a witch is not limited to Euripides' *Medea*. In fact, she is depicted as having some type of magical knowledge within each of the Medea texts that I discuss in this essay. Her magic, however, manifests differently amongst these texts. Similarly in

[125] "Aegeus" by Euripides in *Euripides Fragments*, edited and translated by Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp, pp. 3-4.
[126] *Euripides' Medea: A New Translation* by Diane J. Rayor, lines 785-789.
[127] Lines 717-718.
[128] In "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida on p. 42 describes a *pharmaka* as "this 'medicine,' this philter, which acts as both remedy and poison...This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be - alternatively or simultaneously - beneficent or maleficent."
[129] *Hippocrates' Woman by Helen King, p. 163,* also highlights that this male fear toward a woman handling a *pharmakon* is in part due to the fact that the term means both potion and poison. Therefore, only the woman has the knowledge about which one the *pharmakon* is.

Melanthius' version of Medea, Douglas Olson suggests that Medea possibly invoked *pharmaka* for the purpose of murdering Glauke during her childbirth.[130] Once again, Medea is presented as an unconventional woman and coincidingly infanticidal.

In other texts, such as *Pythian 4* and the *Argonautica*, Medea uses her knowledge of *pharmaka* to instead help others, specifically Jason, identifying her thus as an outwitted witch. In each story, a goddess (Aphrodite and Hera respectively) connives to bring Jason and Medea together because Medea is knowledgeable and can aid him. Hera reveals in the *Argonautica*, "if she will give him kindly advice, I believe that he will readily seize the Golden Fleece and return to Iolcus, because she is very cunning."[131] Medea grants Jason the *Prometheion* drug (*pharmakon…Prometheion*) that is to guard him from the fire.[132] Similarly, in *Pythian 4*, Medea anoints Jason with *pharmaka* and olive oil to protect him from the fire while seeking to obtain the golden fleece.[133] She is described as versed in every potion (*pampharmakos*).[134] Her magical knowledge is further elaborated on in both texts. In *Pythian 4*, she is also said to have oracular powers,[135] similar to how she is depicted in Euripides' *Medea.* In the *Argonautica*, she is known as Hecate's priestess[136], enhancing her status as a magical woman. In a similar manner, the remnants of Euripides' *Aegeus*, Neophron's *Medea*, and Sophocles' *Women of Colchis* all mention Medea's magical prowess. Nephron articulates her ability to interpret oracles,[137] and

[130] "Making Medea Medea" by Matthew Wright in *Female Characters in Fragmentary Greek Tragedy*, edited by p. J. Finglass and Lyndsay Coo, p. 228.
[131] *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius, edited and translated by William H. Race, Book 3, lines 87-89.
[132] Book 3, Lines 845-850.
[133] "Pythian 4" by Pindar, edited and translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien, line 222.
[134] Line 234.
[135] Lines 14-57.
[136] *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius, edited and translated by William H. Race, Book 3, lines 250-252.
[137] "The Fragments of Neophron's Medea," edited and translated by Celia Luschnig,

Women of Colchis may refer to Medea's handling of the Prometheion drug.[138] Sophocles' *Root-Cutters* also incorporates a magical element and describes Medea's use of herbs for a spell. Lloyd-Jones translates, "And she, looking back as she did so, caught the white, foamy juice from the cut in bronze vessels…And the hidden boxes conceal the cuttings of the roots, which she, uttering loud ritual cries, naked, was severing with bronze sickles.[139] In this scene, Sophocles portrays her as unconventional. Very interestingly, Lloyd-Jones comments, "Medea's ritual cry was one usually uttered by men."[140] Therefore, not only is Medea a witch but one who does not conform to gender norms. As a result, Sophocles paints a horrifying image of Medea to instill fear toward female nonconformity. Rather than offer an image of the conforming and outwitted witch who uses her powers to help men like in *Pythian 4*, the *Argonautica*, Melanthius' *Medea*, and *Women of Colchis*, *Root Cutters* presents a maddened, somewhat masculine witch who resists conformity in order to instill fear within both men and women.

In his translation of the *Root-Cutters*, Lloyd-James mentions Welker's hypothesis that Medea manipulates Pelias' daughters into boiling Pelias. This assumption has gained general acceptance. Similar to Euripides' *Daughters of Pelias*, Welker proposes that in *Root-Cutters* Medea deceives Pelias' daughters into thinking that by boiling their father, they could rejuvenate him. It is interesting to note that both Medea and Pelias' daughters are manipulated to betray *philia* and both instances include magical elements. Alan H. Sommerstein in his translation of Aeschlyus' *Nurses* describes that Medea, "rejuvenated the nurses of Dionysus, together with

[138] "Women of Colchis" by Sophocles in *Sophocles Fragments*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, fragment 340. The fragment mentions Prometheus, which likely alludes to the same story of the Prometheion drug; however, it is not explicitly stated. For my argument, I proceed with the understanding that the Prometheion drug is what is referenced.
[139] "Root-Cutters" by Sophocles in *Sophocles Fragments*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, fragment 534.
[140] Fragment 534.

their husbands, by boiling them."[141] Medea's expertise in *pharmaka* grants her a privilege, a knowledge, over others. With this, she can manipulate whatever she desires. This ability poses a threat to the patriarchy. In contrast, according to Wright, Diogenes rationalized Medea's boiling technique. He argued that she was not a sorceress but made weak people strong via steam baths and gymnastic exercises.[142] By doing this, Diogenes makes Medea less threatening and conforms her to gender norms.

Euripides asserts Medea's agency but only due to the fact that she transgresses female conventionality. He is sympathetic to women who are confined by societal norms, but he does not truly reject those norms. He argues that Medea is only able to overcome such a restraint due to her fluidity across animal, gender, and mortal boundaries. She utilizes gender stereotypes to deceive, and her magic to avenge. Her freedom in the end is due to her divine ancestry, as she leaves on the chariot of Helios, like a deus ex machina and finds safety in Athens, which she was able to obtain because of her knowledge of potions. I contend that Euripides makes a point that no human woman can escape societal confines. Euripides' version, as well as Neophron's text, is so complex because the reader cannot easily pigeonhole what or who Medea is, giving her an unearthly characteristic. In the other versions, Medea is a human woman. She is respected because, though she has powers, she uses them to aid men. Additionally, all that she does is due to the love spell that controls her. Her subjugation to men remains, reflecting a tradition at least as old as *The Odyssey* that men can outwit and subdue even a very powerful witch. All these versions, though different, explore female acceptance and resistance to conformity. None of them offer hope for surmounting conformity.

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[141] "The Nurses of Dionysus" by Aeschylus in *Aeschylus Fragments* translated by Alan H. Sommerstein, p. 248.
[142] "Making Medea Medea" by Matthew Wright in *Female Characters in Fragmentary Greek Tragedy*, edited by P. J. Finglass and Lyndsay Coo, p. 221-222.

Conclusion

> At some point in time the diagnosis of endometriosis must have been made with a laparoscopy and I would reflect back on that and look at whether or not the endometriosis is severe enough. And I guess that's really subjective but, you know, with the laparoscope you do get a feeling for the... nature and the position of the endometriosis, the location of the endometriosis, and whether it would actually affect intercourse.
>
> Male gynecologist[143]

Endometriosis is characterized as a gynecological disorder that causes "pelvic pain during menstruation and other times of the month, pain during sexual intercourse, leg pain, and bowel and bladder problems such as cyclic diarrhoea and/or constipation."[144] It is also considered to be associated with infertility.[145] The authors of this text explain that doctors have to filter the diagnosis through an androcentric medical gaze.[146] Medicine, the authors explains, is defined by masculine knowledge,[147] which is reproduced by predominantly male educated elites. These men decide through diagnoses what is relevant and real. We can clearly see a parallel between modern and Hippocratic medicine. Despite this projection of medical knowledge of endometriosis, little is known about endometriosis nor is there a cure.[148] As a result, "women with endometriosis present a threat to Medicine's claim of knowledge of the body, and that, instead of acknowledging the inherent limitations of androcentric medical knowledge, fault is established within women (usually, their choices and their bodies)."[149] As I discuss in my thesis,

[143] "'Do mad people get endo or does endo make you mad?': Clinicians' discursive constructions of Medicine and women with endometriosis" by Kate Young, Jane Fisher, and Maggie Kirkman, p. 346.
[144] P. 337-338.
[145] P. 338.
[146] P. 346.
[147] P. 340.
[148] P. 338.
[149] P. 341-342.

male educated elites have consistently attempted to strip women of agency and assert male expertise over female knowledge beyond medical practices. I specifically reveal this reality through a comparative study on ancient medical and literary texts, which contain magical elements.

Magic and medicine are important to study side by side because in spite of their differences, they nevertheless employ strategies that reinforce gender norms. I explore the downstream effects of the Hippocratic Corpus and Euripides' *Medea* in later history, specifically in relation to how women were perceived and how gender roles were sustained. I draw upon other medical and literary texts that cover a wide range of time periods, such as the 1st to 3rd c. CE and the 17th to 20th c. CE. The diversity of this evidence demonstrates a multifront campaign waged from the stage and patient's bedside to keep women in their prescribed inferior gender roles. Educated male elite authors and doctors uphold the same sexist core values, though these values nevertheless manifest in different ways. It is crucial to study the different fronts of this battle and how it develops throughout time and space. I would like to emphasize that this study is not exhaustive and much more research needs to be done. First, I begin with chapter synopses.

1.1 Chapter Synthesis

In Chapter 1, I argue that the Hippocratics reinforce gender roles and assert male expertise over female knowledge. I analyze the tactics that the Hippocratics apply to instill patriarchal notions. They establish the necessity of marrying and reproducing for women's health and mental wellbeing, provide horrifying case studies of *andrógunos* persons, and cast the womb as a demonic and animalistic force. Each of these practices employs fearmongering to keep

women in their prescribed gender roles so that men can govern their lives by controlling their sexuality. The Hippocratics also practically eliminate the presence of female medical professionals and fully omit any references to female medical professionals handling *pharmaka* in the Corpus.

In Chapter 2, I argue that Euripides upholds patriarchal norms by presenting Medea as a figure who can transgress gender boundaries through her unconventionality. In doing so, Euripides illustrates the inability of ordinary women to go outside gender norms. Medea only succeeds because of her fluidity across animal, gender, and mortal lines. Though the Hippocratics and Euripides apply differing strategies, they both reinforce prescribed gender roles. Now that I have discussed my two chapters, I will highlight and define the intersecting themes within the chapters.

1.2 Overlapping Themes

In this section, I discuss the recurring themes present in both chapters. A *pharmakon* is a tool to uphold gender constructs, expressed in the two chapters. As defined previously, a *pharmakon* is a liminal drug, teetering on the threshold between magic and medicine. The Hippocratics omit references to women administering *pharmaka* while Euripides does not evade the topic. Euripides instead displays the horrifying results of Medea's use of a *pharmakon*. The most significant reference to *pharmaka* is Medea's application of them to murder Glauke. This *pharmakon* is most obviously used as a poison in this case rather than a remedy. Medea escapes repercussions because she is an unconventional woman. A conventional woman who cannot cross animal, gender, and mortal boundaries would not experience the same fate, which I argue is the point that Euripides intends to convey. This play demonstrates the greater male fear of the

potentially lethal outcome that could result from *pharmaka*, especially when a woman is handling them. I think that the fear is specifically directed toward women because within any hierarchy those at the top will always fear that those below will try and supersede them. Thus, an internalized, ever-present male skepticism toward the female is formed. To prevent women from administering *pharmaka*, plays such as Euripides' convey horrifying results when women employ them. As we also see in Deianira's case, oftentimes, things don't turn out as planned due to womanly ignorance. The Hippocratics, on the other hand, completely avoid describing female medical professionals handling *pharmaka*. By doing this, the Hippocratics implicitly claim that *pharmaka* should be limited to men. Whoever is in possession of *pharmaka* is granted a level of authority over others, which poses a potential threat to male supremacy. Therefore, men attempt to prevent women from handling *pharmaka*. Both the Hippocratics and Euripides discourage the female use of *pharmaka* in different ways but simultaneously subscribe to gender norms.

Enforcing marital expectations is another mechanism that both the Hippocratics and Euripides apply. The Hippocratic texts most overtly encourage women to marry and reproduce to overcome any ailments. As I discuss in Chapter 1, this position is formed due to the male need to control female sexuality, which coincides with the desire to confine her to the *oikos*. The Hippocratics often suggest marriage and pregnancy for whatever ailment a citizen woman experienced. Taking care of children further limited the ancient Greek woman to the oikos in a society that already gave her very little freedom to go outside. Euripides enforces marital expectations in a different way. In Chapter 2, I use the word *philia* to articulate the heavy responsibility a wife assumes after exchanging marital oaths with her husband. Medea goes above and beyond to fulfill her oath to Jason. She even breaks the *philia* shared between her and her brother and father. She also fulfills conventional womanly duties by reproducing. Medea,

however, fails to realize that the same marital expectations do not apply to men. Jason breaks *philia* and marries another woman, leaving Medea alone in a man's world. Euripides illustrates a distinction between male and female marital expectations in Classical Greece. Medea must conceive, submit to her husband, and perform other wifely duties. The man's role is to provide her with security unless and until he no longer needs her. However, he isn't bound to the same marital promise as her. Even though Medea is a barbarian Other, her predicament illustrates that the Ancient Greek citizen woman is stripped of agency and cannot function within the patriarchy without a husband. This lack of mobility is strategic. Society wants her to rely heavily on men so that he can control her and her sexual life, which the Hippocratics and Euripides reinforce in different ways.

Female weakness and vulnerability are another element present in Euripides' *Medea* and the Hippocratic Corpus, though it manifests in different ways. The Hippocratics invoke *hysterika* to make a connection between weakness and being biologically female, whereas Euripides' portrays Medea utilizing preconceived notions that women are naturally prone to weakness to deceive. In Chapter 1, I explain the Hippocratics application of *hysterikos*, meaning from the womb. Because the Hippocratics believed that most womanly diseases were caused by the womb, the Hippocratics identified many diseases of women as *hysterika*. In doing so, the Hippocratics attribute weakness to being a woman. A healthy uterus is defined by regular copulation and menstruation. Menstruation signifies her ability to become pregnant. Because of her female anatomy, she is vulnerable to diseases that can be remedied through marriage and serial pregnancy. However, as we can see within the Corpus, an *andrógunos* could not menstruate and thus could not reproduce. Both women in the Corpus die shortly after their diagnosis. By presenting these cases, the Hippocratics reveal the repercussions that will ensue

from lack of intercourse to relieve *hysterika*. Therefore, *hysterika* was used to reinforce prescribed gender norms.

In Chapter 2, Medea deceptively assumes a vulnerable role, associated with femininity. She plays into gender stereotypes to obscure her actual intent to achieve justice for Jason breaking *philia*. Medea expresses her worry for her children whom their father has abandoned. As a woman, Medea cannot protect them, let alone herself. She, however, explains that she cares not for herself but for her sons' wellbeing. She invites both King Kreon and Jason to take pity on her sorry state as a woman. Through this, she convinces King Kreon to let her stay. In another way, she obscures her malintent to poison Glauke through the gifts, preventing Jason from becoming suspicious. By taking advantage of preconceived notions of femininity, Medea can achieve masculine revenge. The Hippocratics' and Euripides' application of these themes has had a lasting effect, which I proceed to analyze.

1.3 The Aftermath

I will now explore the longevity of the Hippocratic wandering womb theory and how it reinforces prescribed gender norms. The theory continued to place women in their prescribed gender roles by stating that intercourse (preferably marital) is the cure for this ailment and that the notion of the wild, erratic womb can be surmounted by men. According to King, "The description of the womb as 'an animal inside an animal' (less emotively translated as 'a living thing inside a living thing')" appears 500 years after Plato and is written by Aretaeus.[150] Thus, despite attempts made by Soranus, of the 1st to 2nd c. CE, and Galen, of the 2nd to 3rd c. CE,

[150] "Galen and the Widow: Towards a History of Therapeutic Masturbation in Ancient Gynaecology" by Helen King, p. 207.

and others to disprove the image of the animalistic, wandering womb, the belief was sustained. Actually, “Herophilus discovered that the female womb was in fact anchored to the body.”[151] Herophilus was a Greek physician of the 4th and 3rd century BCE. The Hippocratic Corpus precedes him, and he predated Galen and Soranus. Yet, both Galen and Soranus struggled to disprove the wandering, animalistic womb.

Galen argued that “the womb may *seem* to move, but ‘it does not move from one place to another like a wandering animal, but is pulled up by the tension’ of the membranes holding it in place.”[152] Galen presents an undemonic and less erratic womb than the Hippocratics but still upholds patriarchal notions. He “regards sexual intercourse as beneficial for sufferers, and in his new etiology of the condition, this therapy, mentioned in the Hippocratic Corpus but only as one of many recommendations for suffocation caused by the womb, is given a central role.”[153] He considers that those most vulnerable to the disorder are "widows, and particularly those who previously menstruated regularly, had been pregnant and were eager to have intercourse, but were now deprived of all this."[154] Though Galen does not mention childless women, he nevertheless asserts that intercourse will appease a woman’s ailments, placing women in their prescribed gender roles as wives and mothers.

Soranus, in contrast, does not assert that sexual intercourse will help the suffocated womb. Interestingly enough, Soranus believed in the health benefits for both men and women that resulted from chastity. He says, “Since men who remain chaste are stronger and bigger than

[151] The Hippocratic Corpus and Soranus of Ephesus: Discovering Men's Minds through Women's Bodies by Megan Michelle Slaughter, p. 38.
[152] “Once upon a Text: Hysteria from Hippocrates” by Helen King in *Hysteria Beyond Freud* by Sander L. Gilman, Helen King, Roy Porter, G.S. Rousseau, and Elain Showalter, p. 42.
[153] P. 42.
[154] P. 42.

the others and pass their lives in better health…For pregnancy and parturition exhaust the female body and make it waste greatly away, whereas virginity, safeguarding women from such injuries, may suitably be called healthful."[155] However, he concludes with: "intercourse seems consistent with the general principles of nature according to which both sexes, <for the sake> of continuity, <have to ensure> the succession of living beings."[156] Although Soranus initially challenges gender norms, he eventually concedes to them in order to further life. There seems to be societal pressure that motivates Soranus to come to this resolve. I believe that this pressure explains the persistence of the theory of the wandering womb despite Herophilus' proof otherwise and Soranus and Galen's discourse against it.

As I have described, the womb is inherently connected to the term *hysterika*. The notion of *hysterika* seeps into medical and literary texts beyond the Hippocratics' period, and it is not simply men who maintain it but women, even female medical professionals. This term, however, has evolved to more explicitly associate femininity with madness, which I discuss in Chapter 2 on Medea. It can be used to describe women's volatility and maudlinism, or as a blanket diagnosis to obscure the doctor's ignorance. Similarly, for the Hippocratics, madness is a symptom of *hysterika*. By *hysterika*, I do not mean that the Hippocratics defined women's diseases as hysteria but were instead *hysterikos*, from the womb, as in caused by the uterus. Despite the disparity between *hysterika* and hysteria, the words are interconnected due to their inherent tendency to uphold gender norms. The words intend to promote the image of women as weak in contrast to the depiction of men as strong. In *On the Affected Parts*, Galen explains: "I myself have seen many *hysterikai* women, as they call themselves and as the *iatrinai* [female

[155] 1.31.
[156] 1.32.

healers] call them."[157] The notion of *hysterika* has evidently become internalized. Galen suggests sexual pleasure as a means to relieve *hysterika*. He explains,

> [I]n the case of a woman suffering from hysterical diseases, very abundant and very thick semen was discharged first to the uterus, and from it to the outside; a widow for a long time, she had collected it in that amount and of that kind. But then certain tensions seized her in her loins and hands and feet, so that she seemed convulsed (spasthe^nai), and at these tensions the semen was discharged (ex-ekrithe^), and she said that the pleasure it gave her was like that of sexual intercourse.[158]

In this case, Galen asserts that a sexual climax relieves *hysterika*. Therefore, sexual intercourse in addition to other mechanisms to achieve this release offer a solution. It is important to acknowledge that Galen believed that women in fact experience sexual pleasure in contrast to the Hippocratics who try and minimize their experience. Furthermore, Galen claimed that to relieve *hysterika*, a woman did not have to rely on a man solely. Galen writes about a widow who experienced *hysterika*, or her womb being drawn up, and quells it through "the customary remedies."[159] The womb, which is inherently feminine, is the cause of illness, and sexual pleasure relieves the conditions it causes. Though intercourse is not the only remedy and Galen rather grants the woman agency, intercourse is nevertheless a means for recovery, thus partially aligning with the Hippocratic Corpus. I presume that Galen, and the female medical professionals who worked with him, would encourage women who are Greek citizens to have sex with their husbands rather than as unwed individuals due to the same societal demands as the

[157] *Hippocrates' Woman* by Helen King, p. 232.
[158] *On Semen* by Galen, edited and translated by Phillip de Lacy, 2.1 in "Aristotle and Galen on Sex Difference and Reproduction: A New Approach to an Ancient Rivalry" by Sophia M. Conell, pp. 412-413.
[159] "Galen and the Widow: Towards a History of Therapeutic Masturbation in Ancient Gynaecology" by Helen King, p. 218.

Hippocratic times where intercourse outside of wedlock for a Greek woman is unacceptable and shameful. Therefore, both Galen and his female medical professionals perpetuated the image of the female as a baby maker and wife.

The history of *hysterika* in medical texts does not stop with Galen. The Loeb translation of the Hippocratic Corpus sustains the term and its patriarchal impression. Emile Littré edited and translated the entirety of the Corpus between 1839 and 1861 into French.[160] "Littré read the Hippocratic Corpus in the context of his time, when hysteria was a recognised condition of disputed aetiology. He expected to see hysteria, duly found it, and drew it out in the headings he wrote for the various sections."[161] Littré's incorporation of hysteria had a spiraling effect. In return, Dr. Robb "translated into English the passages headed by Littré as hysteria," in the 19th century, "and subsequent readers of the Hippocratic Corpus have accepted Littré's categories."[162] This addition has been incorporated into Paul Potter's edition of the Hippocratic Corpus. King further discusses *On Aphorisms,* which "Littré translated as 'Chez une femme attaquée d'hystérie'" Others followed suit, including Francis Adams who wrote, "'Sneezing occurring in a woman with hysterics'" and John Chadwick and W.N. Mann who described, "'When a woman is afflicted with hysteria.' Thus, the diagnosis of hysteria is one made not by the ancient authors of the texts, but by a nineteenth-century translator."[163]

In the 19th century, hysteria was applied outside of Hippocratic translations by practitioners to reinforce prescribed gender roles. Oftentimes, the diagnosis of hysteria was used to obscure the practitioners' ignorance. "At the end of the nineteenth century John Russell

[160] "Laegen Emile Littré, Hippokrates' franske udgiver og oversaetter" by Anders Frøland.
[161] *Hippocrates' Woman* by Helen King, p. 209.
[162] P. 209.
[163] P. 211

Reynolds wrote that 'The employment of the word "hysterical" may sometimes be found indicative of the state of mind of the practitioner rather than of that of the patient's health. It simply conveys a doubt as to what is the matter.'"[164] The origin of women's ailments is more often than not a mystery, even to this day. Therefore, I would presume that physicians often resorted to diagnosing a woman with hysteria in the 19th century. Physicians hide their ignorance by deflecting onto women and concluding that women's inherent madness is the root of the issue. Hysteria was also used in the 19th century to describe effeminate men. For example, "Emile Batault observed that hysterical men were thought to be "timid and fearful men…Coquettish and eccentric, they prefer ribbons and scarves to hard manual labor."[165] Through this, the image of the effeminate man is darkened, upholding patriarchal demands. Therefore, though *hysterika* has evolved it still bolsters prescribed gender norms.

Doctors have long sought to devalue female patients through the use of *hysterika*, and its application extends to female medical professionals. The response toward women in medicine has fluctuated throughout time; what remains consistent, however, is that even when gains are made for women there is always a resistance once again. I will start with 1st and 2nd CE references to female medical professionals. Soranus is a crucial figure to study when considering the societal reaction of this time toward women in medicine. He dedicates two whole chapters on midwives, one titled "What Persons Are Fit to Become Midwives" and another called "Who are the Best Midwives?" Soranus delineates the qualities of the perfect midwife. King argues, "the simple fact that we have a midwifery text from the second century AD may lead us to speculate that it was written in response to perceived inadequacies of midwives prior to that time. This

[164] P. 211
[165] "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender" by Elain Showalter in *Hysteria Beyond Freud* by Sander L. Gilman, Helen King, Roy Porter, G.S. Rousseau, and Elain Showalter, p. 289.

thesis would then assume that a real development in women's health care took place in the early Roman empire."[166]With Soranus as a leading medical figure in the 1st and 2nd century CE, it is reasonable to assume that his reaction to midwifery reflects societal trends. If he is producing the guidelines of what an exemplary midwife is, then midwives must have been more positively received than in earlier times and were increasingly involved in medicine. Similarly, Galen references midwifery. According to King,

> Galen dedicated his treatise On the Anatomy of the Uterus to a midwife, and his description of the midwives consulted by the wife of Boethus for her discharge rates them as 'the best in Rome' (On Prognosis 8, Nutton 1979: 110). However, we know neither how good were 'the best', nor how poor were 'the rest'. Nor is Galen a transparent reporter; he needs to claim that Boethus' wife had the best midwives in Rome in order that his own light may shine more brightly after he succeeds where they failed.[167]

King makes an interesting point that Galen only affirms the excellence of midwives in Rome so that he could assert his male expertise over theirs. If this is the case, then we could say that Soranus had the same intention by writing two chapters on what defines the perfect midwife. If he knew what qualified a midwife as the best, then he must have, therefore, only hired the best. In doing so, he could have elevated himself above the midwives as a more knowledgeable male just as King presumes Galen does. This resonates with my Chapter 1 claim that the Hippocratics include three references of female medical professionals to assert male expertise over the women.

[166] *Hippocrates' Woman* by Helen King, p. 176.
[167] P. 176.

The legacy of reasserting male knowledge over women cast a long shadow on gynecology. Until 1671, gynecology had been written from the male perspective.[168] Jane Sharpe's published work *The Midwives Book or the Whole Art of Midwifry* allowed the female to reclaim her narrative. Interestingly enough, "in England, from the seventeenth century onwards, attempts were made to shift the control of normal childbirth out of the hands of women and into those of men. This contrasts with the experience of the rest of Europe, where normal births continued to be supervised by midwives, who would call in a male surgeon only when difficulties were encountered."[169] Sharpe's publication most likely contributed to this movement. As soon as the female medical professional gains some agency, society squashes her. According to King, the trope of the ignorant midwife had a large presence in the 17th century. With all this in mind, there appears to be a push back against midwives in the 17th century. In reference to the ignorant midwife trope, King explains, "Pierre Dionis…argued that midwives were ignorant, and that it was impossible to be a surgeon 'without being acquainted with all that relates to the Art of Midwifery.'"[170] Though there is written resistance toward the midwife, it is not reflected outside of educated male elite written discourse. Instead, the role of midwife expanded so that she handled medicine, surgery, and bloodletting.[171] The negative perception of midwives within medical discourse highlights the male anxiety toward women in medicine. Educated male elites, as a result, attempted to discredit midwives and reposition them in the inferior roles traditionally prescribed for women.

[168] "Marketing Midwives in Seventeenth-Century London: A Re-examination of Jane Sharp's The Midwives Book" by Katharine Phelps Walsh, p. 223
[169] *Hippocrates' Woman* by Helen King, p. 172.
[170] P. 175.
[171] P. 174.

This effort to assert the patriarchy and ascribe ignorance to the midwife persisted in the 19th and 20th century. As a matter of fact, "under a statute passed in 1894, the state of Massachusetts could charge midwives with the unlicensed practice of medicine, even in cases where they were fully trained as midwives, made no claims to general medical knowledge, and were meticulous in calling in physicians to assist in difficult births."[172] We can see that the male anxiety toward the midwife has traveled across both time and space. It does not simply thrive in Europe. Gilbert Cesbron, the 20th century Frenchman, takes this trope to another level when reproducing a translation of Galen's text. King explains, "Galen states that he has seen many hysterikai women, adding that this is how they describe themselves, and what women healers (ἰατρίναι) have called them. When repeating Daremberg's translation, Cesbron cuts the reference to women healers here, and his text has no ellipsis at the relevant point to alert the reader to the omitted matter."[173] Cesbron completely removes the midwives' imprint. He strips away their agency and puts all the focus on Galen, granting him all the credit. This is very similar to the Hippocratic authors who only reference female medical professionals three times, even though it is known that they had more of an impact. Female erasure through omission is a common male tactic to obscure female involvement and agency while asserting male authority. However, Euripides does not employ the same strategy in *Medea*. Instead, he stresses the impossibility of women successfully asserting agency with society by creating a character who does so and achieves victory only due to her mobility across gender, divine, and animal boundaries. Tactics to reinforce prescribed gender norms are not singular. They are asserted in various ways because it is a multifront battle against female autonomy.

[172] P. 174.
[173] "Galen and the Widow: Towards a History of Therapeutic Masturbation in Ancient Gynaecology" by Helen King, pp. 220-221.

I will now transition to discuss the legacy of Medea and how this figure was adapted by later authors in order to demonstrate the consistent reinforcement of patriarchal norms across both magical and medical platforms. As I have said before, Medea is a very malleable character. Different authors depict her in different ways. However, multiple authors sustain the same central ideas and themes about Medea just like medical professionals toward the female patient and medical professional. Two significant Medea texts that I discuss are Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Seneca's *Medea*. Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses* about 8 CE. Like Euripides, Ovid struggles with the complexity of Medea. Originally, he depicts Medea as vulnerable to passion. This aligns with the gender norms that construct women as most susceptible to emotions. Newlands describes, "Her irrational passion drives her to help, not harm. Medea emerges in the first part of the *Metamorphoses 7* not as a being with supernatural powers that can control the universe, but as a struggling young girl who knows what is 'right' but is impelled by her passion to act otherwise."[174] Therefore, Ovid initially persuades the reader to feel sympathy for Medea. However, Medea then experiences a dramatic change. Jason is not the reason for Medea murdering Pelias. It was her own resolve out of malice.[175] Jason is in fact not present at Pelias' kingdom but sought refuge in Corinth. Euripides excuses Medea's murders because she did them to uphold *philia*. However, in Ovid's version, she does not kill Pelias for this reason. Medea experiences a metamorphosis, transforming into a wicked, hysterical witch.

Ovid places full responsibility on Medea for murdering her children and Jason's new bride and father-in-law. Through this, Ovid places Medea in stark contrast to the conventional woman, upholding the latter's positive image. After deceiving King Pelias' daughters, Medea

[174] "The Metamorphoses of Ovid's Medea" by Carole E. Newlands in *Medea*, edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Isles Johnston, p. 183.
[175] P. 188.

flies on her dragon to Corinth where she finds that her husband has betrayed her and wed another. Ovid glosses over Jason's role in provoking her act of vengeance. He writes,

> Here, after Jason's new bride was consumed
> by Medea's drugs and both seas had seen
> the royal palace burning, Medea
> profanely bathed her sword in her sons' blood.
> After this appalling act of vengeance,
> she fled, avoiding Jason's armed response.
> Borne from there on her Titanic dragons
> she came to Athens, city of Pallas.[176]

Ovid portrays Medea as having blown right through Corinth, leaving destruction in her path. Roth-Siegel argues,

> No blame is attributed to Jason in this version for his marriage to Creusa. It is Medea who had first deserted him to pursue her wicked ends. Further, the Medea who comes to Corinth is hardly the woman Jason married. Her improper lives have caught up with her. Her pursuit of the magical arts and her increasing obsession with them have transformed her and led to the deterioration and destruction of her natural self.[177]

Euripides grants Medea sympathy, for she murders Glauke, King Kreon, and her children because she was enraged that, while she upheld *philia*, Jason had broken it. She committed every crime for Jason's own benefit. In Ovid's version, she deviates from marital expectations and does as she pleases. By writing Medea's story and depicting her as a wicked witch, Ovid presents

[176] *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, edited and translated by Ian Johnston, lines 391-398.
[177] "Amor, Metamorphosis and Magic: Ovid's Medea (Met. 7.1-424)" by Judith A. Rosner-Siegel, p. 242.

what women ought not to be. This harrowing tale persuades women to conform to prescribed gender roles.

Seneca's *Medea*, analogous to Euripides', utilizes the societal conception that women are hysterical to deceive and achieve vengeance. She is an overly emotional woman who murders her children in a fit of rage after her husband leaves her for another. Medea has upheld *philia* by committing crimes for her husband, darkening her image, yet he still marries another. In both versions, Medea takes advantage of hysteria associated with femininity. Seneca's Medea uses her tears to convince King Kreon to let her stay for one more day though in a different way than Euripides'. In Euripides' version, Medea cries hysterical tears so that Kreon would pity her enough to let her stay. In Seneca's story, Medea says to Kreon, "You refuse a wretched woman time that is insufficient even for tears?"[178] Understanding that she is a woman who must cry for her cruel fate and loss of children, King Kreon acquiesces and lets her stay within the kingdom for one more day.

Similarly to Euripides' version, Seneca also describes Medea administering a *pharmakon*. He describes her preparation of the concoction, "She plucks the deadly herbs and bleeds the snakes of their venom; she mixes in also unwholesome birds, the heart of a boding horned owl and entrails cut from a living screech owl."[179] The murder scene, however, it not as animately and horrifyingly described as Euripides'. In the end of Seneca's play, Medea murders her son and is ultimately victorious. The ending suggests that she once again escapes on her grandfather Helios's chariot.

[178] *Medea* by Seneca, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, line 293.
[179] Lines 731-734.

Seneca's Medea is victorious in the end, as Euripides' Medea is, because she crosses mortal-divine boundaries. Jason has the last words in his conversation with Medea, saying, "Travel on high through the lofty spaces of heaven, and bear witness where you ride that there are no gods."[180] The ending is very speculative. Durham argues that through these words, "Jason confirms that Medea has brought about the total dissolution of the patriarchal order."[181] Perhaps this is true but only to the extent that it is overcome by Medea who is inhumane. Similar to Euripides, Seneca is sympathetic to female plight but offers no solution. Instead, he portrays a woman who is in fact not fully woman nor human. Medea asserts, "What savagery of wild beasts, what Scylla, what Charybdis sucking in the Ausonian and Sicilian seas, what Etna crushing the panting Titan, will blaze with such menace as mine? No whirling river, no stormy ocean, no sea enraged by northwesters, no force of fire aided by gales, could check the momentum of my anger. I shall overturn and flatten everything."[182] Medea claims that her anger goes beyond that of wild beasts, such as mythological creatures Scylla and Charybdis. Nor does anyone have the power to stop her, not even the gods, perhaps. She explains that no storm, fire, or wind can stop her, which are elements controlled by the gods. In this way, Medea positions herself above the mortal world. Therefore, both Seneca and Euripides portray women who transgress gender norms due to their fluidity. In doing so, they offer no remedy for women to overcome the patriarchy and thus uphold prescribed gender roles.

On another note, Seneca also illustrates the male fear of the regression from the *gynê* to the *parthenos*, which is ingrained in the Hippocratic Corpus. After killing one of her children and Jason's new bride and father-in-law, she exclaims. "Now in this moment I have recovered my

[180] Lines 1026-1027.
[181] "Medea: Hero or Heroine?" by Caroline A. Durham, p. 56.
[182] Lines 406-414.

sceptre, brother, father, and the Colchians hold the spoil of the golden ram. My realm is restored, my stolen maidenhood restored."[183] Medea exemplifies the necessity in taming wives so that they do not once again become uncontrolled *parthenos*. Therefore, by associating monstrous behavior with reclaiming the *parthenos* identity, Seneca reinforces patriarchal norms.

Magic and medicine, two seemingly disparate practices, converge in educated male elite written discourse on women. Though they both have evolved throughout time, the attitude they convey toward women remains consistent. The two practices present women as a potential threat since the use of either grants an individual agency. The ways in which different educated male elites attempt to prevent women from acquiring this power, as I have demonstrated, is not uniform. These men are products of their culture yet also make their culture in the sense that they produce this writing to be later read by other educated male elites who in turn reproduce these fundamental ideas. This cycle is bound by educated male elites who reflect the greater male anxiety toward the female. It is important to study the different ways in which men reinforce patriarchal norms so that we can combat these attempts and grant women the space to assert their agency.

[183] Lines 982-984.

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