EROS AND THE EROS-AFFLICTED: ANCIENT GREEK EROTIC ANXIETY THROUGH THE MYTHS OF HELEN AND MEDEA

by

CASEY RUTH NEILL

(Under the Direction of Charles Platter)

ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to examine the portrayals of eros, both its perceived origin and effects on the human body, and eros-afflicted women, who might be compelled to act against the established socio-political norm. Helen and Medea are used as a lens through which any potential changes or shifts in Greek thought over time may be identified. The thesis progresses chronologically through time beginning with Homer and concluding in the fourth and third centuries B.C.E.

INDEX WORDS: Eros in Ancient Greece; Eros; Women and Eros; Women in the Ancient World; Erotic Desire; Erotic Anxiety; Helen; Medea

EROS AND THE EROS-AFFLICTED: ANCIENT GREEK EROTIC ANXIETY THROUGH THE MYTHS OF HELEN AND MEDEA

by

CASEY RUTH NEILL

B.A., Ohio University, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2014

EROS AND THE EROS-AFFLICTED: ANCIENT GREEK EROTIC ANXIETY THROUGH THE MYTHS OF HELEN AND MEDEA

by

CASEY RUTH NEILL

Major Professor: Charles Platter

Committee: Naomi Norman
Christine Albright

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my parents for their constant stream of support during the composition of this thesis. My father set a strong example of hard work and dedication that I have emulated throughout my academic career. My mother provided me with sound advice and compassion that has carried me through my academic and personal pursuits. I am also extremely grateful to my committee; I am particularly grateful to Dr. Charles Platter, without whose patience and support this thesis would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The potential for erotic desires to seize someone – especially a woman – and to drive her to act destructively against society was a constant source of anxiety in the Greek world. Anne Carson details this fear: "In [ancient Greek society], individuals who are regarded as especially lacking in control of their own boundaries or as possessing special talents and opportunities for confounding the boundaries of others, evoke fear and controlling action from the rest of society. Women are so regarded by men in ancient Greek society."[1] In the social hierarchy of Greece, the status of women was below that of men and was more akin to that of children.[2] The greater the desire men had to control the movement of women in society, the greater the anxiety there was over the potential to lose that control. The fear of losing control over women, that women would break their boundaries because of eros or some other compulsion,[3] was prevalent in the ancient world, as indicated by its expression in Greek poetry and prose. Authors were able to draw on men's anxiety and imagine the worst possible outcomes of female transgressions. These scenarios were manifested in the mythological tales that provided the subject matter for much of ancient Greek poetry and prose and that created distance

---

[1] Carson, Anne, "Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire," in *Before Sexuality*: *The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* eds. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 135.

[2] Blondell, *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9-10.

[3] Hippocrates (*On Diseases of Women)* described the natural state of women as being "wet" and asserted that this affected their behavior.

between these scenarios and the actual mortal woman who were generating concern. Certain mythological women, such as Helen and Medea, challenged their traditional roles by traversing and subverting the boundaries established for them while under the influence of erotic desires. Therefore, the anxieties represented in the myths of Helen and Medea are twofold; there is both the anxiety over eros as a force to coerce an individual into behaving οὐ κατὰ νόμους and the Greek anxiety over the departure of women from their traditional subservient roles to roles that rivaled the position of men. Men feared the hidden potential within women to usurp male power.

Helen and Medea create a lens through which to study the manifestation of erotic desire in ancient Greek literature. First, the thesis will examine the aspects of eros that created anxiety in the ancient world, namely, its unpredictable and uncontrollable origin, and its effects on the human body. Second, the thesis will provide a basic understanding of what the gender expectations were in the ancient world and the ways in which eros-afflicted women could violate these expectations. Third, the thesis will discuss the representations of Helen and Medea in each literary age; both how their position as women necessitates fear and how their mythologies fit within the study of erotic anxiety. Changes or shifts in the portrayals of these women may be indicative of the times in which each representation is produced.

The anxiety that stems from eros itself may be divided into two distinct categories: the origin of erotic passion, and the physical and psychological effects that eros exerts on the victim and those around him or her. Ancient authors describe eros as a powerful force, both divine and above the divine. Hesiod and Apollonius describe Eros as an independent god, separate from Aphrodite; Hesiod names him as the fourth god to

come into being in the universe.[4] More often, eros is a human condition caused by Aphrodite. For example both Paris and Helen in the *Iliad* blame Aphrodite for the Trojan War and its destruction. Sappho and Anacreon take on a more active role by themselves calling on Aphrodite to manipulate their own lovers.[5] Euripides' Jason affirms Aphrodite's role in manipulating Medea,[6] and in Apollonius both Eros and Aphrodite are responsible for Medea's love.[7] Divine forces were considered unconquerable and that explained why it was so difficult for mortals to resist the effects of eros. There are also stories of divinities being similarly compelled by unexpected erotic desires; for example, Hera borrows Aphrodite's belt and wears it when she meets Zeus in order to overwhelm him with desire and distract him from learning of her actions on the battlefield.[8] Thus, the force of eros is able to be manipulated by the gods and is able to manipulate the gods themselves. Men and gods alike may become passive victims of desire. The solidarity between immortals and mortals in the face of eros is far from comforting to ancient Greeks, especially as it concerns women; instead, it increases the feeling of helplessness and vulnerability when dealing with such a volatile force as eros.[9]

Greek literature is full of examples of gods causing mortals to experience eros but there are also many works in which characters or authors consider eros as a force, albeit a powerful one, that humans are expected to control. When mortals, particularly women,

---

[4] Hes. *Th.* 120-122.
[5] Ibid., 120-122; Sappho Fr.1; Anacreon Fr. 357.
[6] Eur. *Med*. 526-528.
[7] Apollon. 3.1-298.
[8] Zeus is overcome by eros for Hera (Hom. *Il.* 14.135-331).
[9] The issue of helplessness is criticized in the Classical age when there is a growing belief that mortals use the divine origin of eros or the gods susceptibility to eros as an excuse for their own actions. The issue is addressed in Arist. *Clouds.* 1068-1082 and is the focus of the next chapter.

fail to control their erotic urges, other members of their society criticize them. Often some characters hold Helen and Medea personally responsible for their own actions while others blame the gods. For example, both views appear in Euripides *Troades* and *Medea* (which will be the focus of the third chapter). Furthermore, in Herodotus' brief discussion of Helen and Medea, only human agents are mentioned and eros is conspicuously absent. Both women are abducted as part of a cycle of revenge that begins with Io and ends with Helen, and the gods are never mentioned. This alternative perception of eros, as a human emotion and therefore able to be controlled by humans, appears most often in the Classical period.

In addition to the fear of the uncontrollable and unpredictable origins of eros, there was a great concern for the effects of eros on the unwilling target. Eros affects the body and mind of an individual. Physically, a person under the influence of eros may exhibit symptoms similar to those of a disease. Thornton notes "eros is consistently characterized with epithets signifying destructiveness, suffering, pain, and numerous other frightening disorders."[10] Frequent descriptions of pain and comparison of eros to diseases and wounds appear throughout Greek literature.[11] Psychologically, an afflicted person may lose track of propriety and undermine social expectations. The socio-political norm, that mode of life that Greek men feared eros-afflicted women could destroy, is founded on a set of expectations for each gender. Women were to be silent, submissive and obedient to the commands of their husbands, fathers or brothers. These expectations were ideals, and the poets who wrote about them also described, if somewhat bitterly, the

---

[10] Thornton, Bruce. *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality.* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 46.
[11] Sappho Fr. 31; Archilochus Fr. 191, 193.

alternative realities that occured.[12] While women had the power to be useful, contributing members of their societies (prime examples being Penelope and Andromache), Hesiod, Semonides and other authors often chose to write about the negative characteristics of women, both those stimulated by erotic affliction and those innate in most women.

Eros affected both men and women, but the majority of ancient portrayals of eros-afflicted mortals are of women. Women were seen as being particularly vulnerable to eros, making eros-afflicted females a much greater concern to the established social order. The medical authors used a physiological analysis of women's bodies to explain their predisposition to erotic compulsion.[13] Lesley Dean-Jones and Anne Carson discuss the opinions of Hippocrates and Aristotle on the physical nature of women.[14] According to these ancient authors, women were inherently wetter than men. Hippocrates claims: "The female flourishes more in an environment of water, from things cold and wet and soft, whether food or drink or activities. The male flourishes more in an environment of fire, from dry, hot foods and mode of life."[15] Women's bodies craved intercourse because

---

[12] E.g. Semonides Fr.7.

[13] The medical writers' views on women are vast. I provide only a general explanation for the purpose of basic background understanding as to why, in Greek thought, women were more susceptible to erotic desire. For more information see Winkler, John. *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990), Dean-Jones, Lesley. *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), and Hanson Ann Ellis. "The Medical Writer's Woman." In *Before Sexuality*: *The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* eds. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin, 309-338. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[14] Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 1994 and Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 1990.

[15] Hipp. *Vict.* 27 Translation of Hippocrates comes from Carson "Putting Her in Her Place," 137; Similar distinction in Aristot. *Probl.* 4.25.879a33-34; 4.28.88a12-20. There is a debate over whether Aristotle believes that women are warmer or cooler than men. Aristotle affirms that Parmenides claimed that women were warmer than men due to their excess blood (*PA* 648a29-34). Empedocles says that Aristotle cites Parmenides only to contradict his conclusion, believing that women were colder due to blood loss (DK 62 B

it was necessary to regulate the amount of moisture held in their body. The womb was most affected by changes in levels of wetness. The womb needed to be "irrigated" through sexual intercourse to obtain fluids from male partners. Without regular "irrigation" of the womb, the organ could wander over the human body, attaching itself to other organs and generating female hysteria.[16] Carson also notes that wetness, according to Aristotle, is that which is has no boundary.[17] Therefore, women's inherent moistness makes them also inherently boundary-less. Since women's roles in society were tightly restricted and fiercely guarded, any female transgression across the assigned social boundaries was considered a threat to the position of men.

In the Greek world, the inability to hold one's boundaries reflected a lack of *sophrosyne* or self-control.[18] While *sophrosyne* "is a word of rich and varying overtones in its application to masculine exemplars," Carson notes, "feminine *sophrosyne* always includes, and is frequently no more than, chastity."[19] *Sophrosyne* in women is judged by their ability, or inability, to control erotic impulses. The explanation for women's lack of *sophrosyne,* according to the medical texts, is attributed to their physiological

---

65). This was still debated in Plutarch (*Mor.* 650f-651f). Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies,* 44-45.

[16] For men's role in irrigating and anchoring the womb see Dean-Jones, Lesley. "The Politics of Pleasure: Female Sexual Appetite in the Hippocratic Corpus." In *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to Aids,* ed. Domna C. Stanton (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1992): 48-77.

63. For a discussion of "the wandering womb" see Hanson, "The Medical Writer's Woman," 318, Dean Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 70; For ancient discussion on this phenomenon see Hp. *Mul.* 2. 123,124, 127, 137, 138.

[17] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 153; Arist. *De gen. et corr.* 329b31-33.

[18] Both male and female *sophrosyne* required a control over sexual activity or desires. Lesley Dean-Jones asserts "a man who too often felt the attractions of either sex lacked *sophrosyne*." "The Politics of Pleasure," 52. See also Foucault, Michel *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1 Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House Inc, 1990).

[19] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 14.

composition (i.e. their natural wetness and need to irrigate their womb). Due to the patriarchal organization of ancient Greek society, men feared that women would move beyond their traditional boundaries, perhaps because of their physiological urges. Any transgression that had the potential to loosen women from their strict social boundaries and to challenge the position of men threatened the male hold on the society.

Winkler and Keul agree that the anxiety men felt towards eros-afflicted women, as portrayed in the myths of Helen and Medea, was probably not something constantly or consciously explored by the male populace.[20] In fact, it was "socially necessary" for men to ignore any informal power that women might have had to influence Greek life.[21] Instead, men dealt with their anxiety indirectly "through myths of Amazons and through their cultural fantasies of rebellious wives in tragedy or comedy."[22] According to Keuls, there was a "Greek mythological obsession with monstrous women and with gyneococracy (literally 'women's rule,' but more accurately 'women getting out of hand')" and that this reflected "man's irrational fear of the female."[23]

It is clear from the collective stories about Helen and Medea in ancient Greek literature that even when these women were not under the compulsion of eros they resisted the standard confines of their gender and when they were consumed by eros, these women shattered the ideal expectations, leaving their homes and the authority of

---

[20] Winkler, *Constraints of Desire,* 7-8; Keul, Eva. *The Reign of the Phallus*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 332.
[21] Winkler, *Constraints of Desire,* 7.
[22] Ibid., 7.
[23] Keuls, *Reign of the Phallus*, 66; Keuls describes gyneococracy in greater detail: "In the politics of Aristotle, the word "gyneococracy", literally meaning women's rule, refers not to anything like political matriarchy but rather women getting out of control or breaking through the walls of restriction that have been erected around them" Keuls, *Reign of the Phallus,* 321.

their male patrons. Helen and Medea are each related to divinities, are royal, and received unusually high respect from the men around them. Lesley Dean-Jones notes that the majority of eros-afflicted women portrayed in myths "are masculinized in some way" and that "their stories normally end in disaster for them and all concerned with them."[24] Helen and Medea engage in the traditionally masculine mode of expression, speech. In the *Iliad* Helen discusses the attributes of the Greek warriors with Priam[25] and in the *Odyssey* she greets Telemachus' party and even identifies them. Medea in *Pythian 4* gives a prophetic speech on the fate of the sailors' expedition and afterward "the god-like men, motionless, cowered in silence hearing the shrewd wisdom" ἔπταξαν δ' ἀκίνητοι σιωπᾷ/ ἥρωες ἀντίθεοι πυκινὰν μῆτιν κλύοντες).[26] Medea also uses speech to manipulate Creon in Euripides' *Medea.*[27] Her deception leads to the death of Creon and his daughter. These "masculine" attributes are fundamental to the character of each of these women.

In addition to crossing traditional gender roles, Helen and Medea also crossed very real physical boundaries. Helen travels east to Troy and Medea travels west to Greece. Their myths exist as part of the complicated relationship between Greece and the east, an exchange of women and the lives of men who fought over them.[28] Regardless of which direction they were traveling, both women bring havoc to the place from which they depart and to the place in which they arrive. The movement of these women outside

---

[24] Dean-Jones, "Politics of Pleasure," 62.
[25] Hom. *Il.* 3.162-255.
[26] Pind. *P*. 4. 57-58.
[27] Eur. *Med.* 271-356.
[28] The strained relations and negative opinion that the Greeks had for the Persians and other "barbarians" from the east is part of a much larger discussion that can only be mentioned here briefly, but nevertheless support the selection of the myths of Helen and Medea for this thesis.

of their societal and geographical boundaries caused devastation to their males in their society and because their transgressions are intimately associated or attributed to an erotic relationship, Helen and Medea are useful tools in examining Greek erotic anxiety.

The thesis examines the chronological representations of erotic anxiety in Greek literature from the Homeric to the Hellenistic age using Helen and Medea as lens to reflect Greek perceptions of eros in each time period. The first chapter discusses pre-classical views of eros and eros-afflicted women, focusing on how portrayals of Helen and Medea reflect the overarching fears of women violating social expectations. The second chapter discusses the perception of eros in the Classical age, examining the portrayals of Helen and Medea across multiple genres. The chapter considers the historical prose of Herodotus and Thucydides, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the encomia of Gorgias and Isocrates. Two tragedies, Euripides' *Troades* and *Medea*, serve as case studies that reflect the tendency of the Classical age to present eros both as divine force and eros as a force which should and could be controlled by mortals. The third chapter focuses on fourth and third century texts. The poetry of Theocritus, Callimachus and Apollonius are discussed in great detail, as well as the mimes of Herodas. The primary focus of the chapter is Apollonius' portrayal of Medea in the *Argonautica* as a woman consciously resisting her erotic compulsion, but who is ultimately unable to overcome its effects. Over the course of four hundred years, multiple representations of the same myths appear, each version with its own nuanced view of eros and the eros-afflicted. Any differences in the portrayals of myths as well-established as those of Helen and Medea or any increase in the frequency of texts supporting one or more views of eros and eros-afflicted women, are worth noting since

they may reflect the character or overall sentiment of the time period and will add to the ongoing study of erotic anxiety in ancient Greece.

CHAPTER 2

PRE-CLASSICAL PERCEPTIONS OF EROS, BLAME AND EROTIC ANXIETY IN THE MYTHS OF HELEN AND MEDEA

Ancient Greeks were concerned with the potential for eros-afflicted women to act destructively against the societal norm. Evidence for this anxiety is prevalent in Homeric and Archaic literary representations of eros and the eros-afflicted, particularly Helen and Medea. Helen leaves her husband for Paris, a translocation that wreaks havoc on her family and all the Greek city-states with a deadly ten-year war. Medea not only betrays her family and orchestrates her brother's death in the name of love, but also responds violently when Jason exchanges her love for a political alliance. She destroys both the family of his new suitor and her own. Each woman exemplifies the disastrous effects that occur to the traditional Greek socio-political order when a woman succumbs to eros.

The chapter examines ancient Greek anxiety over eros and eros-afflicted women portrayed in pre-classical literature. First, the aspects of eros that created anxiety in the ancient world, namely, its unpredictable and uncontrollable origin, and its effects on the human body must be examined. Second, the expectations for both men and women in the pre-classical world must be defined to establish what was the social norm that Greeks were afraid of losing. Third, the representations of Helen and Medea in Homeric and Archaic poetry can be examined: both how their position as women necessitates fear and how their mythologies fit within the study of erotic anxiety. The main sources for the chapter are the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, and the archaic poets: Sappho, Ibycus, Alcaeus,

Pindar and Stesichorus. Much of the extant pre-classical literature deals revolves around the Trojan War; because of this Helen will be the more prevalent example discussed in this chapter.

The Origin of Eros in Pre-classical Greece

Homer and the Archaic poets discuss eros as a force that overwhelms an individual, a force that can be manipulated by the gods either for a mortal's or another god's benefit or detriment, and a force that can be redirected and altered onto various other objects. Frequently the gods appear to urge two humans into romantic endeavors, or are called upon by one afflicted with unrequited love in hope that the gods might change the inclinations of the beloved. Mortal invocations of divinities indicate that they believed the gods had some level of control over the force of eros and that at their whim divinities could inflict eros on unwilling or unwitting mortal victims.

In Homer's *Iliad* the relationship between Paris and Helen exists almost entirely at Aphrodite's urging. Several characters, including Paris and Helen, attribute the problematic union directly to Aphrodite. In Book Three when Hector reproaches Paris for taking Helen from Sparta, Paris warns Hector not to blame him for Aphrodite's wishes: "Don't bear against me the lovely gifts of golden Aphrodite, the magnificent gifts of the gods are not to be thrown away, gifts which they give, no one wanting could receive" (μή μοι δῶρ᾽ ἐρατὰ πρόφερε χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης:/οὔ τοι ἀπόβλητ' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα/ ὅσσά κεν αὐτοὶ δῶσιν, ἑκὼν δ' οὐκ ἄν τις ἕλοιτο).[29] Helen also appeals to Hector when he finds Paris in her bedchamber; she says that the gods brought about these horrible matters

[29] Hom *Il.* 3.64-66; All translations of Homer are my own unless otherwise indicated.

(αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάδε γ' ὧδε θεοὶ κακὰ τεκμήραντο).[30] In the *Odyssey* Helen tells Telemachus party that she "lamented the infatuation which Aphrodite gave" (ἄτην δὲ μετέστενον, ἣν Ἀφροδίτη δῶχ᾽).[31] To stave off the claim that these characters had personal motives for blaming Aphrodite for their relationship, which of course they did have, there are three other individuals who affirm this claim. Diomedes accuses Aphrodite personally when he encounters her on the battlefield: "Is it not enough that you beguile feeble women?" (ἦ οὐχ ἅλις ὅττι γυναῖκας ἀνάλκιδας ἠπεροπεύεις).[32] Priam and Penelope also issue speeches blaming the gods for the adulterous union. Priam, from atop the Trojan citadel, tells Helen "you are not responsible, but to me, the gods are responsible (οὔ τί μοι αἰτίη ἐσσί, θεοί νύ μοι αἴτιοί εἰσιν).[33] Penelope, in Book Twenty-three of the *Odyssey,* makes a speech in defense of Helen asserting "some god urged her" to leave with Paris:[34]

> οὐδέ κεν Ἀργείη Ἑλένη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,
> ἀνδρὶ παρ᾽ ἀλλοδαπῷ ἐμίγη φιλότητι καὶ εὐνῇ,
> (220) εἰ ᾔδη ὅ μιν αὖτις ἀρήϊοι υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
> ἀξέμεναι οἴκόνδε φίλην ἐς πατρίδ᾽ ἔμελλον.
> τὴν δ᾽ ἦ τοι ῥέξαι θεὸς ὤρορεν ἔργον ἀεικές:
> τὴν δ᾽ ἄτην οὐ πρόσθεν ἐῷ ἐγκάτθετο θυμῷ
> λυγρήν, ἐξ ἧς πρῶτα καὶ ἡμέας ἵκετο πένθος.
>
> Not even Argive Helen, born from Zeus
> would have mixed in love or lay alongside a foreign man
> (220) if she had known that the warlike sons of the Achaeans
> were destined to lead her home again to her dear fatherland.
> In truth, a god urged her to do the shameful deed:
> Not before did she put into her heart the mournful infatuation,
> from which our first grief came. [35]

---

[30] Hom. *Il*. 6.39.
[31] Hom. *Od.* 4.261-262.
[32] Hom. *Il.* 5.349.
[33] Ibid., 3.164.
[34] Blondell's interpretation of Penelope's speech will be discussed further on in this chapter.
[35] Hom. *Il.* 23.218-224.

Furthermore, Aphrodite initiates all contact between Helen and Paris in the *Iliad*. She facilitates their meeting in the bedchamber after she personally removes Paris from his duel with Menelaus. Helen is reluctant to go to her Trojan husband, but Aphrodite warns her not to disobey the will of the gods.[36] Even once Helen is in Paris' presence she is scornful and compares his weak attributes to the bold fury of her former husband,[37] but Paris eventually leads her to his bed, seducing her with soft words. In the remainder of the poem Helen is seen lamenting her situation or thinking about Menelaus.[38] It is clear that the union of Helen and Paris are heavily dependent on the coercion of Aphrodite.

The Archaic poets, both in their treatment of the myths of Helen and Medea and in their broader treatment of love, also attribute the power of eros to Aphrodite. Alcaeus, Ibycus and Sappho write about Aphrodite and other immortal gods' roles in the Trojan War, specifically their role in forcing eros upon Helen. Fragment Forty-Two of Alcaeus begins with the origin of the Trojan War:

> ὡς λόγος, κάκον ἄ[χος ἔννεκ᾽ἔργων
> Περράμωι καὶ παισ[ί ποτ ἦλθε, Κύπρι*
> ἐκ σέθεν πίκρον, π[ύρι δ᾽ὤλεσε Ζεῦς
> Ἴλιον ἴραν.[39]
>
> The story goes, bitter grief for the sake of wicked deeds
> came to Priam and his children,
> from you, Cypris, and Zeus destroyed holy
> Ilium with fire.

[36] Ibid., 3.383-416.
[37] Ibid., 3.417-36.
[38] Helen misses Menelaus: Hom. *Il.* 3.139-40; 3.173-76; Helen misses her family: Hom. *Il.* 3.140, 3.175-75, 3.180, 3.236-42; Helen compares Paris and Menelaus: Hom. *Il.* 3.428-36, 6.350-53.
[39] This version of the reconstruction is taken from D'Angour in line with Page's reconstruction.

This portion of the poem is fragmentary, but most reconstructions supply Zeus and either Aphrodite or Helen as the direct source of pain for the Trojans.[40] Fragment 283 discusses Helen and eros; however, a crucial portion of the poem is missing from the first line.

καιν[.]ων.υν[ ]ν[
ωνενοϲ.ρπ.[ ]

κ᾽Αλένας ἐν στήθ[ε]σιν [ἐ]πτ[όαισε
θῦμον Ἀργείας Τροΐω δ᾽ [ὐ]π᾽ ἄν[δρος
ἐκμάνεισα ξ[εν]ναπάτα ᾽πὶ π[όντον (5)
ἔσπετο νᾶϊ,

παῖδά τ᾽ ἐν δόμ[ο]ισι λίποις [ἐρήμαν
κἄνδρος εὖϲτρῳτοϲ [λ]έχος .[
πεῖθ᾽ ἔρω<ι> θῦμο[
[παι]δα Δ[ιο]ς τε (10)

[ ]πιε..μανι[
[κ]ασιγνήτων πόλεασ μ[έλαινα
[γα]ῖ ἔχει Τρώων πεδίω<ι> δά[μεντας
ἕν]νεκα κήνας,

πόλ]λα δ᾽ ἄρματ᾽ ἐν κονίαισι [
ἤρι]πεν, πόλλοι δ᾽ἐλικϲπε[ϲ
]οι ϲτ[ει]βοντο, φὸνϲ δ . [
]… […]ευϲ

….fluttered the heart of Argive Helen
in her breast; maddened with a passion for the man
from Troy, the traitor-guest, she followed him (5)
over the sea in his ship,

leaving her child at home….
and her husband’s richly covered bed….
… her heart persuaded by desire…
[line missing] (10)

[line missing]
…many of his brothers the black

[40] Page and Campbell use ἼΩλεν instead of Κύπρι. Blondell supplies Helen’s name on the basis that the poem is meant to juxtapose Helen and Thetis, but it is definitively unclear as to whom the poet meant to accuse. Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 99.

earth holds fast, laid low on the Trojan plain
for that woman's sake,

and many chariots in the dust… [41]

The first line that would specify what force is exciting Helen is heavily damaged, but it seems likely that eros or Aphrodite would have been the force "fluttering the heart of Argive Helen."[42] In addition, at line nine Helen's heart is "persuaded," presumably by some force. Persuasion indicates that Helen was at one point resistant to the idea of leaving, and something or someone had to make her change her mind, the likely culprits being eros, a divinity or Paris.

A fragment of Ibycus likewise attributes responsibility to the gods, Zeus and Aphrodite, for creating the conflict at Troy and, presumably, the eros that drove Paris and Helen:

οἳ κ]αὶ Δαρδανίδα Πριάμοιο μέ-
γ' ἄσ]τυ περικλεὲς ὄλβιον ἠνάρον
Ἄργ]οθεν ὀρνυμένοι
[Ζη]νὸς μεγάλοιο βουλαῖς

ξα]νθᾶς Ἑλένας περὶ εἴδει (5)
δῆ]ριν πολύυμνον ἔχ[ο]ντες
πό]λεμον κατὰ δακρ[υό]εντα,
Πέρ]γαμον δ' ἀνέ[β]α ταλαπείριο[ν ἄ]τα
[χρυ]σοέθειραν δ[ι]ὰ Κύπριδα.

… who brought Dardanian Priam's great
city, far-famed and prosperous, to destruction
setting out from Argos
by the counsels of great Zeus

involved, over fair-haired Helen's beauty,
in a struggle glorified by many songs
a war that led to tears

[41] Translation Miller *Greek Lyric*, 45.
[42] David Campbell notes that "subject is probably Love or Aphrodite" Alcaeus *Greek Lyric Poetry I*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 283.

when ruin scaled long-suffering Pergamos
through Aphrodite of the golden tresses…[43]

These examples specifically cite higher powers involved in the fate of Helen and the Trojan War, and it is clear from other poems that there was a profound belief in the ability of Aphrodite or some other divinity to assign erotic passion to whomever he or she so chose. Sappho Fragment Sixteen comments on Helen's erotic desire for Paris in relation to other potential erotic catalysts:

o]ἰ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἰ δὲ πέσδων
οἰ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-
[ ]τω τις ἔραται·

πά]γχυ δ' εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι (5)
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἀ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα[44]
[ ]τὸν [πανάρ]στον[45]

καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροΐαν πλέοι[σα
κωὐδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων (10)
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' ἄϋταν
[ ]σαν

[ ]αμπτον γὰρ [
[ ]... κούφως τ[ ]οη.[.]ν
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι- (15)
[σ' οὐ] παρεοίσας,

τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κἀμάρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα †κανοπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχεντας.[46] (20)

Some say a host of horsemen is the most beautiful thing
on the black earth, some say a host of foot-soldier,

[43] Fr. 1a. Page, or Fr. S 151 Translation from Miller Andrew. *Greek Lyric: An Anthology in Translation.* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996) 95.
[44] 1-7 suppl. Hunt
[45] 8 Page
[46] Suppl. Rackham

some, a fleet of ships; but I say it is
whatever one loves.

Wholly easy it is to make this intelligible
to everyone, for she who by far surpassed
all humankind in beauty, Helen,
forsook her husband,

noblest of men, to sail away to Troy;
neither of child nor of beloved parents
did she take thought at all, being led astray by…

… for pliant…
….lightly…
… now has brought Anaktoria to my mind,
though she is absent:

I would rather see her lovely step
and the glancing brightness of her face
than Lydian chariots and foot soldiers
arrayed in armor.[47]

Sappho attributes both the involvement of Aphrodite and the nature of the erotic forces to the actions of all who are the love-afflicted, not merely that of Helen.

Divine instigation is also present in Archaic representations of the myth of Medea. Hesiod's brief treatment of Medea in the *Theogony* asserts that she too was led away "by the will of the gods" (κούρην δ᾽ Αἰήταο διοτρεφέος βασιλῆος/ Αἰσονίδης βουλῇσι θεῶν αἰειγενετάων/ ἦγε παρ᾽ Αἰήτεω…).[48] Divine involvement is also mentioned in Pindar's *Pythian* Four.[49] In this ode Aphrodite teaches Jason " 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" (μαινάδ᾽ ὄρνιν Κυπρογένεια φέρεν/ πρῶτον ἀνθρώποισι, λιτάς τ᾽ ἐπαοιδὰς ἐκδιδάσκησεν

[47] Translation from Miller, *Greek Lyric,* 1996.
[48] Hes. *Th.* 992-994.
[49] Hesiod's *Theogony* and Pindar's *Pythian 4* are the only poems that reference Medea prior to the Classical age.

σοφὸν Αἰσονίδαν:/ ὄφρα Μηδείας τοκέων ἀφέλοιτ᾽ αἰδῶ, ποθεινὰ δ᾽ Ἑλλὰς αὐτὰν / ἐν φρασὶ καιομέναν δονέοι μάστιγι Πειθοῦς).[50] Gantz asserts that through these references "Medea emerges rather as a victim of Jason and his divine helpers, robbed of her respect for her parents so that she might follow her lover into Greece."[51] Divine forces manipulate Medea; it is not her decision to become involved with Jason but, like Helen, it is the plans of divinities that bring about their union.

The Archaic poets cite the gods' involvement in their own love affairs in addition to mythological relationships. In Fragment One Sappho invokes Aphrodite as she laments that her own love is unrequited. In the first stanza she calls Aphrodite, the "weaver of snares," who manipulates mortals with her erotic power:

> πο]ικιλόθρο[ν᾽ ἀθανάτ᾽ Ἀφρόδιτα,
> παῖ] Δ[ί]ος δολ[όπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
> μή μ᾽] ἄσαισι [μηδ᾽ ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
> [ ]πότν]ια, θῦ[μον,
>
> Immortal Aphrodite on your richly crafted throne,
> daughter of Zeus, weaver of snares, I beg you,
> do not with sorrows and with pains subdue
> my heart, O Lady…

In the fourth stanza Sappho details the exact nature of Aphrodite's powers. Aphrodite is capable of completely changing a person's desires:

> κα]ὶ γ[ὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
> <αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ᾽, ἀλλὰ δώσει,>
> <αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει>
> κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα.>
>
> for if she flees now, soon she shall pursue;
> if she refuses presents, she shall give them;

---

[50] Pind. *P*. 4. 215-220; Translation by Diane Arnson Svarlien (1990) .
[51] Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek Myth.* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1993) 359.

if she does not love, soon she shall love
even against her will

Thornton notes that in Sapphic poetry Aphrodite has the power to "subdue/conquer/break her victims, obliterating their will to resist."[52] Anacreon also attests to the gods' ability to manipulate the erotic focus of an individual. He does not pray to Aphrodite, but to her companion Dionysus, to manipulate Kleoboulos' love:[53]

ὦναξ, ὦι δαμάλης Ἔρως
καὶ Νύμφαι κυανώπιδες
πορφυρῆ τ' Ἀφροδίτη
συμπαίζουσιν, ἐπιστρέφεαι
δ' ὑψηλὰς ὀρέων κορυφάς· (5)
γουνοῦμαί σε, σὺ δ' εὐμενὴς
ἔλθ' ἡμίν, κεχαρισμένης
δ' εὐχωλῆς ἐπακούειν·
Κλεοβούλωι δ' ἀγαθὸς γένεο
σύμβουλος, τὸν ἐμόν γ' ἔρω- (10)
τ', ὦ Δεόνυσε, δέχεσθαι.

O lord, form whom Love the subduer,
the dark-eyed Nymphs,
and Aphrodite of the rosy skin
are companions in play as you wander
over the mountains' lofty peaks,
I entreat you, come to me
in a kindly mood, and with approval
listen to my prayer:
to Kleoboulos offer good
counsel, O Dionysus, so that he
may accept my love.[54]

These examples indicate how one individual can call on the gods to change the personal desires of another, who may not even be aware that they are lusted after. The inability to prevent a god from inflicting eros is arguably part of what makes eros so terrifying to the ancient Greeks.

---

[52] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality,* 51.
[53] Page Fr. 12; Miller, *Greek Lyric,* Fr. 357.
[54] Translation from Miller, *Greek Lyric,* 1996.

Eros is equally inconvenient in the lives of gods, who, while so often responsible for affecting the lives of mortals, find themselves at the mercy of Aphrodite and the erotic power she controls. In Book Fourteen of the *Iliad* Hera, with the help of Aphrodite, seduces Zeus in order to prevent him from focusing on the war below. Hera's plan is successful and under the compulsion of eros Zeus losses track of mortal affairs. Thornton views Zeus' actions in Book Fourteen as proof that "like his daughter Helen, Zeus is the victim of Aphrodite's mind-control power lurking within the shining beauty and pleasures of sex."[55] Eros is able to overcome both mortals and immortals; in fact, the descriptions of the erotic encounters between Zeus and Hera in Book Fourteen and that between Paris and Helen in Book Three are very similar.[56] Rather than being anxious and lashing out, as mortals do, the gods see the effects of eros more as a nuisance than as a real issue. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* Zeus believes that Aphrodite is responsible for his affairs with mortal women.[57] Irritation drives him to turn the tables on the Aphrodite, and he forces her to be the victim of the erotic passion she so often distributes to others. Aphrodite is compelled with longing for Anchises and to engage in intercourse. The power of eros is so strong that not even the goddess who embodies and manipulates the force of eros as part of her divine purpose can stay in control when that same force is turned against her.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that Homeric and Archaic Greeks believed divinities or eros (the natural force) were responsible for the manifestation of erotic desire in mortals and immortals, many modern scholars, such as Blondell, Gumpert and

---

[55] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality,* 59.
[56] Hera and Zeus Hom. *Il.* 14.312-350; Paris and Helen Hom. *Il.* 3.438-447.
[57] MacLachlan, *Women in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook.* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 27.

Suzuki, [58] believe that in the case of Helen the Greeks assigned personal blame to the eros-afflicted. Blondell states that the actions of love afflicted are "still acts, for which one is held accountable even if the driving force is overwhelming."[59] She even goes so far as to discredit Priam's assertion that the gods are responsible and Penelope's speech about the actions of Helen. Blondell claims that Priam's speech is made in a very specific context and is "a face-saving maneuver"[60] triggered by Priam's position as Helen's protector. The conclusion that Blondell draws from Penelope's speech hinges on the phrase "if she had known." She interprets the phrase as an admission of a calculated action, implying that Helen would not have done it if she had known she would be caught. The alternative is to place these words in their larger context following Penelope's admission of fear that some other man would have persuaded her to marry him by convincing her either of Odysseus' death or that there was no hope left of his return. Penelope's remarks that Helen would not have slept with Paris if she had known the Achaeans would come for her, rather than suggesting that Helen would not have eloped if she had known she would be caught, can suggest that Helen engaged in intercourse with Paris because she had no hope of restoring her previous marriage. Blondell disregards the line "the gods urged her to perform the shocking deed," choosing to interpret the entire statement of divine interference as an excuse to cover up the foolish miscalculation of Helen who "underestimated her own value in men's eyes."[61] If we

---

[58] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 64; Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1989) 38; Gumpert, *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past*. (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001) 9.
[59] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 6.
[60] Ibid., 61.
[61] Ibid., 93-94.

examine Penelope's speech as is, however, it is clear that she does not condemn Helen for her personal choices, but rather argues that logic and divine intervention are the causes of Helen's fate.

Additional support for the argument against divine responsibility comes from two particular phrases used in Homer and Hesiod. The first phrase ἧς ἕνεκα (for the sake of) appears twelve times in Homer and once in Hesiod.[62] However, this phrase is ambiguous. Do the Greeks go to war because of something Helen did, or because of something that happened to Helen? The second phrase τίσασθαι δ' Ἑλένης ὀρμήματά τε στοναχάς τε (to avenge both the laments and groans of Helen) appears three times in the *Iliad*.[63] The conflict for modern interpretations is whether this statement is subjective or objective. Is Helen the cause or the owner of the laments and groans, or both? The distinction is important because it provides insight into whether Homeric Greeks believed that the thralls of love, a source of great anxiety, were due to personal shortcomings that could and should be controlled or due to greater compulsions that are natural or divine and thereby unpredictable and uncontainable. There is no clear answer as to whether either statement indicts Helen for having an active role in her departure, but there is clear evidence that several Homeric characters blame the gods and not Helen for her relationship with Paris. This tension of assigning blame, while it appears minimally in Homeric and Archaic texts, prevails in the Classical age and will be discussed in the next chapter.

---

[62] For the sake of Helen:" Hom.*Il.* 2.161; 2.177; 3.128; 3.206; 9.339; *Od.* 4.145; 11.438; 17.118; 22.227; Od. 11.438; 17.118; 22.227; Hes. *WD* 165.
[63] Appears: Hom. *Il.*2.356, 2.590, 3.28.

The Effects of Eros: Physical and Psychological

The physical effects of eros on the human body are manifested in a similar manner as those of diseases.[64] Thornton asserts "the dominant imagery [of eros] is of disease, a disease that afflicts the mind, a disease that burns like fire, all erotic metaphors that become literalized and destroy the hero."[65] Although he reaches this conclusion by drawing on later texts (Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Apollonius' *Argonautica*), which will be the subject of subsequent chapters, the statement is valid in the Homeric and, especially, in the Archaic age as well.[66] Sappho, Anacreon and Archilochus create verbal portraits of what the effects of eros feel like for the afflicted, shedding new light on the feelings that perhaps Helen had when Aphrodite handed her over to Paris or when Medea was overcome with love for Jason.[67] In Sappho Fragment Thirty-one eros cripples the narrator's body, rendering it incapable of performing even the most basic tasks; the narrator cannot speak, is consumed with a fever, is blinded and made deaf, and feels as if she is on the verge of death:

> φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
> ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὄττις ἐνάντιός τοι
> ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί-
> σας ὐπακούει
>
> καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν (5)
> καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν,
> ὠς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὤς με φώναι-
> σ' οὐδ' ἒν ἔτ' εἴκει,

[64] Many of these effects will later be attributed to women unaffected by eros in Hippocrates *One Diseases of Women I*.
[65] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, 33.
[66] In fact, Thornton does draw on Sapphic poetry in this section of "The Tyrant of Gods and Men" but its importance is minimal in comparison to his use of Classical and Hellenistic examples.
[67] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 5.

ἀλλ᾽ ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα †ἔαγε λέπτον
δ᾽ αὔτικα χρῶι πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμηκεν, (10)
ὀππάτεσσι δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἓν ὄρημμ᾽, ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ᾽ ἄκουαι,

κὰδ δέ μ᾽ ἴδρως ψῦχρος κακχέεται† τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ᾽ ὀλίγω ᾽πιδεύης (15)

He seems to me to be equal to the gods,
that man who sits across from you
and listens close at hand
to your sweet voice

and lovely laughter. Truly its sets (5)
my heart to pounding in my breast,
for the moment I glance at you, I can
no longer speak;

my tongue grow numb; at once a subtle
fire runs stealthily beneath my skin; (10)
my eyes see nothing, my ears ring and buzz,

the sweat pours down, a trembling
seizes the whole of me, I turn paler
than grass and I seem to myself
not far from dying. (15)[68]

Ormand praises this poem's ability to transcribe the variety of sensations that eros leaves on the body "blindness, humming in the ears, simultaneously being on fire and cold with sweat." He remarks that "Eros, here, is a force that so overwhelms the process of sensation that it leaves the speaker unable to make sense."[69] Archilochus and Anacreon likewise support this view of eros as a biological attack on the physical body.

Archilochus (Fr. 191)
τοῖος γὰρ φιλότητος ἔρως ὑπὸ καρδίην ἐλυσθεὶς
πολλὴν κατ᾽ ἀχλὺν ὀμμάτων ἔχευεν,

[68] Translation from Miller, *Greek Lyric*, 1996.
[69] Ormand, Kirk. *Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*. (Westpoint, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 40.

κλέψας ἐκ στηθέων ἁπαλὰς φρένας.

For such was the passion of love that coiled itself beneath my heart
and poured thick mist across my eyes
robbing me of my tender senses

(Fr. 193)
δύστηνος ἔγκειμαι πόθωι,
ἄψυχος, χαλεπῆισι θεῶν ὀδύνηισιν ἔκητι
πεπαρμένος δι' ὀστέων.

In wretchedness I lie here, gripped by longing,
lifeless, with bitter pain by the gods' will
pierced through the bones.[70]

Anacreon (Fr. 413)
μεγάλωι δηῦτέ μ' Ἔρως ἔκοψεν ὥστε χαλκεὺς
πελέκει, χειμερίηι δ' ἔλουσεν ἐν χαράδρηι.

Once again Love has beating me like a blacksmith
with a great hammer and dipped me into a wintery torment.[71]

In addition to describing eros seemingly as a cause of torture, Anacreon personifies eros, a detail which may suggest that erotic desire is attributed to a particular divinity (Aphrodite) or is a divinity in its own right.

The origin of eros and physical incapacitation of the body are indeed great sources of anxiety, but the potential for eros to make a person lose control, or in other words lack *sophrosyne,* is a great concern to ancient Greeks. According to Carson *sophrosyne* is "the essence of power to keep one's physical and psychological boundaries intact."[72] An eros-afflicted person may lack *sophrosyne* in many aspects of their life. Sappho Sixteen discusses the different possible objects of eros.[73] Sappho makes it clear

[70] Translation of Archilochus Fr. 191 and 193 from Miller, *Greek Lyric*, 1996.
[71] Page Fr. 68; Miller Fr. 413, Translation from Miller; Ormand translates "Eros" instead of "Love" Ormand, *Controlling Desires*, 32.
[72] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 142.
[73] For text of Sappho 16 see above.

that erotic desire can take many different forms, lust for war, ships, men or women. This concept is not unknown in Homeric epic and the verb ἐρᾶσθαι appears both to describe love for a person and love for an activity, predominately war. Of the nine occurrences of this verb in the Homeric and Hesiodic texts, five describe a sexual or erotic longing and two describe a longing for war or battle.[74] D'Angour asserts that the comparison between eros for warfare and eros for sexual gratification in Fragment Sixteen reveals the irony of the scene in the *Iliad* Book Five where Zeus instructs Aphrodite to concern herself with matters of marriage rather than war[75] (οὔ τοι τέκνον ἐμὸν δέδοται πολεμήϊα ἔργα,/ ἀλλὰ σύ γ' ἱμερόεντα μετέρχεο ἔργα γάμοιο[76]). Although erotic problems are viewed as being involved with females, they are comparable to male domain of war. In fact, the Trojan War would not have started if it were not for the effects of eros (i.e. Aphrodite) on Paris and Helen; thus, love and war are intrinsically connected in Homer. Sappho's inclusion of the erotic desire to witness military personal or equipment alongside descriptions of the narrator's desire for Anaktoria, and the description of Aphrodite's power to "subdue/conquer/break" in Frag. One[77] indicates that Sappho was aware of the interconnection between these spheres and the versatility of erotic persuasion.

Helen lacks *sophrosyne* when her eros for Paris drives her from Menelaus because of her eros for Paris. Her departure triggers a great conflict among the male community. Carson concludes that the reason women, like Helen, are "awfully adept at confounding

---

[74] Erotic or sexual desire: *Il.*3.446, 14.328, 20.223; *Od.* 11.238; Hes. *TH.* 915. Eros for war*: Il.*9.64, *Il.*16.208.
[75] D'Angour, Armand. "Love's Battlefield: Rethinking Sappho Fragment 31," in *Eros in Ancient Greece, e*ds. Ed Sanders, Chiara Thumiger, Chris Carey, and Nick J. Lowe, 59-72. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 59.
[76] Hom. *Il.*5.248-9
[77] See above.

the boundaries of others" is because "women are formless creatures who cannot or will not or do not control their own boundaries."[78] They lack the necessary *sophrosyne* to control their actions in the face of desire, leading them to disregard the social boundaries established to maintain order in the ancient world.

Gender Roles and Regulations: Ideal and Reality

In order to comment on poetic expressions of Greek anxiety over women traversing their social boundaries, it is essential to identify the social "normal" that male Greeks were afraid of losing. To assuage their anxiety, men promoted the submissive ideal, wherein women remained within the confines of the household and under the control of men. In the most basic biological sense control was exerted to protect the bloodline. In a patriarchal society, a transgression of a woman, perhaps an adulterous affair, left the bloodline vulnerable to penetration; there is no certain way to determine who is the father of the offspring (whereas the mother is always abundantly clear).[79] This mattered even more in early Greek society where family ties and friendships between families were of great importance and transcended generations.[80] The desire for clear paternal lineage increased male fear that women would undermine their bloodlines through adultery. This was a certainly a concern for upper class families, like those of Helen and Medea, since their offspring would inherit wealth, property and arms. In addition, the most prized women were those who were quiet and obeyed the orders of their male guardians. Blondell adds, "silence [was] deemed central to the female virtue of

[78] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 155.
[79] O'Higgins, Dolores M. "Medea as a Muse: Pindar's *Pythian* 4," in *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, 103-126. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 104.
[80] Diomedes and Glaucus' exchange on the battlefield. Hom. *Il.* 6.

sophrosyne."[81] Women were expected to be silent in the presence of men, primarily because women were confined to the "domestic world of peace"[82] and had no place in the political dealings of their husbands.

Homer emphasizes the ideal wife in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* primarily through juxtaposition. In the *Iliad*, Andromache is meant to project the ideal wife. She is loyal to Hector and although she attempts to persuade him to remove himself from battle, she does not compel him to be dishonorable. She stays inside doing domestic work while Helen is conversing with Priam. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope is generally seen as ideal wife.[83] She is contrasted mythologically with Helen's sister Clytemnestra, who does not faithfully await her husband's return. Penelope does everything in her power to deter suitors, weaving and unweaving to delay marriage. She is also compared to the other women in the *Odyssey*. If Odysseus had pursued relationships with Circe, Calypso, or Nausikaa instead of returning to Penelope, he would have been prohibited from upholding traditional male roles. Pavlock asserts that these women attempted to "lure [him] into complacency by providing ease and pleasure with no effort but at the expense of his involvement in normal political an social affairs."[84] Penelope also stands out in comparison to Helen, for even though Helen is portrayed as chaste wife of Menelaus in the *Odyssey*, (compared to Artemis rather than Aphrodite[85]) she is still not as chaste as Penelope. Helen's position as the chaste wife in the *Odyssey* is also tentative because of

---

[81] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 23.
[82] Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 19.
[83] Blondell discusses some qualities of Penelope that are not ideal. Namely, that she is beautiful and that she has the ability to manipulate men through speech (even though she does this to preserve her marriage with Odysseus). *Helen of Troy,* 93.
[84] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition,* 8.
[85] Hom. *Od.* 4.121-2.

her use of a pharmakon. The use of pharmakon by women in mythology is its own source of anxiety to men. These drugs, Helen's in particular, have the power to do both "good and evil."[86] Helen uses her drugs to ease Menelaus' pain and memory of her earlier behavior. This action is perhaps sympathetic, reflecting Helen's desire to make Menelaus feel better, but it is also self-serving. Helen's use of pharmakon is more suspicious because Circe is the only other woman who uses drugs in the *Odyssey*. Circe's drugs make Odysseus' men forget their sorrow and longing for their homeland and then turn them into swine. This close tie with Circe reminds the audience that Helen was not and may not ever be an ideal wife, and simultaneously raises Penelope's status as the perfect exemplum.[87]

Most women in Homeric and Archaic sources did not uphold the values that Andromache and Penelope, the noble wives of the Trojan War, seem to have represented. The reality of female behavior became a popular topic of early poets, who bitterly describe what they see as the true nature of the mortal women around them. Hesiod describes the origin of women, the creature Pandora, who was made specifically as a punishment to mortal men. The language he uses is reminiscent of Homer's descriptions of Helen. For example, each poet describes his woman as being "dog-eyed," apparently meaning impudent or shameless.[88] Hesiod implies that Pandora, whose true nature is destructive, shares a connection with woman who has caused the most destruction in literature thus far.

---

[86] Ibid., 4.230.
[87] Additionally, in Hom. *Od.* 9 the effect of the Lotus-Eater's plant makes Odysseus' men lose their urge to seek their homeland, affecting them in a similar manner to Helen's pharmakon.
[88] Hes. *WD*. 77-78.

Beauty resembling that of the immortal goddesses is also attributed to Helen and Pandora.[89] Appearances in ancient Greece were intrinsically tied to the expectations of the individual: if one was beautiful on the outside, they were expected to be beautiful or good on the inside.[90] Each woman represents a harsh juxtaposition between Greek ideals and reality; they are κᾶλον κακόν a "beautiful evil."[91] Ormand comments on the similarities between Hesiod's Pandora and Homer's Helen: "the outstanding thing about [Pandora] is not that she looks exceedingly beautiful – we should think of Helen here – but that she hides a dangerous and destructive nature."[92] Helen's beautiful form gives her power unmatched by any other mortal woman and power more akin to that of the mythical founder of the mortal female race or to a goddess. Helen, and Pandora reflect the most potent characteristics of Aphrodite herself, an "ambiguous nature… seductive beauty and sweet pleasures of sex masking a threatening destructive power that cannot be resisted, that deceives and beguiles and subverts the mind and its consciousness of shame and right."[93] The Trojan elders are acutely aware of Helen's duplicity and they view her warily as she moves around Troy, crossing the boundaries between the spheres of female and male influence, engaging both in domestic fields (weaving in *Il.*3.125-128) and secular ones (speaking 3.162-255).[94]

---

[89] Hom. *Il.* 3.156: Helen is "terrible like the immortal goddess to look at in the face;" Hes. *WD.* 62: Pandora "resembles the immortal goddesses to look at in the face."
[90] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 3. For the dual conception of kalos as beautiful and morally good see Lewis and Short, A Greek-English Lexicon, "kalos" A.I and A.III.
[91] Blondell uses this same description to compare Helen with Hesiod's Pandora. Ibid., 3.
[92] Ormand, *Controlling Desire,* 27.
[93] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality,* 58.
[94] See Introduction for description of Helena and Medea's use of the traditionally masculine mode of expression, speech.

Archilochus and Semonides view the nature of women as being inherently dualistic; women are able to be both good and bad, useful and destructive, sometimes concealing their true intent. A fragment of Archilochus "she, wily-minded woman, brought in water in one hand, fire in the other hand" (τῆι μὲν ὕδωρ ἐφόρει δολοφρονέ[ουσ]α χερί, θητέρῆι δὲ πυρ),[95] aligns the poet with the traditional view of women as two-sided and thus dangerous. In Semonides Fragment Seven, Zeus is indeed responsible for creating women, as in Hesiod's *Theogony*. However, instead of simply fashioning the one woman who within herself holds the potential to destroy men, Semonides lists ten different types of females, each a plague to men in their own way. Semonides reflects another aspect of ancient Greek anxiety that Ormand defines as a fear "that women are by nature greedy, that they consume, but do not produce, and this uncontrolled appetite is the thing that fundamentally defines them."[96] In fact, Hesiod describes women as greedy and gluttonous, comparing women to lazy drones who sit in the hive and consume to the products of the male worker bees.[97] According to these poets, women are able to deceive men and strive to take whatever they desire from men to the detriment of the socio-political order. Fragment Seven of Semonides ends with an allusion to Helen herself "ever since Hades welcomed those who fought a war for a woman's sake…" This line does not mean that Semonides believed that Helen was the first woman, but that Semonides, is aware that women have always been detrimental to men and society at large, and that one could look as far back as Homer for proof.

---

[95] Arch. fr. 184.
[96] Ormand, *Controlling Desire*, 27.
[97] Hes. *TH*. 592-599

Helen and Medea: Erotic Transgressions of Female Boundaries

The extant representations of Helen and Medea predominately come after they have suffered some sort of erotic compulsion; therefore, these women represent a two-fold anxiety for men: they are victims of unstoppable eros and they are females traversing the narrow boundaries set out for them. It is difficult to determine whether certain transgressive character traits in these women are generated as a result of eros or whether they were already present in these women before they became afflicted. For example the power of speech is present for both women, and may have been a natural quality regardless of erotic impulse.[98] The only portrayals of Helen and Medea in this time period are after each woman has been overcome with eros. Therefore, it is impossible to determine from Homeric and Archaic representations alone whether speech was a quality innate to each woman or whether it was a boldness encouraged by their erotic affliction. Regardless, it is clear that eros instigates the worst transgressions of the female sphere: Helen leaves Menelaus for Paris, Medea leaves her father and orchestrates her brother's death to help her lover escape.

Medea in *Pythian* Four gives a prophetic speech on the fate of the sailors' expedition and when she concludes "the god-like men, motionless, cowered in silence hearing the shrewd wisdom" ἔπταξαν δ' ἀκίνητοι σιωπᾷ/ ἥρωες ἀντίθεοι πυκινὰν μῆτιν κλύοντες).[99] In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Helen leaves the female occupation of weaving to engage in conversations with powerful men. In the *Iliad* she discusses the attributes of the Greek warriors with Priam[100] and in the *Odyssey* she greets Telemachus'

[98] Chapter One discusses the attribution of speech as a tool tied to the sphere of men.
[99] Pind. *P*. 4. 57-58.
[100] Hom. *Il.* 3.162-255.

party and even the one who recognizes him. Occasionally, other Homeric women engage in speech. For example, Andromache prevails upon Hector to stay within the Trojan walls.[101] She is ultimately unsuccessful in persuading him from the course that he feels to be most honorable. Helen, on the other hand, is generally successful in manipulating the men around her. The only person who Helen who Helen is not able to persuade is Hector;[102] but when he blames Helen for her part in the Trojan War, he is immediately rebuked for scorning Aphrodite. Helen is the only person, other than Hector, who ever casts blame on herself, referring to herself as κυνώπης (shameless).[103] Blondell, Gumpert and Suzuki believe that Helen's pejorative statements, rather than assigning blame, are actually examples of the "seductive female voice."[104] They believe that Helen is aware that the "implication that a woman has learned her lesson is, in consequence, a powerful tool for manipulating men"[105] and that she is aware of her need for protection as the debate over her fate wages on with the war. Therefore, it is not just that Helen speaks that raises anxiety, but that she has the ability to use speech to manipulate the men around her.

Helen's self-abasement through derogatory name-calling occurs most often in conjunction with her praise of powerful men (Hector and Priam) in order to affect the perceived hierarchical distance between herself and her male guardians. Suzuki asserts that Helen's praise and thankfulness towards these men are designed to increase their

---

[101] Ibid., 6. 483-555
[102] Ibid., 6.400-438
[103] For more information of this particular insult see Margaret Gravey "Dog Helen and Homeric Insult" *Classical Antiquity* (1995). Ex. Helen to Priam Hom. *Il.* 3.172-176.
[104] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 64.
[105] Ibid., 64.

good will towards her.[106] Helen needs the protection of the Trojan leaders to ensure her own safety, since her ability to survive being returned to Menelaus is still unclear at this point in the war.[107] According to Gumpert, "her self-recriminations… admit her guilt at the same time they render her endearing, and even innocent."[108] If that is so, then the case of Helen's willingness to accept responsibility as the cause of the Trojan War is really just one more way in which she employs her feminine abilities to alter the lives of men around her. By gaining the protection of Priam and Hector she prolongs the Trojan War, by manipulating them with her words she weakens their masculine power to make crucial decisions over her fate. These moments of apparent apology are then really moments wherein Helen engages in the exact activity that causes men such great anxiety.

It is worth noting that Helen and Medea's overall success in the world of rhetoric is striking when compared to Aphrodite's failure to enter into the male realm of warfare. During her rescue of her son Aeneas, she is pierced with Diomedes' spear.[109] When she returns to Olympus, Zeus reminds her that her place is in the domestic, female sphere of marriage, not war.[110] Aphrodite is not as successful in crossing the boundaries between traditional male and female roles as Helen and Medea are.

A benefit of the institution of marriage was that it could assuage men's anxiety over the destructive potential of women; since marriage, according to Carson, is "the means, in Greek view, whereby a man can control the wild eros of women and so impose

---

[106] Helen remarks about Hector's kindness in *Il.*24.762-75, and entreats Priam *Il.*3.172-175.
[107] The audience knows that Menelaus will pardon Helen but there is no way for Helen to know this during the war. Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen*, 38.
[108] Gumpert, Matthew. *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past*. (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 9.
[109] Hom. *Il.* 5.370-390
[110] Ibid., 5.492-495

civilized order on the chaos of nature."[111] The *Catalogue of Women* documents the marriages of many mythological women, including Helen's. Typically, men would "lead" women into their control; the usual word to express this action in Greek is ἄγειν. In Helen's case however, the formula is quite different. When she reaches an appropriate age a great number of powerful Greek suitors competed for a chance to marry Helen. Ormand notes that unlike the usual descriptions of marriages that occur within the catalogue where a man "makes [a woman] his blooming bride," in the description of Helen's suitors "over and over again, we read a new formula: 'for greatly he wished in his spirit to be the husband of lovely-haired Argive Helen.' A man can make another woman his wife, but Helen's beauty is such that whoever marries her will become her husband."[112] Helen is established as the dominant party in the relationship and not the traditional subservient partner; she does not follow traditional gender expectations even before succumbing to eros.

Eros triggers the departure of both Helen and Medea from their homes; each departure not only impacts the status of the women themselves, but also the reputation of the men associated with them. Once Helen departs it is uncertain whether she belongs in Sparta or in Troy. For example, the Trojan men do not think that Helen should stay in Troy, but Priam seems to accept her presence as being the will of the gods.[113] Helen herself acknowledges that apart from Hector "no other person in wide Troy is gentle or friendly, all bristle at [her]" (οὐ γάρ τίς μοι ἔτ᾽ ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ/ ἤπιος οὐδὲ φίλος,

[111] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 143.
[112] Ormand, *Controlling Desire,* 24.
[113] Trojan Men: Hom. *Il* 3.159-160.; Priam on the citadel: Hom. *Il.* 3.162-165.

πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν).[114] Blondell asserts that the principle of male control in marriage necessarily "gives men a certain responsibility for women's behavior."[115] This means that Helen's departure from Menelaus reflects on his ability to control the women under his command. The possibility that a man's wife, while under the influence of erotic desire, could move beyond the confines established resonated with the male audience that saw in Helen the potential for their own wives to subvert the traditional role of women. Helen's departure also affects the reputation of Paris. Hector criticizes his brother's cowardice and his union with Helen.[116] Paris' union makes him an object of derision by Hector and the other Trojan men. When the Menelaus searches for Paris on the battlefield, the narrator says that the Trojan men did not hide him out of love "for he was hated by all equal to black death" (οὐ μὲν γὰρ φιλότητί γ᾽ ἐκεύθανον εἴ τις ἴδοιτο/ ἶσον γάρ σφιν πᾶσιν ἀπήχθετο κηρὶ μελαίνῃ).[117] The association Menelaus and Paris have with Helen, as her past and current husband, are distorted and lessened by Helen's actions (actions which were triggered by eros), proving Blondell claim that in Greek mythology: "the more one partner diverges from her or her gender stereotype, the more the other partner does as well."[118]

Conclusion

Descriptions of Helen and Medea's catastrophic effects on the socio-political norm in ancient Greece are found throughout Homer and the archaic poets. They were compelled to record the myths that articulated the greatest fears of Greek men as a

---

[114] Hom. *Il.* 24. 774-775.
[115] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 10.
[116] Hom. *Il.* 3.44-57.
[117] Hom. *Il.* 3.454-455.
[118] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 31.

warning and reminder of the dangers of eros, women, and particularly eros-afflicted women. Nearly all descriptions of Helen before the fifth century are of Aphrodite or eros compelling her into an illicit relationship with Paris. Her power to destroy the men around her and to completely unravel the Greek world raised her from mere mythology to divine goddess in her own right (although that is a subject that warrants a separate discussion and is outside the scope of this thesis). As Helen rises, the desire to condemn or excuse her as a victim of eros is evident in the literary record. Supernatural by birth, descendent of Zeus, she is a dangerous woman to lash out against. One poet, Stesichorus, rather than simply describing the powerful force of eros, chose instead to exonerate Helen. His palinode, preserved in a work of Plato, reveals an alternate mythology:

> οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος,
> οὐδ᾽ ἔβας ἐν νηυσὶν εὐσέλμοις,
> οὐδ᾽ ἵκεο Πέργαμα Τροίας:
>
> That story is not true,
> you did not go in the well-benched ships,
> nor did you come to the Trojan citadel.[119]

According to Plato, Stesichorus wrote this as a palinode to an earlier poem, in which he criticized her involvement with Paris. After writing his original poem the goddess Helen blinded him for his slander, his composition of the palinode restores his sight. It is revealed in Plato, and in the works of subsequent classical authors, that Stesichorus is referring to an alternate version of the myth where Helen is not a boundary-crossing, fear-inducing, adulterous women, but instead innocent Helen is whisked away by the gods to Egypt for the entirety of the Trojan War (Euripides places a phantom Helen at Troy that deceives everyone). Stesichorus may have had a poetic agenda for his palinode.

---

[119] Plat. *Phaedrus*. 243a-b.

Blondell and Suzuki both feel that Stesichorus wrote his poem to establish himself alongside or above Homer: He, Stesichorus, accurately articulated the fate of Helen, as evident by his blinding and restoration of sight, whereas Homer did not.[120] Plato too could be accused of personal agenda, including this fragment in his discussion of erotic love and morality.

Stesichorus' version of events provides an interesting solution to the anxiety that Helen represents for the Greek audience. Aphrodite may have been responsible for Helen's betrothal to Paris, but Stesichorus does not present Helen as a destructive woman acting upon her erotic compulsions; Helen is the innocent bystander of divine plots and does not intentionally break any of her traditional boundaries. The palinode saves Helen and raises her back to the ideal wife whom the best men of Greece once sought. For while Homer and the Archaic Greeks thoroughly believed in the divine or supernatural force of eros, its ability to affect anyone (man, woman or god) in any way (lust for war, women, or men), they were terrified that eros would be the catalyst to push women out of their traditional roles and challenge the established social orders. They feared the unpredictable impulse of eros; they feared its affects on their bodies and souls, and most of all they its affects on the world they had created. In other words, the Greeks feared everything that women like Helen and Medea represented.

[120] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 120; Suzuki, *Metamorphosis of Helen,* 14.

CHAPTER 3

HELEN, MEDEA, AND CLASSICAL TENSION: EROS OR WOMEN

There was a tension during the Classical age between the belief that eros was a natural or divine force which had the ability to influence men and gods, and the belief that mortals were responsible for their own actions even when under the influence of eros. The tension exhibits itself minimally in Homeric and Archaic age literature, perhaps due to the limited number of works that survive from these periods, while the Classical age is represented by many texts that illustrate this tension. The belief in human responsibility may also have exhibited itself more prominently in literature at this time because the changing socio-political conditions in Greece after the Persian Wars were more conducive for commenting on the extent of personal responsibility. The rise of democracy and with it the increased use of rhetoric and oratory, the flourishing of literary genres such as tragedy, comedy and prose, and the burgeoning of different political and personal philosophies[121] created an atmosphere for exploring multiple perspectives of eros and eros-afflicted women in the myths of Medea and Helen in literature.

As in the Homeric and Archaic works examined in Chapter Two the two anxieties, erotic compulsion and maintaining control over women's position in Greek

[121] For example, the Platonic view of eros is an immense topic that will only be mentioned here but not explored in any great detail given the boundaries of this thesis. For more information on Platonic conceptions of love see Chicester, Teddi Lynn. "Love, Sexuality, Gender: On Love, Discourse of Love, and the Banquet of Plato." *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Michael O'Neill, Anthony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Price, A.W. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

society, collide in the representations of Helen and Medea. These women appear numerous times in both prose and poetry during the fifth-century B.C.E. After a brief introduction into the social, political and literary environment of the Classical age, which supported an inquiry into human will and traditional divine attributions, the chapter will examine how the tension between a divine origin of eros and human culpability presents itself in Euripides' *Medea* and *Troades.* The goal is understand how Euripides portrays these two contrasting ideas simultaneously in his plays. Second, the chapter will examine selections from Classical literature that support the belief in a divine origin for eros. For comparison, the chapter will examine texts that reflect a tendency towards assigning personal culpability to eros-afflicted women. It is important to note that texts supporting human responsibility are not mutually exclusive from texts that support the traditional perspective; texts may engage in both ideas simultaneously or characters may argue for one over the other.

The Fundamentals of Fifth Century Athens[122]

The establishment of a democracy in which a city-state is controlled and regulated by citizens appointed to office by public election or lot was a radical concept, even in Athens. The idea of a citizenry and the "citizen" simultaneously created the non-citizen, the foreigner, the Other. Such concepts (citizen versus non-citizen, Greek versus non-Greek) are certainly not new to classical Greece, but during Pericles' time there was a stricter definition of citizenship. In Athens, the primary focus of this study, the enactment

[122] Classical Athens was a diverse community and there were many factors influencing the changing socio-political ideology visible in literature at this time. The point of this section is not to address all possible interpretations or to delve into great detail on life in fifth-century Athens, the section merely strives to provide a basic overview of some of the changes which may have influenced the portrayal of eros and eros-afflicted women in literature.

of Pericles' law of 451-450 B.C.E. made an outsider of anyone who was not born from an Athenian-born male *and* female.[123]

The effect of the citizenship law is commonly believed to have increased control over Athenian women, so that there would never be a question of paternity in the matter of citizenship.[124] Therefore, women continued to be confined to the domestic sphere for the purpose of sexual control.[125] Ormand, Pomeroy and Biesecker all discuss the development of Athenian society in relation to the constriction of women's roles. According to Ormand "as the fifth century progressed, Athenian society became increasingly closed."[126] Pomeroy believes that there was a clear connection between democracy and the subordination of women.[127] Pericles' Funeral Oration reveals the male view of the ideal woman in fifth century Athens.[128] The best woman, according to Pericles, is not to be talked about by men in any capacity, whether in praise or

---

[123] Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 16.5, 26.4.
[124] Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity.* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), Ormand, *Controlling Desire,* 2009, Crockett "Gorgias' Encomium of Helen: Violent Rhetoric or Radical Feminism?" *Rhetoric Review*. Vol. 13 No. 1 (1994): 71-90. Beisecker believes that this law actually made an opening for the growth of women within Athenian political society since it inadvertently admitted that they were Athenian citizen and that their genealogy mattered. Beisecker, Susan. "Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women's Status in Ancient Athens: Gorgias' and Isocrates' Encomiums of Helen." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* Vol. 22. No. 1 (1992): 100.
[125] While there is certainly evidence that upper class women were to some degree confined, new studies have concluded that middle and lower class room had more social room than previously believed. See Fanthom, Elaine, Helene Foley, Natalie Kampen, Sarah Pomeroy, H.A. Shapiro. *Women in the Classical World.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
[126] Ormand, *Controlling Desire,* 48.
[127] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves,* 78; Beisecker believes that this law actually made an opening for the growth of women within Athenian political society since it inadvertently admitted that they were Athenian citizen and that their genealogy mattered. "Rhetoric, Possibility and Women's Status," 100.
[128] Thuc. 2.45

condemnation. Women, therefore, are expected to pass their lives as inconspicuously as possible. Presumably this was done through remaining in their domestic sphere and avoiding any intersections with the masculine realm (all things outside the home). The anxiety over confining women and keeping them separate from the political life of Athens is present in Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata.*[129] This play deals with the issue of gender in Athenian politics, where the women of Athens try to make decisions for the state with arguable success. The anxiety over how much power and personal freedom a woman should be given in the fifth-century is clearly reflected in Old Comedy.

The man's sphere, that of the power-wielding Athenian citizen, was characterized, according to Wohl, by "both his political and erotic autonomy – he lives and loves as he wishes – and by his willingness to risk his life to preserve that autonomy."[130] In other words, "democracy and democratic eros are coterminous."[131] Wohl goes so far as to say that "eliciting love was a primary goal of anyone who would influence democratic politics. To the extent that democracy is the collective decisions of the citizen body and those decisions are driven by desires."[132] In fact, the verb "to persuade" (πειθειν) encompasses a range of meanings. It can have positive or negative connotations; it can mean to persuade reasonably[133] and it can also mean to persuade with negative intent or to deceive.[134] In the context of democracy, persuasion could either mean manipulating the populace for perceived benefit of all, or for the potentially self-motivated interests of the

---

[129] This is also seen in the fourth-century comedy *Ekklesiazousia.*
[130] Wohl, Victoria. *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 4.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 2.
[133] For example see: Soph. *Phil.* 102
[134] For example see: Hom. *Il.* 6.360

few. The personified goddess Persuasion is intricately to Aphrodite and erotic forces, Sappho first calls Peitho the daughter of Aphrodite.[135] Therefore, Wohl is correct in claiming that politics was tied to the art of erotic persuasion, which naturally required a great deal of rhetorical skill.

Due to the dynamic socio-political climate of the Classical age, it is not surprising that we are able to read multiple perspectives on the same issue (that of eros) in representations of Medea and Helen. Debate over different ways of viewing situations (including erotic afflictions) was popular and encouraged in the political climate of democracy. The individual who presented his perspective most persuasively would win the support of his peers. In comedy and tragedy, the verbal contest (*agon)* was a formal element to the play's structure. For instance, in Euripides' *Troades* there is a debate between Hecuba and Helen over who is responsible for Helen's presence at Troy: Helen or Aphrodite. [136] The goal of their debate is to gain the agreement of Menelaus and thus to influence his actions. Encouragement of skills in persuasion, necessary to sway Athenian juries, produced orators like Gorgias who composed a speech defending Helen from those who would condemn her for the affair with Paris. Developing skills in debating was just as important to orators defending clients in lawsuits, as it was to tragedians persuading their audience to feel sympathy or anger towards particular characters.

Tragedy serves as a great portal to comment on tensions between the male sphere and the female sphere, particularly on how those spheres were influenced by erotic desire, because the genre is so intimately connected with that of rhetoric. Sansone is

---

[135] Gantz sites Sappho 200LP. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 104.
[136] Eur. *Troad.* 914-981.

accurate when he discusses how important the tragic poets' ability to "construct persuasive speeches for delivery by others and to present opposing sides of an argument in a manner that aroused fervid passions at will" was to the success of his play.[137] Sansone cites Aristotle and Aristophanes as ancient sources for the connection between rhetoric and tragedy. In Aristotle's instructions on oratorical delivery, Sansone notes that the "frequent references to poetry in this passage" are indication that "Aristotle sees no fundamental differences between delivery as it relates to dramatic acting and as it relates to oratory."[138] Sansone also draws conclusions from two plays of Aristophanes, *Clouds* and *Acharnians*. While noting that "Aristophanic comedy, of course, is not an unbiased source of evidence for fifth-century life and thought," Sansone asserts that the picture presented in these two, that Dikaeopolis, trained by Euripides, is successful and that Strepsiades, supported by his son educated by the Right and Wrong arguments of Socrates' school, is unsuccessful, suggests "that one is better off learning public speaking form a tragic poet than from a philosopher or rhetorician."[139] Regardless of which genre would better prepare someone for a defense (since these questions are not primary concerns in this discussion), the link between tragedy and rhetoric may explain Euripides' and other tragedian's willingness to portray two conflicting views of eros clearly within the same play.

---

[137] Sansone, David. *Greek Drama and the Invention of Rhetoric*. (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.
[138] Ibid., 13; Aristot. *Rhet.* 3. 1403b36; For more information on the similarities that Aristotle draws between rhetoric and tragedy see Sifakis Gregory. *Aristotle on the Function of Tragic Poetry*. (Crete: Crete University Press, 2001).
[139] Sansone, *Greek Drama*, 4.

Euripides' *Medea* and *Troades*

The anxiety over women's position in society, at least of upper class women's, may be reflected in the portrayal of women in popular literature. While Fantham notes that "drama is a problematic source for the lives of both men and women" there may still exist in drama a reflection of "real social and historical tensions, even if in a somewhat indirect fashion."[140] Similarly, Pavlock views Euripides' portrayals of tragic heroines as serving "not so much to represent the condition of women per se as to expose the tensions or paradoxes of a society shaped primarily by males" and that Euripides' heroines in particular were imbued with qualities that "in some ways impinge upon the male spheres."[141]

Euripides' *Medea* and *Troades* are case studies for the existence of tension between the perception of eros as a divine force and the concern with human responsibility in the Classical age. Characters within these works attribute the actions of Helen and Medea to the will of divinities; others lament and criticize their choices, suggesting that these women were acting of their own accord, and acting badly. The existence of both perceptions within the same play show that these two ideas, which are in direct opposition with the each other, managed to exist simultaneously in the collective Athenian thought. It is possible that Euripides may have included both perceptions of

---

[140] Foley et al., *Women in the Classical World*, 69-70. For the problem of drama in interpreting social norms and anxiety Foley recommends: Foley, Helene P. "The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama." *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*. Ed. Foley, (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981), 127-68; Zeitlin, Froma, "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama." *Representations* 11 (1985): 63-94; Just, Roger. *Women in Athenian Law*. (London: Routledge, 1989), and Des Bouvrie, S. *Women in Greek Tragedy*. (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1990).
[141] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*, 10.

eros as a comment on the dual and conflicting nature of Athenian beliefs about erotic desire.

The audience's introduction to Medea is designed to elicit sympathy for the heroine.[142] The Nurse appears, lamenting the fate of her mistress and so automatically moves the audience towards lamenting Medea's situation as well. The Nurse lists all the actions that Medea has taken on behalf of Jason but claims that Medea had been struck with eros (ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖσ' Ἰάσονος).[143] While Medea is the agent of her deeds, the implication of the Nurse is that she was performing under the influence of erotic compulsion and therefore not responsible for her actions. Mastronarde notes that the attribution of Medea's initial infatuation to the will of the gods is in line with Pindar (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.213) and Hesiod's description (Hes. *Theo.* 992-4).[144] Jason, likewise, attributes Medea's actions to the power of love, citing Aphrodite specifically as the true author of Medea's crimes, and removing any personal agency from her: "I, since you greatly exaggerate your kindness, know that Cypris, alone of gods and men, is savior of my adventure" (ἐγὼ δ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ λίαν πυργοῖς χάριν/ Κύπριν νομίζω τῆς ἐμῆς ναυκληρίας/ σώτειραν εἶναι θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μόνην).[145] Jason attributes to Aphrodite the success of his journey, in addition to the traditional aid he receives from Athena and Hera.[146] The chorus also believes that eros is an agent of the divine, specifically of Aphrodite, and that Medea has an excess of eros (which would be harmful to any

---

[142] Mastronarde Donald. *Euripides' Medea*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 161.
[143] Eur. *Med.* 8; All translations of Greek are my own unless otherwise indicated.
[144] Mastronarde, *Euripides' Medea*, 164.
[145] Eur. *Med*. 526-528; Jason's claim that Aphrodite is responsible is in line with Pind. *P*. 4 (see previous chapter).
[146] Mastronarde *Euripides' Medea,* 260.

mortal).[147] Therefore, there are three characters in Euripides' *Medea* (the Nurse, Jason and the chorus) who attribute Medea's actions to Aphrodite, holding the divinity responsible for Medea and Jason's fate.

There is, however, support in this play for Medea's personal responsibility. It comes from Medea and, ironically, Jason. Medea does not believe that her actions ought to be attributed to Aphrodite. In her attack on Jason she claims personal responsibility for all endeavors taken on his behalf.[148] While Jason initially responds to the attack with his claim that Aphrodite was responsible, after Medea has murdered their children, Jason recants that statement. Jason now gives agency entirely to Medea; the deeds, which were previously considered tools of his rescue, are now atrocious crimes. He calls Medea a traitor, a murder, an evil being and a monster.[149] Medea has placed Jason not only "in the position of helplessness that she seemed to be in at the start,"[150] but Jason is forced to suffer the same despair, or more despair, than that he was intending to inflict on Medea. Once he is in Medea's situation he seems to view things in a perspective similar to her own; Mastronarde notes that even Jason's appeals to the gods and his curses are similar to those uttered by Medea, but it is too late.[151] Thus, Euripides portrays Jason as a hypocrite: that when the actions of the love afflicted are advantageous, they are the workings of a divinity, and when they are harmful, they are the actions of a dangerous women. The play allows the audience to consider their own perspectives on Medea and

---

[147] Eur. *Med.* 627-641.
[148] Ibid., 465-519.
[149] Ibid., 1322-1350; These images are characteristic of barely civilized women; for historical precedent see Semonides Fragment 7.
[150] Mastronarde, *Euripides' Medea,* 373.
[151] Ibid.

eros and it forces the audience to examine how their views change based on each situation.

Conflicting views of eros are also present in Euripides' *Troades*, where Helen is at once hated and exonerated for her actions triggering the Trojan War. Poseidon opens the play with a description of the downfall of Troy.[152] While he does not say, "Helen is innocent," Poseidon attests to the presence of divinities in the war and clearly indicates that the Trojan War was affected by the will of the gods, immediately distancing Helen from the cause of war. Poseidon reveals that there was an alliance between Athena and Hera. Helen claims their alliance was the result of the Judgment of Paris;[153] a dispute between the three goddesses (Hera, Athena and Aphrodite) over the title of "most beautiful." Helen asserts that this competition set the Trojan War in motion, not her own infidelity. In Homeric fashion, [154] she attests to the strength of Aphrodite even over Zeus and on account of this power, she believes she should be pardoned: "Blame that Goddess! One stronger than Zeus, who has power over the other gods and is the slave of that one! Pardon me! (τὴν θεὸν κόλαζε καὶ Διὸς κρείσσων γενοῦ,/ ὃς τῶν μὲν ἄλλων δαιμόνων ἔχει κράτος,/ κείνης δὲ δοῦλός ἐστι: συγγνώμη δ' ἐμοί).[155] She reiterates the claim of divine involvement at line 1042: Don't, by your knees, slay me, a disease of the gods having come to me! Pardon me! (μή, πρός σε γονάτων, τὴν νόσον τὴν τῶν θεῶν/ προσθεὶς ἐμοὶ

[152] Eur. *Tro.* 1-48.
[153] Ibid., 914-944.
[154] The ability of erotic desire to overcome divinities is attested in Hom.*Il.*14 with the union of Hera and Zeus, in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite in regards to her relationship with Anchises, and in Xenophanes Frag. 11 "Homer and Hesiod have ascribed unto the Gods all that is reproach and blame in the world of men, stealing, adultery and deceit." Translation by J.M. Edmonds. Although Euripides' Herakles refutes this statement in *Herakles* 1340-1344.
[155] Eur. *Tro.* 948-950.

κτάνῃς με, συγγίγνωσκε δέ).[156] Needless to say, Helen has something to gain by claiming divine involvement, and the gods never specifically say that they had a hand in Helen's departure from Troy. Euripides, by having Helen repeat the claim for divine involvement twice, sets up the juxtaposition between this argument and the argument held by most other characters in the play that Helen, not the gods, are responsible for her actions.

The Trojan women, after whom the play is titled, are Helen's main accusers. The prophet Cassandra says that Helen went to Troy willingly, not as a victim stolen by force (καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ἑκούσης κοὐ βίᾳ λελῃσμένης).[157] Hecuba thinks that Helen is casting blame on the goddess in an attempt to exonerate herself: "Don't hold the goddesses as ignorant, adorning your own sin…" (μὴ ἀμαθεῖς ποίει θεὰς τὸ σὸν κακὸν κοσμοῦσα).[158] Hecuba then counters Helen's claim that her presence in Troy was the result of the Judgment of Paris, questioning why goddesses as wise as Hera or Athena would waste time in such a trivial argument when neither goddess had anything to gain by winning.[159] She continues, asserting that Aphrodite is merely an excuse used by Helen and other mortals to forgive their own love-driven crime: "All follies are Aphrodite for mortals" (τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς).[160] Hecuba also responds to any claim that Paris stole Helen by

---

[156] Eur. *Tro.* 1042-1043.
[157] Ibid., 373.
[158] Ibid., 981.
[159] Hecuba questions why Hera would seek the prize of loveliness since she could hope to win none mightier than Zeus, and Athena would have little investment since she has no interest in marriage at all. Her argument is logical and rationalizes an elaborate myth, a common feature in Euripidean tragedy. Ibid., 969-981.
[160] Ibid., 989; This statement may be reflective of what is generally seen among scholars as a tendency by Euripides to rationalize myths or gods. For more information see Lefkowitz, Mary. "Impiety' and 'Atheism' in Euripides' Dramas." *The Classical Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 1. (1989): 70-82m and McDermott, Emily. *Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).

force, saying that Helen should have resisted capture, called upon her semi-divine brothers, or killed herself as "a noble wife would have done."[161] Blondell notes that Hecuba is not "perversely misunderstanding Helen's argument about the 'force' of Aphrodite… so much as literalizing Helen's implication that erotic passion is as exculpatory as physical violence."[162] Finally, Hecuba claims to have advised Helen to depart from Troy and offered her aid that Helen refused.[163] Hecuba clearly believes that eros is not a viable excuse for an adulterous affair that destroyed her entire city and of course her perspective is biased due to her position as destitute Trojan slave. From these examples there is a clear division between the characters on the subject of eros-afflicted mortals: some, like Helen, believe that the gods are clearly at fault for the affair of Helen and the destruction of Troy, whereas others, like Hecuba, feel that Helen is simply blaming the gods for actions that she committed in an attempt to exonerate herself and spare her own life.

In both *Medea* and *Troades* the characters disagree on the catalyst for the major crimes that occur. Two main arguments exist: divine eros and female error (Medea's and Helen's). In addition to displaying the division of blame, Euripides includes ambiguous moments wherein blame is uncertain: some characters first blame the gods and then blame the women in question. As previously stated, Jason is caught attributing Medea's actions to Cypris, and then to Medea (when things are not working out well for him). Cassandra and Andromache are also guilty of this. Cassandra claims Helen went willingly but then asserts that the Greek men died on account of "one woman and one

---

[161] Eur. *Tro.* 998-1014.
[162] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 92.
[163] Eur. *Tro.* 1015-1021.

Cypris."[164] Euripides' play about Helen and Medea expose an important characteristic of myth; that myth allows multiple versions of the same story to exist simultaneously in the collective thought. He creates two opposing speeches for Jason, one supporting Aphrodite's role in his fate and one condemning Medea, and he creates two views for Cassandra in the *Troades*. These seeming contradictory speeches may be an example of the tragic tendency towards rhetoric discussed earlier. The option of mortal blame or divine will may reflect a progression in Greek thought; namely, that it may not have been enough to settle for the blaming divinities for human actions and many Greeks may have felt that individuals needed to take responsibility for their actions.

The Divide

There is a multitude of evidence in classical literature supporting both the belief in eros as an agent of divine will and as a force able to be controlled by mortals. It is necessary to be aware that each genre of literature examined in the second half of this chapter operated with goals specific to their medium; tragedies often commented on the Athenian political environment through their portrayal of Homeric myths, the philosophical works of Plato were created to instruct students on morality, and the rhetorical works of orators such as Gorgias and Isocrates were exercises in skill and persuasion, which are at times clear examples of sophistry. The works that support the traditional allocation of blame for erotic affliction to divinities such as Aphrodite, and the works that provide evidence for the belief in human culpability are not mutually exclusive and, just as in the Euripides' plays examined earlier, often the contradicting

[164] Ibid., 368.

beliefs existed within the same text. Euripides' motivation for including conflicting perceptions of eros and blame will be explored at the end of the chapter.

An Argument for a Divine Origin of Eros

There is evidence in classical literature for a common belief that eros is the product of divinities and that mortals should not be held responsible for their actions while under its influence. The following examination of literary works supporting the idea of a divine origin for eros is not all-inclusive, but rather a representative. For example, eros and erotic compulsion occur frequently in classical tragedies and according to Thumiger, "the erotic emotion was one of the most codified in tragedy." Eros is most frequently described as a force that affects the individual, but also appears as a divinity, associated with Aphrodite.[165] Eros the divinity appears in Euripides *Hippolytus, Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Medea*, and in Sophocles' *Antigone.*[166] Aeschylus describes the erotic desire in terms of archery and missiles, features associated with Eros rather than Aphrodite, in *Supplices* and *Prometheus.*[167] Therefore, both Aphrodite and Eros appear as the divine source of erotic desire in classical tragedy.

Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and *Antigone* both attribute the actions of their main characters to eros inflicted by the gods. In the *Trachiniae* both Deianeira and her messenger attribute Herakles' love for Iole and subsequent destruction of Oechalia to divine eros. The messenger claims "Eros alone of gods beguiled him to perform these

[165] Eros first appears in Hes. *TH.* 119-122 and in the archaic poems: Semonides 575, Sappho 47, Alkaios 327LP, Akousilaos 276.
[166] Eur. *Hip.* 525, 530-2, *Med.* 530-1, *IA* 543-51; Soph. *Ant.* 781-90.
[167] Aesc. *Supp.* 1004-5, *Prom.* 649-50.

feats of arms" (Ἔρως δέ νιν μόνος θεῶν θέλξειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε).[168] Deianeira does not blame Herakles or Iole for their affair:

> Ἔρωτι μέν νυν ὅστις ἀντανίσταται
> πύκτης ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, οὐ καλῶς φρονεῖ:
> οὗτος γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν ὅπως θέλει,
> κἀμοῦ γε: πῶς δ᾽ οὐ χἀτέρας οἵας γ᾽ ἐμοῦ;
> ὥστ᾽ εἴ τι τὠμῷ τ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τῇδε τῇ νόσῳ
> ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι,
> ἢ τῇδε τῇ γυναικὶ τῇ μεταιτίᾳ
> τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ᾽ ἐμοὶ κακοῦ τινος.
>
> Now whoever, just like a boxer with his hands,
> rises against Eros, he does not think clearly:
> For this one rules the gods however he desires,
> and over me too; so why not another woman just like me?
> Am I, truly raging, throwing blame upon my husband
> having been seized by disease
> or by this woman, his accomplice
> of some bad thing neither shameful to them nor me? [169]

Thumiger believes that Deianeria refuses to cast blame on either person because she is attempting to "rationalize and protect her position within the household."[170] In other words, Deianeria does not want to believe that her husband would have chosen to leave her; she saves face by attributing his actions to the work of a divinity.

Deianeria also excuses his behavior on the grounds that eros afflicts humans in the same manner as a disease. She describes the effects of eros as being those of a disease.[171] Herakles attests to this claim when he bewails the "bite and "drying out" of

---

[168] Soph. *Trach.* 354-55.
[169] Ibid., 441-448.
[170] Thumiger, Chiara. "Mad Eros and Eroticized Madness in Tragedy," in *Eros in Ancient Greece,* eds. Ed Sanders, Chiara Thumiger, Chris Carey, and Nick J. Lowe, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 35.
[171] The disease-like effects of eros are frequently referred to by the Archaic poets, see Chapter 1.

eros, symptoms used for describing diseases in ancient Greece.[172] The Messenger and Deianeira in the *Trachiniae* stress the power of a divine eros to manipulate the actions of men. The chorus attributes the erotic compulsions of men to Aphrodite specifically, and also describes Aphrodite's power to beguile the Olympians, even Zeus. Likewise, the chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone* asserts that eros is unconquerable in battle (Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν) and emphasizes that no one of men *or* gods can escape it (καί σ' οὔτ' ἀθανάτων φύξιμος οὐδεὶς/ οὔθ' ἁμερίων σέ γ' ἀνθρώπων). The chorus sees eros as a destructive force that drives its victims to madness and ruin.[173] Thus in the *Trachiniae* and in *Antigone* eros is described as a product of divine will (Aphrodite), and its effects on humans drives them to break social boundaries (Herakles bringing Iole to his home), and plagues their physical well-being (causing symptoms similar to disease).

Many plays of Euripides (in addition to *Medea* and the *Troades*) show the existence of a belief in divine eros. Euripides' *Helen, Andromache* and *Hecuba* all consider the Judgment of Paris as the motivating factor in Helen's departure from Sparta.[174] Indeed the premise of Euripides' *Helen* is that Helen was never at the Trojan citadel at all; instead, after Paris made his choice, Hera created a phantom Helen that Hermes brought to Egypt in order to save her chaste bed for Menelaus (ἀκέραιον ὡς σώσαιμι Μενέλεῳ λέχος).[175] Helen, Theonoe and the chorus all attest that either the competition of goddesses or the will of Zeus was responsible for Helen's predicament,

---

[172] Thumiger, "Mad Eros and Eroticized Madness," 35; Soph. *Trach.* 1054-55; Hipp. *Epid.* 1.2 describes the effects of disease as fever, shivers, pain and numbness in the extremities. These descriptions of diseases are similar to the poetic descriptions of the effects of eros.
[173] Soph. *Ant.* 781-800.
[174] Eur. *Hel.* 1-67, 676-681, 881-886; Eur. *Andr.* 274-292; Eur. *Hec.* 629-46.
[175] Eur. *Hel.* 48.

not her own infidelity.[176] Dale confirms "the Judgment of Paris, as the beginning of all troubles is accepted as literal truth in this play, with no hint of skepticism or rationalizing interpretation."[177] The claim that Hera created the phantom, a detail that Dale asserts was not common knowledge among the audience, further aids the argument that Helen should not be liable for the start of the Trojan War because of divine involvement.[178] However, Helen and her supporters are constantly battling the misconception that Helen was personally responsible.[179] The frequent debate between whether the will of the gods was responsible for Helen's actions, her affair with Paris or at least the phantom affair, or whether Helen simply made the choice to betray her husband, indicates that Euripides was intentionally creating a dialogue about the trigger of the Trojan War. While his motivation for this debate is hard to distinguish without a deeper examination of Euripides' tragedies as a whole, his dialogue on the responsibility of Helen might have forced his audience to consider how they perceived eros.

Euripides employs the motif of divine catalysts for eros in plays not involving Helen or Medea. The most obvious example is Phaedra in the play *Hippolytus.* Euripides has the goddess Aphrodite identify herself, her power and her decision to send eros to Phaedra in the proem of the play. Phaedra is merely as a pawn to effect revenge on Hippolytus, who had devoted himself to Artemis, ignoring Aphrodite. [180] Much as the argument between goddesses is accepted as the catalyst for *Helen,* Aphrodite's personal introduction to the play assures Euripides' audience that divine will is responsible for the

[176] Eur. *Hel.* 1-67; 641-2; 676-681; 709; 881-886; 1508-1511; 1688-1692.
[177] Dale A.M. *Euripides' Helen*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967): 70.
[178] Ibid., 115
[179] Eur. *Hel.* 68-136.
[180] Eur. *Hipp.* 1-57.

tragic events that follow. He further supports this claim with the chorus' speech on the power of eros.[181] There should be no doubt in the minds of Euripides' audience that Phaedra is an innocent victim of a divine plot.

The negative reaction of Hippolytus to Phaedra's love, his disgust and shame at the prospect of being an object of lust to his stepmother,[182] perpetuates the argument and tension that appears in *Helen* and *Hecuba.* Hippolytus scorns Phaedra for her unnatural lust and does not excuse her on that basis that erotic desire is sent from divinities. The audience is meant to sympathize with both characters, and again we refer to Sansone's comment about tragic poets' skill to "construct persuasive speeches" for both sides of an argument in a manner "that aroused fervid passions seemingly at will."[183] Euripides' work in *Helen, Hecuba,* and *Hippolytus* are full of speeches that heighten the tension between the divine origin of eros and the expectations of personal control for his audience.

Gorgias and Isocrates' speeches on the perception of Helen reflect the nature of fifth century Athens; namely, these speeches embody the persuasive eros that Wohl describes in *Love Among the Ruins.*[184] Both speeches acknowledge the possibility of divine eros in their encomiums of Helen. Rollins and Blondell discuss Gorgias' approach to the Helen myth,[185] asserting that the bulk of Gorgias' argument rests on his claim that Helen "either by the will of fate and the judgment of the gods and the decree of necessity she acted or she acted either having been seized by force or persuaded by words or

---

[181] Eur. *Hipp.* 525-563.
[182] Ibid., 601-668.
[183] Sansone, *Greek Drama,* 5.
[184] See above.
[185] Rollins, Brooke. "Persuasion's Ethical Force: Levinas, Gorgias and the Rhetorical Address." *JAC,* Vol. 29 No. 3 (2009): 539-559; Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* (2013).

conquered by love" (ἢ γὰρ τύχης βουλήμασι καὶ θεῶν βουλεύμασι καὶ ἀνάγκης ψηφίσμασιν ἔπραξεν ἃ ἔπραξεν, ἢ βίαι ἁρπασθεῖσα, ἢ λόγοις πεισθεῖσα, [ἢ ἔρωτι ἁλοῦσα]).[186] Gorgias continues through each of these possible motivations for Helen's departure to Troy. He asserts that if it was the will of the gods then they should be held accountable for "the premeditation of humans is unable to impede the premeditation of gods" (εἰ μὲν οὖν διὰ τὸ πρῶτον, ἄξιος αἰτιᾶσθαι ὁ αἰτιώμενος· θεοῦ γὰρ προθυμίαν ἀνθρωπίνηι προμηθίαι ἀδύνατον κωλύειν). He specifically undermines the argument that Helen chose to leave because she yearned for Paris, a point brought up by those condemning Helen, by remarking that no one should be surprised at this event because either love is a god and therefore has power over lesser beings, or love is a disease and therefore should be considered a misfortune, not a mistake (ὃς εἰ μὲν θεὸς [ὢν ἔχει] θεῶν θείαν δύναμιν, πῶς ἂν ὁ ἥσσων εἴη τοῦτον ἀπώσασθαι καὶ ἀμύνασθαι δυνατός; εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπινον νόσημα καὶ ψυχῆς ἀγνόημα, οὐχ ὡς ἁμάρτημα μεμπτέον ἀλλ' ὡς ἀτύχημα νομιστέον).[187] By using a list of reasons that excuse Helen's actions, Gorgias' speech proves to be a defense of Helen rather than a praise of her, a criticism that Isocrates will make in his encomium.[188] Suzuki criticizes Gorgias' speech, claiming that it is "double edged: it makes Helen innocent only because it considers her not as a subject who willed her own actions, but as a passive object – not least of his own rhetorical exercise."[189] Ultimately Gorgias' speech is more a praise of his own rhetorical ability than a persuasion on behalf of Helen,[190] but his inclusion of divinities reflects widespread

[186] Gorgias *Helen.* 2.6.
[187] Ibid., 2.19.
[188] Isoc. *Helen.* 14-15.
[189] Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen,*15.
[190] Rollins, "Persuasions' Ethical Force," 546.

knowledge that, at least in some mythic traditions, they had a hand in Helen's translocation.

Isocrates' *Encomium of Helen* takes a different approach than that of its predecessor, while still asserting that the will of divinities was involved in the relationship between Helen and Paris. He does not begin with the divine interferences, preferring to emphasize Helen and her suitor's elevated position among mortals. Isocrates praises the extraordinary beauty of Helen which impacted the decisions of those around her, attracting powerful men (e.g. Theseus, Menelaus, Paris) to her side.[191] According to Blondell his description of Helen's beauty is presented as divine, a "transcendent force endowing her with value regardless of her own intentionality or actions."[192] The emphasis on the power of Helen's beauty, along with the divine attention Helen attracts, distances her from personal responsibility. Isocrates elevates the position of Helen's suitors as well, discussing the triumphs of Theseus and the worthiness of Paris (both of whom were involved in removing Helen from her home illegally). Theseus abducted Helen (before she was married to Menelaus) so that he could connect himself to the Dioskouroi and the daughter of Zeus. Helen's value to Theseus lay in her relation to divinities and eternal fame.[193] Isocrates includes the Judgment of Paris to enforce the high standing of the prince, asserting the gods would not have chosen him if he were not the best judge.[194] Helen's beauty and Paris' merit attract divine attention. Although the two

---

[191] Beisecker, "Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women's Status," 108.
[192] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 224.
[193] Pausanias says that Helen's abduction by Theseus was treated by Stesichorus, Alkman and Pindar. Theseus' motivation for divine recognition seems justified since Menelaus often is portrayed as being accepted into the Elysian Fields because of his marriage to Helen. Hom. *Od.* 4. 563. See Gantz 288-291.
[194] Isoc. 10.46.

orators differ on how Helen arrived at Troy, each acknowledges the actions of divinities in their narratives. It is as if the inclusion of the divinities in any portrayal of Helen, in tragedy or oratory, is the ultimate argument against anyone who might criticize Helen's actions or suggesting that she possessed poor moral character.

The Argument for Human Culpability in the Face of Eros

Despite the wealth of evidence for the continued belief in eros as a product of the divine, there is an urge in Classical Athens to hold individuals responsible for actions or crimes they committed, even if they are done by the eros-afflicted. In Euripides' *Andromache* and *Hecuba*, both cited above as examples of a widespread belief in divinely ordained eros, some characters blame Menelaus for Helen's departure from Sparta.[195] For example, Peleus criticizes Menelaus in *Andromache* for failing to keep guard over his wife.[196] His argument rests largely on the claim that Helen, and women in general, are not naturally chaste and men, knowing this, must act accordingly. When Menelaus fails to uphold his duty to control his wife, *he* must accept responsibility for his wife's actions.[197]

Helen, of course, is always an easy target to hold accountable for the Trojan War, since her translocation to Troy was, essentially, the cause of the war. In *Hecuba,* Helen is repeatedly blamed by Hecuba and the queen curses Helen for her affair with Paris.[198] Just like the Hecuba in Euripides' *Troades,* this Hecuba does not think that any disagreement

---

[195] Hecuba blames Helen Eur. *Hec.* 266-69, 941; Peleus criticizes Menelaus Eur. *Andr.* 590- 64.
[196] Eur. *Andr.* 590-64.
[197] For more information on men's responsibility for their wives actions see Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place" (1990) and Blondell, *Helen of Troy* (2013).
[198] Eur. *Hec.* 266-69, 941; Upcott affirms Hecuba's opinion on Helen "by faithlessly deserting her husband for Paris, [Helen] had been the cause of the Trojan War. Upcott, A.W. *The Hecuba of Euripides*. (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910), 97.

among the gods affected Helen's transgressive action. Hecuba blames Helen's own erotic desire, for which she holds Helen personally responsible. In addition, neither Orestes nor Tyndareus, Helen's mortal father, excuse Helen for her actions. Orestes says that Agamemnon went to Troy "trying to find a remedy for the wrongdoing and injustice of [Menelaus'] wife" (ἀλλ᾽ ἁμαρτίαν τῆς σῆς γυναικὸς ἀδικίαν τ᾽ ἰώμενος).[199] Tyndareus after calling Clytemnestra a "profane woman" (γυναῖκας ἀνοσίους),[200] says that he would never speak to Helen or commend her and that he pities Menelaus for having gone to war for the sake of a wicked woman (Ἑλένην τε, τὴν σὴν ἄλοχον, οὔποτ᾽ αἰνέσω/ οὐδ᾽ ἂν προσείποιμ᾽: οὐδὲ σὲ ζηλῶ, κακῆς/ γυναικὸς ἐλθόνθ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἐς Τροίας πέδον).[201] There is no doubt in minds of Euripides' Hecuba, Tyndareus and Orestes that Helen is personally culpable for the Trojan War.

In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* Helen *and* Paris are considered responsible for their affair. The chorus blames Paris for violating *xenia* because of his eros for Helen.[202] The chorus then blames a "distraught Helen" who "alone destroyed many, very many, lives at Troy" (ἰὼ ἰὼ παράνους Ἑλένα/ μία τὰς πολλάς, τάς πάνυ πολλὰς/ ψυχὰς ὀλέσασ᾽ ὑπὸ Τροίᾳ).[203] It is inevitable that Helen will receive some blame in the play, since she is the most likely target for any declaration of mortal responsibility in the Trojan War and all the consequences to follow. There is one moment, however, in which a character actively

---

[199] Eur. *Orest.* 649-650.
[200] ἀνοσίος is used to describe Oedipus in Soph. *OT.* 353. This word reserved for people who have committed unholy or impious acts.
[201] Eur. *Orest.* 507-525.
[202] Aesch. *Ag.* 385-402; Fraenkel goes into great detail about the chorus' criticism here. The chorus uses the opportunity to criticize any man who, like Paris, brings trouble on his fellow citizens attempting to avoid the consequences of his actions. Eduard. *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* Vol. II. (Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1950), 208.
[203] Aesch. *Ag.* 1455-1461.

removes the blame from Helen. Clytemnestra tells the chorus to "not turn hate against Helen, as if a slayer of men, as if alone having destroyed the lives of many Greek men she brought about incurable pain" (μηδ' εἰς Ἑλένην κότον ἐκτρέψῃς,/ ὡς ἀνδρολέτειρ', ὡς μία πολλῶν / ἀνδρῶν ψυχὰς Δαναῶν ὀλέσασ' / ἀξύστατον ἄλγος ἔπραξεν).[204] Clytemnestra may be instructing the chorus to blame eros for Helen's actions, since eros earlier ode,[205] or she may be attributing blame to the cursed line of Atreus.[206] She may be instructing the chorus to blame her, as a representative of women, since the chorus responds by criticizing Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra approves their correction.[207] Clytemnestra's speech may be ambiguous but the chorus' assertion that Paris and Helen were responsible for their affair is clear. Mortals, not gods, can and should be held responsible for their choices. The compulsion to blame individuals for their actions is present in the plays of the three most famous tragedians.

The personal culpability of abducted women is an issue that is explored in Herodotus' *Histories*. In fact, the very first section of Book One deals with the series of abductions (Io, Europa, Medea and Helen) that the Persians identity as the origin of Greek-Persian conflicts. Each abduction is primarily attributed to the actions of men who seize the women either out of lust, revenge or some combination of the two. The depictions of these abduction appear to blame the men for their rash behavior. Herodotus also includes a Persians statement that seems to blame the female victims for their abduction as well: "Certainly it is clear that if these women had not wanted it, they would

---

[204] Ibid., 1462-67.
[205] Ibid., 698; Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*, Vol. III, 692.
[206] A detailed description of the fortunes of the house of Atreus can be found in Gants, *Early Greek Myth*, 545-550.
[207] Aesch. *Ag.* 1468- 81; Fraenkel discusses the ambiguity and possible interpretations in this scene with no clear decision. *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*, Vol III, 692-703.

not have been seized" (δῆλα γὰρ δὴ ὅτι, εἰ μὴ αὐταὶ ἐβούλοντο, οὐκ ἂν ἡρπάζοντο).[208] Herodotus records the Persian belief that humans, and especially women, are actively involved in their transgressive crimes. Blondell concludes that in these Persian logoi recited by Herodotus "female self-assertion remains a cause of male destruction, but only as a complement to and consequence of male erotic weakness."[209] Herodotus does not include any mention of the Greek myths about these abductions, in all of which divinities could be considered the catalyst for each woman's abduction. He may have omitted the Greek versions because his intended purpose of this section is record what the Persians believed started the animosity between the east and west, but it is surprising that he does not follow up these Persian accounts with the traditional Greek mythological stories. Murray and Moreno note that Herodotus "rather than *chercher la femme* in the mythological world, about which nothing definite is known, Herodotus prefers to discuss recent characters and events."[210] Herodotus, at least in this instance, tries to deal with events in recent human history.

Helen is mentioned again in Book Two of the *Histories* when Herodotus describes an Egyptian shrine. Herodotus' discussion with Egyptian priests leads him to conclude that the shrine must be to Helen. The priests explain that Paris brought Helen to Egypt before returning to Troy, but since Proteus thought her abduction unjust he held her until Menelaus could reclaim her.[211] Again, Herodotus leaves out the version wherein Helen

---

[208] Hdt. 1.4.2; How and Wells remark that Herodotus "probably saw the humor of this argument." How, W.W. and J. Wells. *A Commentary on Herodotus.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 55.
[209] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 149.
[210] Murry, Oswyn and Alfonso Moreno, *A Commentary on Herodotus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 78.
[211] Hdt. 2.113-9.

was transported by a divine being, evidence that he desired to record the abduction of Helen in terms of human actions.

The encomiums of Gorgias and Isocrates were used earlier for evidence of divine involvement in the translocation of Helen, but it is important to look at the larger context of these speeches. The speeches were encomiums, and as mentioned earlier Gorgias' was considered more of a defense speech rather than a laudatory speech. Therefore, the very existence of these speeches indicates that Helen must be in need of defense. For what better use of rhetoric and display of persuasive power could there be for Gorgias than clear even the guiltiest (Helen) of blame.[212] Isocrates composed his speech both to glorify Helen and to fulfill his own agenda. While, he mentions personal blame several times, he never blames Helen. Instead, he mentions the oath of suitors,[213] which appeared in the *Catalogue of Women.* This does not exclude Helen from responsibility for her departure with Paris, but it does indicate that the subsequent war was the responsibility of her sworn protectors. Isocrates' *Encomium of Helen* can also be interpreted as a display of oratorical power and as a promotion of Pan-Hellenic and Athenian identity (it was for the sake of Helen that all the Greek city-states joined together). Isocrates spends a great portion of his speech praising Theseus. His elevation of the great Athenian hero would have bolstered Athenian pride. Theseus embodied Wohl's description of the male citizen as one who had "both political and erotic autonomy – he lives and loves as he wishes – and by his willingness to risk his life to preserve that autonomy."[214] In other words, Theseus had risked his life to preserve Athenian freedom from the demands of Minos and

---

[212] Crockett, Andy. "Gorgias' Encomium of Helen: Violent Rhetoric or Radical Feminism?" *Rhetoric Review*. Vol. 13 No. 1 (1994): 83-84; Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 166.
[213] Iso. *Helen* 40.
[214] Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins*, 4

he exercised his erotic autonomy by pursuing Helen. Helen is then glorified by her connection with the Theseus, the ideal male citizen. Isocrates includes Helen's relationship with Theseus in order to rally Athenian approval for his speech. Therefore, Isocrates and Gorgias' encomiums both because of their content and because of their nature, which assumes that Helen needed to be exonerated, also support mortal culpability for erotic actions.

Conclusion

The fear of women gaining power in Athens collides with the tension over blame in erotic situations in many literary works of the Classical age. The tension was probably more obvious because of the popularity of oratory and debate. Women were often the main characters in Euripides' works,[215] and Blondell notes "over time Euripides was known for his interest in transgressive women."[216] This may have been because female characters granted him an opportunity to comment on multiple anxieties or political beliefs at once. For example, the myth of Helen allowed him to comment on her affair, whether it was the result of divine interference (Judgment of Paris) or whether Helen was a transgressive woman, crossing the social boundaries by deserting her husband (if Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is any indication of public attitudes towards Helen). Hecuba, in her conversation with Menelaus, emphasizes the dangerous feminine nature of Helen: that Helen has the ability, because of her sex, to instill erotic desire in Menelaus and to persuade him to spare her life.[217] Blondell characterizes Helen's subsequent defense speech as "an intellectually and morally vacuous tissue of sophistries" that Euripides

---

[215] For example: Euripides' *Helen, Medea, Hippolytus, The Troades, Andromache,* and *Hecuba.*
[216] Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 182.
[217] Eur. *Troad.* 890-894, 1049.

wrote to "simultaneously entertain and alienate an Athenian jury."[218] It entertained because it played on the male affection for forensic speeches but alienating because Helen was a woman appropriating "the role and status of a male citizen by speaking on her own behalf."[219] It would have been alarming to hear a woman deliver a speech that the audience would know was ultimately successful in preventing her death.

Medea, on the other hand, is entirely driven by eros for Jason and helps him complete his task to steal the Golden Fleece.[220] The extent of her crimes must have been debated in the Classical age, and ultimately, of course, Euripides portrays most controversial Medea yet. Euripides also identifies Medea by her position as a woman. Boedecker notes that the Chorus repeatedly uses the word woman "as if by repeating the term that should define her, they hope to make her respond accordingly."[221] Medea herself laments her female status and the lack of control women have over their fate in society (since they are so tightly controlled by marriage and male authority).[222] Her position as a woman, however, like Helen, grants her certain characteristics. Helen uses her sex as a tool for persuasion. Medea uses superior oratory skills to persuade Creon into delaying her departure from Corinth. Medea also asserts that, as a woman, she is imbued with innate cleverness,[223] a quality that Jason confirms[224] and which terrifies Creon.[225]

---

[218] Blondell, *Helen of Troy*, 195.
[219] Ibid., 193.
[220] Apollonius comments more on the role of Medea in Jason's mission in his *Argonautica.* This will be discussed at length in the next chapter.
[221] Boedecker, Deborah. "Becoming Medea: Assimilation in Euripides," in *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 134.
[222] Eur. *Med.* 230-250, 511-519.
[223] Eur. *Med.* 407-9.
[224] Ibid., 525-35.
[225] Ibid., 284-323.

Euripides brings out two characteristics of the female sex in his portrayals of Helen and Medea; both characteristics allow the women a special ability to overcome challenges, which were partially created because of their eros for particular men. Helen and Medea allowed Euripides simultaneously to comment on the question of human culpability in the face of erotic desire (or more specifically female responsibility), and to comment on the potential for women to create destructive situations for their male counterparts.

Aphrodite is indeed the goddess of love and the classical Greeks, like those Greeks before them, believe her power to be formidable. However the idea that eros excused all personal responsibility was increasingly criticized in literature, especially when the troubled party was capable of disrupting Greek political stability or committing heinous crimes. The urge to blame mortals was not non-existent in the Homeric and Archaic ages but there are significantly fewer examples of this phenomenon. It is possible that what appears to be an increased tension between erotic compulsion and human will is simply the result of the amount of material available from the Classical period. It is undeniable, however, that there was an anxiety in the male-citizenry over the potential for women to transgress their boundaries and many Greeks felt that blaming these transgressions on the gods was not enough, women (and in fact all mortals) could be held accountable for their actions.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY HELLENISTIC PORTRAYALS OF EROTIC ANXIETY

In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, early Hellenistic anxiety over the potential of eros to affect mortals' ability, particularly women's, to behave according to social custom is apparent. In early Hellenistic literature the effects of eros, which generally result from the actions of divinities, are portrayed as completely overwhelming. Consistent with earlier literary representations of erotic desire, these texts portray eros affecting the physical body of the individual and the psychological ability to remain within established social boundaries. I propose to examine only literature from the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. where there is still a strong Greek identity that has not yet been overwhelmed by Roman influence. Therefore, the primary texts used in this chapter include the works of Theocritus, Callimachus, Apollonius, the surviving mimes of Herodas and other mime fragments. I will occasionally cite later sources, like Apollodoros, who are clearly drawing on Classical and Hellenistic myths, particularly in regards to the myths of Helen and Medea.

Fourth and third century B.C.E. literary representations of eros and eros-afflicted women develop largely from Homeric and classical precedent, but also respond to this precedent with nuanced representations of erotic anxiety. First, this chapter examines early Hellenistic portrayals of the origin of erotic desire. The majority of these portrayals reflect a continued perception of eros as a product of the divine. Next, this chapter examines Hellenistic representations of the effects of eros on mortals. The basic

descriptions of these effects are in line with earlier portrayals of erotic affliction manifesting itself with disease or wound-like symptoms. Third, this chapter examines numerous portrayals of mortals resisting the effects of eros. Certain individuals, such as Apollonius' Medea, are portrayed as losing an internal struggle to resist the compulsion of eros. Other individuals, like Polyphemus in Theocritus *Idyll* Eleven, resist the effects by seeking out cures or methods by which to lessen the symptoms of eros. Finally, the chapter examines how those who are eros-afflicted act destructively against societal norms, either by seeking revenge or through their failure to resist erotic compulsion. Due to the nature of the material, Medea is the primary focus of the chapter.

The Origin of Erotic Desire in the Early Hellenistic Period

The inability of mortals to control when they might be afflicted with eros and who target of their erotic desire would be caused great anxiety. In the early Hellenistic literature, divine agents caused eros, often capriciously, although in some literature, mortals acknowledged some personal responsibility for their erotic relationships.[226] Both views of erotic desire are consistent with earlier representations of eros, particularly the views of the archaic poets.[227]

Several divinities are cited as the source for erotic desire including: Aphrodite, Eros, Zeus and the Muses. In Theocritus' eleventh *Idyll* Aphrodite (called Cypris here) is responsible for wounding Polyphemus: ἔχθιστον ἔχων ὑποκάρδιον ἕλκος /Κύπριδος ἐκ μεγάλας.[228] In the fifteenth *Idyll* the singer at the feast of Adonis sings a song about Aphrodite and Adonis in which Aphrodite is honored with a feast and her connection

[226] E.g. Theoc. *Id.* 2. In this chapter, all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
[227] Sappho Fr. 1; Anacreon Fr. 12 (Page).
[228] Theoc. *Id.* 11. 15-16.

with love praised. Aphrodite also appears as an agent along with the god Eros. The existence of a divine Eros that is separate and yet intricately connected to Aphrodite appears first in Hesiod.[229] The popularity of Eros as a divinity seems to have grown throughout the Classical period and he is undeniably present in Hellenistic works. Originally a primal force, he eventually is regularized as the son of Aphrodite and, usually, of Ares.[230] As Aphrodite's son he is sometimes portrayed as an agent or extension of her realm of love, he appears thus in Callimachus' *Aetia* and in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Eros is also cited without direct reference to Aphrodite and seems to hold the same, or very similar, powers as Aphrodite over eros.[231] In the first *Idyll* Aphrodite approaches Daphnis and she comments on his unfulfilled boast that he could conquer Eros in wrestling: You, Daphnis, boasted you would master Eros: And now you yourself have been conquered by troublesome Eros (τύ θην τὸν Ἔρωτα κατεύχεο Δάφνι λυγιξεῖν:/ ἦ ῥ᾽ οὐκ αὐτὸς Ἔρωτος ὑπ᾽ ἀργαλέω ἐλυγίχθης).[232] In the third *Idyll* the narrator claims to know of divine Eros and calls him a "burdensome god" (βαρὺς θεός).[233] In Callimachus' *Aetia* Fragment 67 "Eros himself" teaches Acontius a skill so that he can win Cydippe as a wife: Αὐτὸς Ἔρος ἐδίδαξεν Ἀκόντιον… τέχνην.[234] In these poems Aphrodite and Eros are actively involved in the erotic relationships of mortals.

Many other gods, usually in conjunction with Aphrodite or Eros, also play a role in infecting mortals with erotic desire. Medea's desire for Jason in the *Argonautica* is the

---

[229] Hes. *Th*. 119-122.
[230] For more on the Eros' lineage, or lack there of, see Gantz, *Early Greek Myth,* 3-4.
[231] The nuanced descriptions of Eros and Aphrodite's power will be discussed in greater detail further on.
[232] Theoc. *Id.* 1. 97-98
[233] Ibid., 3.15.
[234] Call. *Aet.* Fr. 67 1-3.

result of many deities working together, albeit with very different motives: Erato, Hera, Athena, Aphrodite and Eros. Book Three begins with an invocation to the Muse Erato. The narrator calls on Erato because the Muse shares in the power of Aphrodite (σὺ γὰρ καὶ Κύπριδος αἶσαν/ ἔμμορες) and enchants unwedded maidens (ἀδμῆτας δὲ τεοῖς μελεδήμασι θέλγεις/ παρθενικάς).[235] As Hunter asserts "the *peitho* of Eros and the *peitho* of poetry had always been closely associated" and the invocation to Erato therefore "points to the poetic quality, as well as to the subject, which the muse is to bring to [Apollonius].[236] Furthermore, Erato, as first divinity mentioned in association with Medea's eros for Jason also adds to the content of the book; namely, Erato introduces the theme of eros that will be the main focus of Book Three.

After the invocation Apollonius' introduces the other divinities who will play a major role in shaping the fate of Medea and Jason. Hera and Athena, who are plotting to try to find a way to coerce Medea to aid Jason in his quest, eventually decide that the only way to manipulate her is by enlisting the aid of Aphrodite and Eros. [237] Clearly, Apollonius is saying that gods like Hera and Athena, while able to influence the lives of mortals in many ways, cannot manipulate erotic desire without the help of divinities particularly associated with eros. Hera and Athena cannot directly harness the power of eros but they have the ability to entreat Aphrodite. These powerful divinities are portrayed as interdependent. Hera and Athena rely on Aphrodite and Aphrodite, we will see, relies on Eros. The opening of Book Three portrays specific and limited realms of the immortal gods.

---

[235] Apollon. 3.3-5.
[236] Hunter, R.L. *Apollonius of Rhodes*: *The Argonautica Book III.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 95
[237] Apollon. 3.6-35

Furthermore, these goddesses desire a specific type of erotic desire that comes from Eros, not Aphrodite. The poet seems to be distinguishing desire and love. Desire is personified by Eros and love by Aphrodite. The characterization of each emotion is portrayed through Apollonius' description of the child Eros. Eros is greedy and petulant, difficult to control and entirely focused on his own pleasure. Beye comments on the different qualities of love and passion portrayed in the opening of Book Three: "the uncontrollable nature of desire (Eros)…wars with the more intellectual other-person oriented emotion of love (Aphrodite)."[238] Pavlock notes that in Apollonius "Aphrodite and Eros together embody the deceptive qualities that form the experience of love."[239] In Apollonius, each deity has very specific powers over love. Aphrodite and Eros work together to bestow erotic desire to mortals.

While gods and goddesses are most frequently cited as the source of erotic desire, there are some early Hellenistic texts that indicate mortals may have had some control over their erotic relationships. For example, a second-century mime fragment reveals an abandoned woman's description of her relationship with her ex-lover.[240] She believes their love was the result the choice of her and her lover: "the choice was made by both of us: we were joined (ἐξ ἀμφοτέρον γέγον' αἵρεσις:/ ἐξευγνίσμεθα). [241] The narrator credits Aphrodite less, she first asserts that Aphrodite is only the "the surety of our love" (τῆς

---

[238] Beye, Charles. *Epic and Romance in the 'Argonautica' of Apollonius*. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 127.
[239] Pavlock, Barbara. *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 44.
[240] The fragment was found on a papyrus of the second-century B.C.E. and was first published by B.P. Grenfell (*An Alexandrian Erotic Fragment and Other Greek Papyri,* 1896: P.Grenf. v.11) The fragment also appears in a collection of mime fragments compiled by Rusten and Cunningham, *Theophrastus, Herodas, Sophron and Other Mime Fragments*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
[241] Ibid, 1-3.

φιλίης Κύπρις/ ἔστ᾽ἀνάδοχος). She later implies, however, that both she and her lover had credited Aphrodite to their erotic connection when she says that now her lover denies Aphrodite's role (ὁ τὴν Κύπριν οὐ φάμενος εἶναι τοῦ ἐρᾶν μεταιτίαν). In other words, within the poem the narrator attributes the personal motivations of herself, her lover and Aphrodite to the erotic relationship. The fact that her lover denies that Aphrodite shares responsibility for their affection after their relationship is over, implies that when things do not work out between lovers, their love was not sent from divinities but was merely a series of (poor) human choices.[242] It could be argued that in Books One and Two of the *Argonautica* Apollonius presents Jason as a man whom Medea could have been attracted to even if the gods had not intervened; namely, Jason is the main hero and leader of the Argonauts and he attracts the interest of the queen of Lemnos, Hypsipyle. However, the lengthy description of the gods' plans at the beginning of Book Three more likely points toward Apollonius' intent to portray divinities as intricately involved in Medea's love affair with Jason. In general, humans are not usually portrayed as having an active role in their erotic desires and the majority of fourth and third century texts follow earlier precedents in depicting eros as being the result of actions of divinities.

The Effects of Eros in Early Hellenistic Literature

The effects of eros on mortals, male and female, in the fourth and third centuries follow archaic and classical descriptions. Thornton notes that eros is consistently portrayed "with epithets signifying destructiveness, suffering, pain, and numerous other

[242] This conclusion is reminiscent of the Euripides *Medea* when Jason first attributes Medea's affection to Aphrodite and then changes his mind after the murder of his children, blaming Medea rather than the goddess for the unfortunate end to their relationship.

frightening disorders."[243] Beye adds that the most common descriptions of the effects of eros are as "dread disease, a destructive force above all else."[244] In addition to descriptions of eros as a disease, eros is also described as a physical wound that is inflicted by either Aphrodite or Eros. Descriptions of erotic effects as being similar to diseases and wounds are found in Apollonius, Theocritus and many mime fragments.

In Apollonius, Medea's eros is described both in terms of a wound and a disease. Apollonius describes the immediate effects of the eros on Medea:

> **…**τὴν δ᾽ ἀμφασίη λάβε θυμόν.
> αὐτὸς δ᾽ ὑψορόφοιο παλιμπετὲς ἐκ μεγάροιο
> καγχαλόων ἴιξε: βέλος δ᾽ ἐνεδαίετο κούρῃ
> νέρθεν ὑπὸ κραδίῃ, φλογὶ εἴκελον: ἀντία δ᾽ αἰεὶ
> βάλλεν ὑπ᾽ Αἰσονίδην ἀμαρύγματα, καί οἱ ἄηντο
> στηθέων ἐκ πυκιναὶ καμάτῳ φρένες, οὐδέ τιν᾽ ἄλλην
> μνῆστιν ἔχεν, γλυκερῇ δὲ κατείβετο θυμὸν ἀνίῃ.
> ὡς δὲ γυνὴ μαλερῷ περὶ κάρφεα χεύατο δαλῷ
> χερνῆτις, τῇπερ ταλασήια ἔργα μέμηλεν,
> ὥς κεν ὑπωρόφιον νύκτωρ σέλας ἐντύναιτο,
> ἄγχι μάλ᾽ ἐζομένη: τὸ δ᾽ ἀθέσφατον ἐξ ὀλίγοιο
> δαλοῦ ἀνεγρόμενον σὺν κάρφεα πάντ᾽ ἀμαθύνει:
> τοῖος ὑπὸ κραδίῃ εἰλυμένος αἴθετο λάθρῃ
> οὖλος Ἔρως: ἀπαλὰς δὲ μετετρωπᾶτο παρειὰς
> ἐς χλόον, ἄλλοτ᾽ ἔρευθος, ἀκηδείῃσι νόοιο.
>
> …Speechlessness seized her soul.
> [Eros], rejoicing, darted back again from the well-roofed hall.
> The missile burned from the depths
> of the maiden's heart, like fire. Always she threw
> flashing eyes at Jason and her chest panted with the
> constant toil of the heart. She had no
> recollection, her soul overflowed with sweet pain.
> Just as a spinster, for whom these sorts of deeds are a care,
> heaps dry twigs around a raging firebrand,
> so that by night she would ready a flame under her roof.
> sitting very close, the terrible thing rising from
> the small fire brand, consumes all things;
> in this way Eros having wrapped secretly around her heart, ignited.

[243] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, 46.
[244] Beye, *Epic and Romance,* 51.

> It turned the soft cheeks from pale,
> another time red, with careless thought.[245]

The effects of eros on Medea are twofold: they are both the effects of wound (since she is struck with an arrow) and they are the effects of a disease. As a wound to her heart, the arrow burns and pains her. As a disease, Medea loses the ability to speak and her color pales. A similar description of the loss of control over bodily functions and the paling and flush that comes with eros appears in Sappho Fr. 31.[246] Furthermore, the fire and flame metaphors are indicative of descriptions of fever. Hunter notes: "the comparison of love to smoldering fire is common in later poetry [such as] Callimachus Epigram 44 [and] Headlam on Herondas 1.38."[247] Similar descriptions appear throughout Book Three and Four as Apollonius uses repetition to enforce his portrayal of the power of eros and the negative impact that it has on mortals.[248]

A mime fragment from the second century B.C.E. affirms the negative descriptions of the effects of eros seen in Apollonius. The woman in the fragment asserts that "pain holds [her]" (ὀδύνη μ'ἔχει)[249] and that she has a "great fire burning in her heart" (ἔχω τὸ πολὺ πῦρ τὸ ἐν τῆι ψυχῆι μου καιόμενον).[250] She says that she "going to go mad" (μέλλω μαίνεσθαι)[251] and that "to be madly in love brings great trouble"[252]

---

[245] Apollon. 3.281-298.
[246] Sappho. Fr. 31. 8-15
[247] Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes,* 130
[248] Similar descriptions also appear at 3.751-765, 1009-1025; 4.57-65, 445-451,1060-68
[249] Fragment one in Rusten and Cunningham, *Theophrastus, Herodas, Sophron and Other Mime Fragments*, 2002. See above.
[250] Mime Frag. 1.15-16.
[251] Ibid., 1.23.
[252] This translation comes from Rusten and Cunningham. The word used in this line is "ἐπιμανουσοραν" which R and C identify as a hapoxlegomon meaning "being madly in love." Rusten, Jeffrey and I.C. Cunningham. *Theophrastus, Herodas, Sophron and Other Mime Fragments,* 365

(επιμανουσοραν μέγαν ἔχει πόνον). Eros is portrayed as extremely dangerous and destructive to the body and mind.

In Theocritus' thirtieth *Idyll*, eros is also described as both a fever and a wound. The narrator says that he "has been crushed by a deadly disease" (Ὤιαι τῶ χαλεπῶ καἰνομόρω τῶδε νοσήματος)[253] which "eats the inner marrow of the one remembering/longing" (τῷ δ' ὸ πόθος καὶ τὸν ἔσω μυελὸν ἐσθίει/ ὀμμιμνασκομένῳ).[254] The use of "ὀμμιμνασκομένῳ" or "of one longing" also implies that this feeling lingers after the initial affliction. He also characterizes his affliction as wound which bites into his heart (ἕλκος ἔχων καὶ τὸ κέαρ δακών).[255] The suffering that eros causes the narrator is so great that he simply wishes to give up on life: "I ache in my head, you don't care. I sing no longer, having thrown myself down I will lie here and thus the wolves will eat me" (᾽Αλγέω τὰν κεφαλάν, τὶν δ' οὐ μέλει. οὐκέτ᾽ ἀείδω,/ κεισεῦμαι δὲ πεσών, καὶ τοὶ λύκοι ὦδέ μ᾽ ἔδονται).[256] The portrayals of the negative effects of eros, particularly being so intense that the afflicted would consider suicide, are again reminiscent of archaic poetry, such as Sappho Thirty-One and Archilochus 153.[257]

Eros versus the Eros-Afflicted

In early Hellenistic literature, mortals are frequently portrayed as attempting to resist the effects of eros either through sheer will power or by seeking out cures or methods by which to mollify the symptoms of eros. For example, Daphnis in Theocritus

---

[253] Theoc. *Id.* 30. 1.
[254] Ibid., 30.21-22. The use of the verb ὀμμιμνασκομένῳ may imply that the person is purposefully recalling the memory of the lost beloved. The implication may be equivalent to the modern "to dwell."
[255] Ibid., 30.10.
[256] Ibid., 3.
[257] See Chapter Two for a discussion of the effects of eros in archaic poetry.

Idyll One confronts Aphrodite, and tells her that even in Hades he will be a pain to Eros (Δάφνις κὴν ᾽Αίδα κακὸν ἔσσεται ἄλγος ῞Ερωτι).[258] In other words, Daphnis promises to struggle against Eros forever, and that Aphrodite and Eros will always know that some mortal resisted their power.[259] Apollonius portrays Medea's resistance through a series of monologues and descriptions of her physical hesitations.[260] Other individuals, like Polyphemus in Theocritus *Idyll* Eleven, seek ways to mollify their pain. These authors pit mortal determination against divinely attributed erotic desire.

The most detailed and nuanced description of a mortal resisting the effects of eros can be found in Apollonius' *Argonautica.* The agonizing effects of eros plague Medea with internal turmoil. She is torn between succumbing to the will of eros, and maintaining her reputation and her loyalty to her family. Apollonius' frequent descriptions of Medea's inner conflict are reminiscent of tragedy. In Euripides' play, Medea is deeply torn when it comes to the decision to murder her own children.[261] Apollonius builds on the tragic style of portraying the inner emotions of characters in order to allow his reader to understand the perspective of Medea, giving depth to the "eros-afflicted woman" who is so often a trope in mythology.

Medea laments her affliction and then goes back and forth on what fate she hopes to befall Jason (3.464-70):

> ‘τίπτε με δειλαίην τόδ᾽ ἔχει ἄχος; εἴθ᾽ ὅγε πάντων
> φθίσεται ἡρώων προφερέστατος, εἴτε χερείων,
> ἐρρέτω. ἦ μὲν ὄφελλεν ἀκήριος ἐξαλέασθαι.

---

[258] Theoc. *Id.* 1.104
[259] Hunter, Richard. *Theocritus: A Selection*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1999. 96.
[260] Apollon. 3.464-70, 3.636-44, 3.645-664, 3.681-687, 3.771-801, 4.11-23, 4.106-7, 4.465-74, 4.731-52.
[261] Eur. *Med.* 1019-1080

> ναὶ δὴ τοῦτό γε, πότνα θεὰ Περσηί, πέλοιτο,
> οἴκαδε νοστήσειε φυγὼν μόρον: εἰ δέ μιν αἶσα
> δμηθῆναι ὑπὸ βουσί, τόδε προπάροιθε δαείη,
> οὕνεκεν οὔ οἱ ἔγωγε κακῇ ἐπαγαίομαι ἄτῃ.’
>
> Why does pain hold wretched me? If he is the best
> of heroes who will die, or the worst,
> let him die! But in truth, I wish he would keep himself
> safe. Let this be so, revered goddess, daughter of Perses,
> that he, escaping death, would go home. But if it is his lot
> to be overpowered by [my father’s] oxen, may he learn before that fate that,
> for his sake, I am aggrieved by his bad lot.

At the start, Medea seems content to let Jason’s fate befall him as it should, but struggles with her affection for him, still desiring that he survive and know of her love for him. Hunter notes that Medea has already begun to separate herself from her people by asserting how she herself (ἔγωγε) feels.[262] Her thoughts are separate and contrary to those of the collective Colchian population.

Medea is equally torn in her next monologue in which she chastises herself for caring more about Jason than her family. By the end of her speech, however, she is hopeful that her sister will ask her to help the Argonauts and thus give a pretext for her involvement (3.636-44):

> ‘δειλὴ ἐγών, οἷόν με βαρεῖς ἐφόβησαν ὄνειροι.
> δείδια, μὴ μέγα δή τι φέρῃ κακὸν ἥδε κέλευθος
> ἡρώων. περί μοι ξείνῳ φρένες ἠερέθονται.
> μνάσθω ἐὸν κατὰ δῆμον Ἀχαιίδα τηλόθι κούρην
> ἄμμι δὲ παρθενίη τε μέλοι καὶ δῶμα τοκήων.
> ἔμπα γε μὴν θεμένη κύνεον κέαρ, οὐκέτ᾽ ἄνευθεν
> αὐτοκασιγνήτης πειρήσομαι, εἴ κέ μ᾽ ἀέθλῳ
> χραισμεῖν ἀντιάσῃσιν, ἐπὶ σφετέροις ἀχέουσα
> παισί: τό κέν μοι λυγρὸν ἐνὶ κραδίῃ σβέσαι ἄλγος.
>
> I am wretched! What sort of heavy dreams have terrified me!
> I fear lest the voyage of heroes should bear some great evil

[262] The addition of –γε adds emphasis. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes*, 149

> My heart is very much disturbed by the stranger.[263]
> Let an Achean maiden in his far off home be a care to him,
> and let maidenhood and my father's house be a care to me.
> All the same, however, shamelessly,[264]
> I shall make a trial of my sister, no longer keeping apart.[265]
> If she should entreat me to ward off the contests, grieving
> for her own children, this would quench the mournful pain in my heart.

At the verge of confronting her sister, Medea hesitates. She is so torn that she cannot make the walk to her sister's bedroom; instead, Medea paces as her good sense tries to resist the compulsion of love.[266] Beye notes Medea's resistance "three times - again the magical three - she tries and then falls crying on her bed. It is her sister who must come to her."[267] Even once her sister is present, out of shame she tries to resist revealing her true feelings by speaking "tricky words" (δόλῳ). She goes through with the plan, however, because "bold Loves drive her on" (θρασέες γὰρ/ ἐπεκλονέεσκον Ἔρωτες)[268] and Chalciope quickly asks Medea to aid Jason on behalf of her own sons. The pretext of aiding Chalciope's sons does little to preserve the dignity of Medea and enables her to give in more to the effects of eros.

Medea's third monologue in Book Three is her longest and by far the most dramatic and revealing of how great Medea's struggle really is. She laments her love for Jason and wishes that she had died before she had ever seen him.[269] She declares that some god brought the Argonauts to Colchis (a statement that the audience knows to be

---

[263] I have followed Hunter's translation of this line. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes,* 166.
[264] Hunter notes how Medea's use of the word dog-faced or shameless echoes Helen's self-reproach in Homer. Ibid., 167.
[265] Lines 641-642 are taken from Ibid., 167.
[266] Apollon. 3.645-664.
[267] Beye, *Epic and Romance,* 136.
[268] Apollon. 3.681-687.
[269] Ibid., 3.771-775.

true).[270] She wishes first that Jason might die in his task and then that she might find some way to aid him.[271] She urges all her shame to depart so that she may aid him, and then asserts that if he should succeed with her aid that she will kill herself.[272] Soon, however, the thought of dying after helping Jason pricks her and she seems to lean away from that decision since it would not save her reputation from disgrace. She asserts she would prefer to kill herself before she has the chance to dishonor her family.[273] Medea's threat of suicide is a testament to just how much she is attempting to resist the compulsion of eros, hoping that she might die before she gives into it.[274] She will, ultimately, give into the power of eros and aid Jason and the Argonauts on their quest, departing Colchis as a disgraced woman.

Hesitation and thoughts of suicide appear again as the fourth book begins. Although compelled to help Jason, Medea's actions bring her nothing but distress and she is wracked with guilt. The narrator notes that she would have killed herself, if Hera had not made her flee with Jason.[275] In this moment Beye notes that the "passive, suffering, vulnerable, would-be suicide becomes the malevolent agent of Hera."[276] The queen of the gods, unable to instill eros in Medea herself, will not let her plans be thwarted. Once Eros has planted the seed of love in Medea, Hera is now free to manipulate the woman using fear and whatever other tools are available to the goddess. Medea still battles with her eros, but she is also being pushed by Hera to respond correctly to its effects; namely, she

---

[270] Apollon. 3.777.
[271] Ibid., 3.778-81.
[272] Ibid., 3.782-87.
[273] Ibid., 3.788-801.
[274] Hunter notes that these verses are reminiscent of Phaedra's struggle in Euripides' *Hippolytus* 392-402. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes,* 180
[275] Apollon. 4.11-23.
[276] Beye, *Epic and Romance,* 145.

is directed away from suicide and towards aiding Jason. Both eros and Hera are directing Medea's actions.

In addition to these monologues, Apollonius continues in Book Four to describe Medea's hesitation and unwillingness to follow her love of Jason blindly. As the Argo departs from the shores of Colchis, Medea "darts back" and "helpless she stretched her hands to her country" (ἡ δ' ἔμπαλιν ἀίσσουσα/ γαίῃ χεῖρας ἔτεινεν ἀμήχανος).[277] Jason must comfort her to counter this last minute change of heart. A little later, Medea sees the outcome of her planning to help the Argonauts escape and understands that, as Jason suggests, her brother Apsyrtus must be killed, but when the moment for his death arrives Medea must avert her eyes.[278] She recoils from the blood of her brother as it begins to stain her robes.[279] The recoil from the blood, while a normal reaction to witnessing fraternal murder, is most likely a physical manifestation of Medea's shame and guilt.

The third scene that signals Medea's internal turmoil is her encounter with her cousin Circe. Jason and Medea must find her in order to be cleansed of Apsyrtus' murder. Medea and Circe converse in their native language,[280] a detail which Beye describes as "a realistic touch" that "evokes in the reader Medea's homesickness, Circe's homesickness, [and] their sense of family."[281] This moment of shared affection, however, does not last for Circe. After she promises safe travel for the couple, she commands Medea never to return to the island and never to seek aid from her again because of her crimes against the

[277] Apollon. 4.106-7.
[278] Ibid., 4.465-7.
[279] Ibid., 4.473-4.
[280] Ibid., 4.731-733.
[281] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 27.

family.[282] Medea is visibly shaken by this command and Jason must lead her away from Circe's home.[283] With the abandonment of even Circe, whose reputation from the time of Homer is ambiguous at best, Medea loses all hope of ever returning to Colchis and receiving forgiveness from her family for the deeds prompted by eros. Apollonius' detailed portrayal of the eros-afflicted Medea stands as a testament to the Hellenistic portrayal of eros as "a more destructive force than either strength or cunning."[284]

When resisting alone is insufficient, some early Hellenistic texts portray the afflicted actively seeking a remedy for eros, or at least a way to lessen its symptoms. The idea that eros could be "cured" may have resulted from eros' intimate association with diseases. In other words, since disease could be cured, perhaps something that manifests like a disease might also be curable.[285] Callimachus' Epigram Fifty-six attributes the discovery of a cure for eros to Polyphemus:

> ὡς ἀγαθὰν Πολύφαμος ἀνεύρετο τὰν ἐπαοιδὰν
> τὠραμένῳ: ναὶ Γᾶν, οὐκ ἀμαθὴς ὁ Κύκλωψ:
> αἱ Μοῦσαι τὸν ἔρωτα κατισχναίνοντι, Φίλιππε:
> ἦ πανακὲς πάντων φάρμακον ἁ σοφία.
> τοῦτο, δοκέω, χἀ λιμὸς ἔχει μόνον ἐς τὰ πονηρὰ
> τὠγαθόν: ἐκκόπτει τὰν φιλόπαιδα νόσον.
> ἔσθ᾽ ἁμῖν χἄκαστά σ᾽ ἀφειδέα ποττὸν Ἔρωτα:
> 'τουτί, παῖ, κείρευ τὰ πτερὰ παιδάριον,
> οὐδ᾽ ὅσον ἀττάραγόν τυ δεδοίκαμες: αἱ γὰρ ἐπῳδαὶ
> οἴκοι τῶ χαλεπῶ τραύματος ἀμφότεραι.'
>
> How great the charming song that Polyphemus discovered
> for the lover! O Gaia, the Cyclops was not ignorant.
> O Philippus, the Muses reduce love's swelling;

---

[282] Apollon. 4.744-8.
[283] Ibid., 4.749-52.
[284] Clauss, James. "Conquest of the Mephistophelian Nausicaa: Medea's Role in Apollonius' Redefinition of the Epic Hero," in *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 176.
[285] Theoc. *Id.* 7, Call. *Epi.* 47.

for poetic skill is the all-healing remedy of all things.
Hunger, I think, is only good thing against this toil.
It stops the boy-loving disease.
There is for us each cure for you, great Eros.
There, boy, cut off the childish wings!
You are feared not even a little bit:
both home-remedies of the painful wound exist.

Callimachus says that both the Muses and hunger can cure eros completely (πανακὲς φάρμακον) or at least reduce its symptoms (κατισχναίνοντι). Theocritus, in his eleventh *Idyll*, agrees that the Muses have the unique ability to reduce the pain of erotic desire. The power of poetry in Theocritus echoes Hesiod's description of the Muses' power in the *Theogony*.[286] Theocritus also affirms Polyphemus as the discoverer of the "remedy."

οὐδὲν πὸτ τὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει φάρμακον ἄλλο (1)
Νικία οὔτ᾽ ἔγχριστον, ἐμὶν δοκεῖ, οὔτ᾽ ἐπίπαστον,
ἢ ταὶ Πιερίδες: κοῦφον δέ τι τοῦτο καὶ ἁδὺ
γίνετ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώποις, εὑρεῖν δ᾽ οὐ ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι…

οὕτω γοῦν ῥάιστα διᾶγ᾽ ὁ Κύκλωψ ὁ παρ᾽ ἁμῖν, (7)
ὡρχαῖος Πολύφαμος, ὅκ᾽ ἤρατο τᾶς Γαλατείας,…

ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὗρε, καθεζόμενος δ᾽ ἐπὶ πέτρας (16)
ὑψηλᾶς ἐς πόντον ὁρῶν ἄειδε τοιαῦτα…

οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα (80)
μουσίσδων, ῥᾷον δὲ διᾶγ᾽ ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν.

It seems to me, O Nicias, that no remedy is produced (1)
for eros, no ointment to rub on, no herb to sprinkle over,
except the Muses: this thing is both light and sweet
for men, but is not easy to find…

Thus Polyphemus the Cyclops, my ancient countryman, (7)
managed [his pain readily], when he loved Galatea

He found the only remedy, sitting on the lofty rocks (16)
looking at the sea, he sang these sorts of things

[286] Hes. *Th.* 1-34.

> Thus Polyphemus, singing, shepherded his love (80)
> and he managed it more easily than if he had paid gold.

Polyphemus uses song, the realm of the Muses, to help ease the pain he suffers because of his love of Galatea. The desire to find a cure for the symptoms is another way in which mortals try to resist the effects of eros.[287]

Transgressions of Eros-Afflicted Women:

In Hellenistic literature women are represented as transgressing social boundaries in various ways as the result of eros. An eros-afflicted woman might leave her socio-political realm in order to aid her beloved or to bring her erotic desire to fulfillment. Additionally, the pain of being abandoned by one's lover could drive the afflicted to seek revenge on the person who left the relationship, as in Theocritus' *Idyll* Two. They may become too focused or obsessed with their eros, exhibiting a lack of proper *sophrosyne*.[288] These different reactions to eros, all negative, are the combination of Greek anxiety over the power of eros and how it threatens their ability to maintain established socio-political norms.

The effects of eros on Medea led her to commit serious transgression. Apollonius represents eros-afflicted Medea as being obsessed with Jason. Medea's affliction controls all of her thoughts and ultimately her actions as the narrative continues. She is constantly consumed with thoughts of Jason, thinking the types of things "which Eros urges one to care for" (ὅσσα τ᾽ Ἔρωτες ἐποτρύνουσι μέλεσθαι);[289] namely, she thinks about the appearance of Jason, his mannerisms, his speech. She considers Jason to be the pinnacle

---

[287] The medical writers discuss the physical effects of eros in women as part of their physiological condition and believed that regular intercourse could alleviate these symptoms. See Chapter One.
[288] For a detailed discussion on *sophrosyne* see Chapter One.
[289] Apollon. 3.452.

of the male sex. Medea is concerned for the safety of her beloved and is pained at the thought of losing him as her father plots against him.[290] This obsession is what drives her to aid Jason, knowing that doing so will make her a traitor to her family and country. Kohnken notes that particularly in Book Four when Medea departs with Jason, Apollonius emphasizes "the "ambiguous and dangerous position and suffering of Aeetes' daughter Medea, who gives up her parents and her country to join Jason and the Argonauts."[291] Medea is portrayed as the victim of eros in this book, torn between love of Jason and love of her country. The differences between these two eros lie in their reception by Medea's peers; namely, eros for the fatherland is expected to come before interpersonal eros. Medea's choice to help Jason capture the Golden Fleece and to leave Colchis with him are her ultimate transgressions of boundaries.

Extreme pain resulting either from attempts to resist eros or from the loss of the object of desire, could drive individuals to seek revenge against whomever they believed had injured them. In Theocritus *Idyll* Two, Simaetha is preparing a magic potion that she will use "to try to rekindle [her lover's] sexual attraction for her."[292] At the end of the poem the woman says that she will compel him by love charms, and if he hurts her then he will beat the doors of Hades and the Fates: νῦν μὲν τοῖς φίλτροις καταθύσομαι: αἰ δ' ἔτι κἠμὲ/ λυπῇ, τὰν ᾽Αίδαο πύλαν ναὶ Μοίρας ἀραξεῖ./ τοῖά οἱ ἐν κίστᾳ κακὰ φάρμακα φαμὶ φυλάσσειν.[293] Manipulation of a loved one through the use of potions was not unusual in ancient Greece. Winkler and Luck both discuss the use of magical spells to

---

[290] Apollon. 3.456-462.
[291] Kohnken, Adolf. "Apollonius' 'Argonautica," in *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 142.
[292] Thornton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, 20.
[293] Theoc. *Id.* 2.159-161.

coerce or punish the one causing another's erotic suffering. Winkler says that the purpose of a spell like Simaetha's was "to put [the spell-maker] in a role opposed to that of the erotic victim that he 'actually' is."[294] It was a way to displace the pain felt by the individual who was abandoned onto the beloved.[295] Luck notes the majority of the extant texts describing magical spells related to eros show very cruel intentions.[296] These texts are designed to plague enemies, break up marriages and even bring death to the target. Luck views Theocritus' second *Idyll* as evidence of how "love magic, while [seeming] harmless enough, can turn to hate magic if the victim does not respond."[297] Magic was certainly one way that an afflicted woman could be imagined to act against social propriety.

Women afflicted with eros could also become obsessed with the object of their eros and with sexual encounters in general. This obsession caused great anxiety to the men whose power was maintained in part through the control of women's sexual lives[298] and led to some humorous portrayals of sexual obsessed women. Female obsession with the object of their erotic desire is seen in several mimes Herodas. Mimes were meant to reflect scenarios that occur in every-day life. Finnegan notes that they also included many elements of earlier comedy. He asserts:

---

[294] Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire*, 71-100; Luck, George *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts.* Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985. 33-176

[295] Winkler has an interesting notes that "in literature lovesick clients are usually female" as in Theoc. *Id.* 2 "and the ritual experts whose help they seek in learning how to counteract or fulfill eros are usually male, whereas the prescription papyri and tablets are predominately composed by (or on behalf of) men in pursuit of women." Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire*, 90.

[296] Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 48

[297] Ibid., 48

[298] See Chapter One.

> One trait of Attic comedy, and one which obviously influenced Herodian mime, is the ambiguous portrayal of women themselves. Although presented as acting for a worthy cause (i.e. to bring about peace, to save their city, or to defend the reputation of their sex against the misogynistic jibes of the tragic poets), they are, nevertheless, stereotyped as decadent housewives or old hags, deceitful and addicted to gossip, sex and wine.[299]

The reception of mimes by the Greek audience then must have been a mixture of humor and realism. The audience was likely the elite, but Eposito notes that "nothing prevents their being enjoyed by a public less educated and less capable of recognizing all nuances: even on the level of pure sitcom, they are very entertaining."[300] The entertainment value of mimes presented a less controversial method of exploring the male perception of eros-obsessed women.

In his fifth mime, Herodas portrays Bitinna, a slave owner, who is upset by the betrayal of her slave lover Gastron. Her anger at being replaced almost results in violence against him. This violence is avoided and her anger mollified by the fortunate presence of a female slave. Bitinna's anger and preoccupation with her sexual relationship could have triggered male anxiety over women leaving their boundaries and putting the patrilineal social structure at risk. A similar obsession with sexual intercourse is seen in Herodas' sixth mime or "Two Women and a Dildo."[301] The discussion between the women is over the possession of a dildo that is trading hands in the community. Ormand notes that there are several interpretations of this mime. First, the conversation could be interpreted as making fun of these "sexually voracious women" who are willing to trade sexual favors

---

[299] Finnegan, R.J. "Women in Herodian Mime," 21-37, *Hermathena* No. 152. 22

[300] Esposito, Elena. "Herodas and the Mime," *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 267-281. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 277

[301] Ormand adds that the names of the women could be names of female poets whom Herodas is mocking. Ormand, *Controlling Desires*, 116.

for a cheap price.[302] Second, the work could be interpreted as a "play on men's fears and insecurities."[303] The dildo is superior to the women's husbands and is greedily shared among dissatisfied wives. An obsession with a person or sex could be interpreted as another effect of eros.

The eros-afflicted women represented in Theocritus, Herodas and Apollonius are each portrayed as becoming involved in actions that disrupt the established social order. Simaetha causes pain to the man who scorned her. Bitinni and the women with the dildo represent fear over women's sexual obsessions which could potential cause them to seek sexual satisfaction outside of their marriage and thus endangering the line of the husband. Medea is arguably the most dangerous of these eros-afflicted women. She abandons her home and betrays her family all in the name of love.

Conclusion

The majority of early Hellenistic portrayals of eros include a feature of divine origin, where a god or goddess sends erotic desire to mortals. In fourth and third century literature mortals are often portrayed as trying to resist eros' effects as in, for example, Daphnis in Theocritus' first *Idyll* and Medea in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Human determination is ultimately unable to overcome an agent of the divine. In addition, it is not only the divine origin that makes love so unconquerable, but the effects of eros on the body are destructive to mortals physical and psychological condition. The immense pain of the erotic affliction kills Daphnis and Medea contemplates suicide because of it (saved only by Hera's divine planning). Anger and obsession often trigger the afflicted to act

[302] Ormand, *Controlling Desires*, 116-117.
[303] Ibid.

against the established social norm. It is this reaction to eros that elicits the most anxiety from the male community.

The mortals portrayed in early Hellenistic literature who are afflicted with eros are both male and female. Women, however, cause the most destruction when they are afflicted. According to Acosta-Hughes the trope of "heroines overwhelmed by erotic impulses [is] another recurring feature of Hellenistic poetry, and indeed the in-depth reading of psychological trauma was at one time seen as the period's contribution to Greek erotic poetry."[304] Apollonius' portrayal of Medea is particularly relevant to the issue of the eros-afflicted woman's psychological state, since Apollonius includes extensive details of her inner turmoil. Undoubtedly, classical tragedy influenced Apollonius' portrayal of the deep emotional reactions of Medea. Unlike his epic predecessor, whose characters Beye believes change very little from Book One to Book Twenty-Four, Apollonius' characters are complex and detailed.[305] Apollonian Medea deals with issues of shame, glory and eros in a more personal way than her Homeric Helen predecessor whose personal thoughts on her situation are expressed minimally.

Apollonius' portrayal of Medea reflects a continuing view of eros-afflicted women as potentially dangerous to their male counterparts, and a source of anxiety for men. Pavlock believes that "Apollonius reinforces traditional views about the excessive passion of the females, so prevalent in fifth-century literature. He associates women in particular with the violation of social values and disruption of the community."[306]

---

[304] Acosta-Hughes, "The Prefigured Muse," 88; see also Lightfoot, J.L. *Parthenius of Nicaea: The Poetical Fragments and the Ἐρωτικά παθήματα.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1999).
[305] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 34.
[306] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*, 55.

However, Apollonius seems to be commenting on the classical tension between the belief in divine eros and human responsibility. Apollonius presents Medea both as an example of the excessive passion that females can have, but also as the victim of a force that no mortal is able to conquer. Her transgressions against the societal norm are depicted as the result of a divinely sent erotic compulsion, which she actively resists but is unable to overcome. Apollonius' depictions of Medea respond to Homeric and Classical representations of eros-afflicted women, like Helen and Medea, and is indicative of male anxiety over the potential transgressions of the eros-afflicted.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Ancient Greeks were afraid of eros' power to infringe upon the physical and psychological well-being of individuals. They were particularly concerned with women's susceptibility to erotic impulses. Ancient Greek men feared that if a woman were affected with erotic desire she might violate the social expectations of her gender in order to fulfill or relieve the effects of eros. Many modern scholars, including Ann Carson and Ruby Blondell, have noted the fear of transgressive, eros-afflicted women in Greek literature.[307] This fear is evident in literary descriptions of eros and eros-afflicted women. Helen and Medea, two women whose mythological foundations are based largely on their association with erotic desire and subsequent transgressions of social boundaries, figure prominently here. Although these women are different in many ways, each woman embodies the most extreme examples of what could go wrong if a woman were afflicted with eros.

The effects of eros are presented as overwhelming and destructive to the human body and mind. Claude Calame, Chiara Thumiger, and Bruce Thornton have done extensive research on the portrayals of the effects of eros in ancient literature.[308] The primary texts reveal that there are very few descriptions of the physical affects of eros in Homer. Descriptions of disease or wound-like effects of eros first appear in the works of

---

[307] Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place," 1990; Blondell, *Helen of Troy,* 2013.
[308] Calame, *The Poetics of Eros*, 1999; Thumiger, "Mad Eros," 2013; Thorton, *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality,* 1997.

the archaic poets and then continue throughout Greek literary history. For example, disease-like eros appears in Sappho, Archilochus, Sophocles, Theocritus and Apollonius.[309] The effects of eros can reach such a climax that the afflicted may consider death to escape its pain. Ancient Greeks worried that the uncontrollable and unpredictable effects of eros would overwhelm their bodies.

The alternative to death was to give into the erotic urges but submitting to eros had its own dangerous side-effects. The anxiety over women engaging in improper sexual or social behavior because of their affliction presents itself in two main ways in ancient literature: individuals are either able to resist eros and they choose not to or they are unable to resist eros because its power is associated with the divine. Thus, Helen and Medea are portrayed either as having committed their transgression by choice, or by compulsion. The literary evidence suggests that ancient Greeks believed that divinities, particularly Aphrodite and Eros,[310] were responsible for inflicting erotic desire onto mortals. This style of representation appears in the literary works of Homer, the archaic poets, the tragedians, sophists and Hellenistic poets. In the Classical age, the fact that erotic desire was attributed to divinities did not necessarily excuse the behavior of the afflicted. Therefore, there are differing opinions on Helen and Medea in ancient literature.

In the pre-classical and Hellenistic ages the identification of divinities as the agents of erotic desire meant that eros-afflicted women were not considered personally responsible for their erotic feelings. Mortals were not expected to be able to overcome an

---

[309] Sappho Fr. 1; Archilochus Fr. 191, 193; Eur. *Hipp.*176-310; Soph. *Trach.* 1054-55; Theo. *Id.* 30, 3; Apollon. 3.281-298;
[310] Hes. *Th.* 120-122; Sappho Fr.1; Anacreon Fr. 357; Eur. *Med*. 526-528; Apollon. 3.1-298.

emotion that was sent from divinities, particularly when divinities themselves were also unable to resist the effects of eros.[311] For example, in Homer the relationship between Helen and Paris exists almost exclusively at the hands of Aphrodite. The archaic poets call on Aphrodite to aid desires because she had the power to send eros to mortals.[312] In Apollonius' *Argonautica,* Medea is struck by erotic desire sent by Eros, at the direction of Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena. Apollonius presents Medea's internal struggle with eros and ultimate failure to resist erotic compulsion in order to show that mortals could not overcome the effects of erotic desire.

In the Classical age, however, both the view that women were the innocent victims of eros and the view that women should be held accountable for all their actions, appear. The classical audience is presented with both perspectives in nearly equal quantities. In fact, in fifth-century literature, particularly Euripides *Troades* and *Medea*, both perceptions co-exist in the same text. This thesis examined how both of these views appear in Euripides' *Troades* and *Medea*. The opinion that women should be able to control their erotic desire does not originate in the fifth-century but it is more frequently expressed in the fifth-century than in any other period. The increasing popularity of this view may due to any number of reasons. The rise of democracy and with it the value of rhetoric and debate may have impacted the presentation of these two opposing views of the eros-afflicted. This thesis does not claim to have any clear solutions on what the motivations for these conflicting perceptions were, but it does argue that modern scholars

[311] Zeus is overcome by eros for Hera (Hom. *Il.* 14.312-350); Aphrodite is overcome with eros for the mortal Anchises (*HH 5*).
[312] Sappho Fr. 1; Anacreon Fr. 357.

should be aware of this change when they discuss ancient Greek perceptions of eros and eros-afflicted women.

The examination of the representations of Helen and Medea gives insight into a much larger phenomenon of Greek anxiety over eros and women. Ideally, women should remain within their social and gender boundaries, away from the political realm of men. They were supposed to obey their fathers, husbands and sons. Men feared that eros would drive women away from these social boundaries and this fear is present in Greek literature. The depictions of eros-afflicted Helen and Medea examined in this thesis are only tools that allow for the study of nuanced changes in the portrayal of eros-afflicted women. They are only one piece of a much larger pattern of Greek thought about eros. The observations made in this thesis provide a base for a larger inquiry into why erotic anxiety presented itself in different ways at different time periods and what this might indicate about the ancient Greek perception of eros and women at various time periods.

REFERENCES

Acosta-Hughes, Benjamin. "The Prefigured Muse: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Poetics." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 81-91. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Apollodorus. *The Library*. Trans. Sir James Frazer. Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann, 1921.

Apollonius, Rhodes. *The Argonautica.* Trans. R.C. Seaton. London: William Heinemann, 1912.

Asheri, D., Lloyd, A., & Corcella, A. *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Athanassakis, Apostolos. *Hesiod.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Athanassakis, Apostolos. *The Homeric Hymns.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Austin, Norman. *Helen of Troy and Her Shameless Phantom.* Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Bassi, Karen. "Helen and the Discourse of Denial in Stesichorus' Palinode." *Arethusa* 26, (1993): 51-75.

Beye, Charles. *Epic and Romance in the 'Argonautica' of Apollonius*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982.

Biesecker, Susan. “Rhetoric, Possibility, and Women’s Status in Ancient Athens: Gorgias’ and Isocrates’ Encomiums of Helen.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* Vol. 22. No. 1 (1992): 99-108.

Blank, Thomas. “Isocrates on Paradoxical Discourse: An Analysis of Helen and Briesis.” *Rhetorica: a Journal of the History of Rhetoric.* Vol 31. No. 1 (2013): 1-3.

Blondell, Ruby. *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Boedeker, Deborah. “Becoming Medea: Assimilation in Euripides.” In *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, 127-148. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Breitenberger, B. *Aphrodite and Eros: The Development of Erotic Mythology in Early Greek Poetry and Cult*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Bulloch, Anthony. “Hymns and Encomia.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 166-180. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Calame, Claude. *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece*. Trans. Janet Lloyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Callimachus. *Callimachus: Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and Other Fragments*. Trans. T. Gelzer and C.H. Whitman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Callimachus. *Callimachus: Hymns and Epigrams; Locophron; Aratus*. Trans. A.W. Mair and G.W. Mair. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Callimachus. *Callimachus: Hymns, Epigrams, and Select Fragments*. Trans. Stanley Lombardo and Diane Rayor. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Campbell, D.A. *Greek Lyric Poetry I*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Carson, Anne. *Eros the Bittersweet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Carson, Anne. "Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire." In *Before Sexuality*: *The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* eds. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin, 135-170. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Chichester, Teddi Lynn. "Love, Sexuality, Gender: On Love, Discourse of Love, and the Banquet of Plato." *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Michael O'Neill, Anthony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Clauss, James. "Conquest of the Mephistophelian Nausicaa: Medea's Role in Apollonius' Redefinition of the Epic Hero." In *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, 149-177. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Craik, E. "Sexual Imagery and Innuendo in *Troades*." In *Euripides, Women and Sexuality*, ed. A. Powell, 1-15. Milton, UK: Routledge, 1990.

Craik, E. "Tragic Love, Comic Sex?" *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*. (1993): 253-62.

Crockett, Andy. "Gorgias' Encomium of Helen: Violent Rhetoric or Radical Feminism?" *Rhetoric Review*. Vol. 13 No. 1 (1994): 71-90

Cuypers, Martine. “Historiography, Rhetoric, and Science: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Prose.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 317-336. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Cupyers, Martine and James Clauss. “Introduction.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 1-14. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Dale, A.M. *Euripides’ Helen*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

D’Angour, Armand. “Conquering Love: Sappho 31 and Catullus 51.” *Classical Quarterly* Vol. 56 No.1 (May, 2006): 297-300.

D’Angour, Armand. “Love’s Battlefield: Rethinking Sappho Fragment 31.” In *Eros in Ancient Greece,* eds. Ed Sanders, Chiara Thumiger, Chris Carey, and Nick J. Lowe, 59-72. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Deacy, Susan and Karen F. Pierce. *Rape in Antiquity.* London: Duckworth, 1997.

Dean-Jones, Lesley. “The Politics of Pleasure: Female Sexual Appetite in the Hippocratic Corpus.” In *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to Aids*, ed. Domna C. Stanton, 48-77. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Dean-Jones, Lesley. *Women’s Bodies in Classical Greek Science.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Demos, Marian. *Lyric Quotation in Plato*. Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

Des Bouvrie, S. *Women in Greek Tragedy.* Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1990.

Doherty, L. *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences and Narrators in the Odyssey*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Elliott, Alan. *Euripides' Medea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Erskine, Andrew. "From Alexander to Augustus." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 17-29. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Esposito, Elena. "Herodas and the Mime." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 267-281. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

Euripides. *Euripides* Vol.I. Trans. Arthur S. Way. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912.

Euripides. *Euripides* Vol.II. Trans. Arthur S. Way. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912.

Euripides. *Euripides* Vol.IV. Trans. Arthur S. Way. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912.

Euripides. "Hippolytus." In *Euripides 1,* ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, 157-221. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944.

Euripides. "Medea." In *Euripides 1,* ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, 55-106. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944.

Euripides. *Women on the Edge: Four Plays.* Trans. Ruby Blondell, Mary-Kay Gamel, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, Bella Zweig. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Fanthom, Elaine, Helene Foley, Natalie Kampen, Sarah Pomeroy, H.A. Shapiro. *Women in the Classical World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Finnegan, R.J. "Women in Herodian Mime." *Hermathena* No. 152. (1992): 21-37.

Fraenkel, Eduard. *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* Vol. I-III. Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1950.

Foley, Helene P. "The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama." *Reflections of Women in Antiquity.* Ed. Foley, 127-68. New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981.

Foucault, Michel *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1 Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Random House Inc, 1990.

Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek Myth.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1993.

Gerber, Douglas E. *Greek Elegiac Poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Gerber, Douglas E. *Greek Iambic Poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Gerber, Douglas E. *Greek Lyric Poetry I*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Gilhuly, Kate. *The Feminine Matrix of Sex and Gender in Classical Athens.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Gregory, Justina. *Euripides and the Instruction of Athenians*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Gorgias. *Encomium of Helen.* Greek text from: Hermann Diels, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1922.

Gowing, Alain. "From Polybius to Dionysius: The Decline and Fall of Hellenistic Historiography." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 384-394. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Gravey, Margaret. "Dog-Helen and Homeric Insult." *Classical Antiquity* Vol. 14. No. 1 (1995): 41-61.

Gumpert, Matthew. *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001.

Gutzwiller, K..*A Guide to Hellenistic Literature.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Hanson, Ann Ellis. "The Medical Writer's Woman." In *Before Sexuality*: *The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* eds. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin, 309-338. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Harder, Annette. "Callimachus' *Aetia.*" In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 92-105. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Harrison, T. "Herodotus and the Ancient Greek Idea of Rape." In *Rape in Antiquity.* Eds. S. Deacy and K. Pierce, 185-208. London: Duckworth and The Classical Press of Whales, 1997.

Hatzichronoglou, Lena. "Euripides' Medea: Woman or Fiend?" In *Woman's Power, Man's Game,* ed Mary DeForest, 178-193. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1993.

Hook, LaRue van. "The Encomium on Helen by Gorgias." *The Classical Weekly* (1913): 122-123.

How, W.W. and J. Wells. *A Commentary on Herodotus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912.

Hunter, Richard. *Apollonius of Rhodes: The Argonautica Book III.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Hunter, Richard. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Hunter, Richard. *Jason and the Golden Fleece.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hunter, Richard. *Theocritus: A Selection*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1999

Hutchinson, G. *Hellenistic Poetry.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988.

Irby-Massie, Georgia. "Women in Ancient Science." In *Woman's Power, Man's Game,* ed. Mary DeForest, 354-372. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1993.

Juffras, D. "Helen and Other Victims in Euripides' Helen." *Hermes* 121. (1993): 45-57.

Just, Roger. *Women in Athenian Law.* London: Routledge, 1989.

Karydas, Helen. *Eurykleia and Her Successors.* London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998.

Kennedy, George. "Isocrates' Encomium of Helen: A Pan-Hellenic Document." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* Vol 89. (1988): 77-98.

Kennedy, George. "Gorgias" in *The Older Sophists*, ed. Kent Sprague, 30-67. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1972.

Kuels, Eva. *The Reign of the Phallus.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985.

King, Helen. *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece.* London: Routledge, 1998.

Kohnken, Adolf. “Apollonius’ ‘Argonautica.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 136-150. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Lape, Susan. “Menander’s Comedy.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 282-296. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making SEX*: *Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Lefkowitz, Mary. “Impiety’ and ‘Atheism’ in Euripides’ Dramas.” *The Classical Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 1. (1989): 70-82.

Lightfoot, J.L. *Parthenius of Nicaea: The Poetical Fragments and the Ἐρωτικά παθήματα.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1999.

Lightfoot, J.L. “Romanized Greeks and Hellenized Romans: Later Greek Literature.” In *Literature in the Greek World,* ed. Oliver Taplin, 239-266. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Luck, George. *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts.* Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Univeristy Press, 1985.

MacDowell, D.M. trans *Gorgias: Encomium of Helen.* Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982.

MacLachlan, Bonnie. *Women in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook.* New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012.

Marquardt, Patricia A. “Hesiod’s Ambiguous View of Woman.” *Classical Philology* Vol. 77, No.4. (1982): 283-291

Mastronarde, Donald. *Euripides’ Medea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

McDermott, Emily. *Euripides’ Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989.

Michelini, Ann. *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

Miller, Andrew. *Greek Lyric: An Anthology in Translation.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996.

Mossman, Judith. *Euripides Medea: Commentary and Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Murray, Jackie. “Hellenistic Elegy: Out from Under the Shadow of Callimachus.” In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 106-116. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Murry, Oswyn and Alfonso Moreno, *A Commentary on Herodotus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Nagy, G. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

O’Higgins, Dolores M. “Medea as a Muse: Pindar’s *Pythian* 4.” In *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, eds. James Clauss and Sarah Johnston, 103-126. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Ormand, Kirk. *Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Westpoint, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2009.

Otis, B. *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963.

Page, D.L. *Euripides.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964.

Page, D.L. *Sappho and Alcaeus*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979.

Papillon, Terry. "Isocrates on Gorgias and Helen: The Unity of the 'Helen.'" *The Classical Journal* Vol. 91 No. 4. (1996): 377-391.

Parker, Holt. "Women and Medicine." *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World,* First Edition. Ed. Sharon L. James and Sheila Dillon, 107-124. Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.

Pavlock, Barbara. *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Payne, Mark. "The Bucolic Fiction of Theocritus." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 224-237. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Pelliccia, H. "Sappho 16, Gorgias' *Helen* and the Preface to Herodotus' *Histories*." In *Beginnings in Classical Literature,* ed. Francis Dunn and Thomas, Cole, 63-84. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Pindar. *The Odes.* Trans. Sir. John Sandys. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1915.

Poillakos, John. "Gorgias' Encomium to Helen and the Defense of Rhetoric." *A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* Vol 1. No.2 (1983): 1-16.

Porter, James. "The Seduction of Gorgias." *Classical Antiquity* Vol 12. No. 2 (1993): 267-299.

Price, A.W. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity.* New York: Schocken Books, 1975.

Porter, J.I. The Seductions of Gorgias *Classical Antiquity* 12 (1993): 267-293.

Reed, J.D. "Idyll 6 and the Development of Bucolic after Theocritus." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 238-250. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Renehan, Robert. "The Early Greek Poets: Some Interpretations." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology,* Vol. 87 (1983): 1-29.

Roisman, H. *Loyalty in Early Greek Epic and Tragedy*. West Germany: Konigstein/Ts.: Hain, 1984.

Rollins, Brooke. "Persuasion's Ethical Force: Levinas, Gorgias and the Rhetorical Address." *JAC,* Vol. 29 No. 3 (2009): 539-559.

Rosenmeyer, T.G. *The Green Cabinet.* Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1969.

Rusten, Jeffrey and I.C. Cunningham. *Theophrastus, Herodas, Sophron and Other Mime Fragments.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Said, Suzanne. *Homer and the Odyssey.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Sanders, E. "Sexual Jealousy and *Eros* in Euripides *Medea."* In *Eros in Ancient Greece,* eds. Ed Sanders, Chiara Thumiger, Chris Carey, and Nick J. Lowe, 41-58. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Sansone, David. *Greek Drama and the Invention of Rhetoric*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Scherer, M. "Helen of Troy." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* New Series, Vol. 25. No. 10. (1967): 367-383.

Segal, Charles P. "Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen* and the Defense of Rhetoric*." Rhetorica 1 (*1983): 1-15.

Segal, Charles. *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Sens, Alexander. "Hellenistic Tragedy and Lycophron's 'Alexandra.' In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 297-314. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Shaffer, Diana. "The Shadow of Helen: The Status of the Visual Image in Gorgias' Encomium to Helen." *Rhetoric: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* Vol. 16, No.3 (1998): 243-257.

Sifakis, Gregory. *Aristotle on the Function of Tragic Poetry.* Crete: Crete University Press, 2001.

Skutsch, H. "Helen: Her Name and Nature" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 107 (1987): 188-193.

Slings, S.R. "Poet's Call and Poet's Status in Archaic Greece and Other Oral Cultures." *Listy filologicke/ Folia philologica.* (1989): 72-80.

Smith, A.H. "The Making of Pandora." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol.11 (1890): 278-283.

Smith, H.W. *Aeschylean Tragedy.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1924.

Snyder, Jane. "The Web of Song: Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets." *The Classical Journal* Vol. 76 No. 3 (1981): 193-196.

Solomon, Jon. "The Wandering Womb of Delos." In *Woman's Power, Man's Game,* ed Mary DeForest, 91-108. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1993..

Sprague, Roasmond. *The Older Sophists.* Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1972.

Strauss, Barry. *The Trojan War: A New History.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006.

Suzuki, Mihoko. *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Thalmann, W. *The Swineherd and the Bow: Representations of Class in the Odyssey*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Theocritus. *The Idylls.* Trans. Robert Wells. New York: Carcanet Press Limited, 1998.

Thomson, George. *Aeschylus and Athens*. London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1946.

Thornton, Bruse. *Eros: The Myths of Ancient Greek Sexuality.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

Thumiger, Chiara. "Mad Eros and Eroticized Madness in Tragedy." In *Eros in Ancient Greece, e*ds. Ed Sanders, Chiara Thumiger, Chris Carey, and Nick J. Lowe, 27-40. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Upcott, A.W. *The Hecuba of Euripides*. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910.

Walters, K.R. "Women and Power in Classical Athens." In *Woman's Power, Man's Game,* ed. Mary DeForest, 194-214. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1993.

Wardy, Robert. *The Birth of Rhetoric: Gorgias, Plato and Their Successors.* London: Routledge, 1996.

Winkler, John. *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece.* New York: Routledge, 1990.

Wissmann, Jessica. "Education." In *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature,* ed. James Clauss and Martine Cuypers, 224-237. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

Wohl, Victoria. *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Wolff, C. On Euripides Helen. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology,* Vol. 77. (1973): 61-84.

Woodbury, L. "Helen and the Palinode." *Phoenix.* Vol. 21. No. 3. (1967): 157-176

Xenophanes. *Greek Elegy and Iambus I.* Trans. J.M Edmonds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931.

Zanker, G. "The Concept and Use of Genre-Marking in Hellenistic Epic and Fine Art." *Genre in Hellenistic Poetry* Ed. Harder, M.A., R.F. Regtuit, and G.C. Wakker, 225-238. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1998.

Ziegler, K. *Das Hellenistische Epos*. Leipzig, 1934.

Zeitlin, Froma. "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama." *Representations* 11 (1985): 63-94.