

## A PSYCHOANALYTICAL LOOK AT THE MYTH OF MEDEA

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Understanding Medea, one of the female protagonists of mythology for thousands of years, could be the beginning of delving into the roots of women's issues (Eur. *Med*; Soph. *Frag.*). Is Medea merely a mythological hero, or does she carry traces from the past about what it means to be a woman in her existential journey? I hadn't thought that this essay, which I started with these questions and inquiries, could delve so deeply into the depths of the past. However, the similarities among myths extending from ancient societies to the present are flawless data for looking into the future. Among these patterns, we can see not only what happened in the past but also how the future could unfold.

First and foremost, it is necessary to examine Medea etymologically in terms of the meaning her name carries. Etymologically, in Greek, Medea means cunning, schemer, one who plans. The meaning of Medea in the myth is sorceress, one who performs spells, master of potions and poisons (Hes. *Theog.*; Beekes 2010). Medea's most well-known feature is her eyes being of a light colour and bright. She is the creator of the longest love epic of the ancient world, the most remembered female hero of the Black Sea tribes.

The first appearance of Medea in mythology begins with the Greeks' desire for the golden fleece, which symbolises world power (Ap. Rhod. *Argon*; Pind. *Pyth.*). The golden fleece is the name of the fur that symbolises wealth and power in Greek mythology. When we consider that verbal and written symbolisations are produced from real life, possessing the saving fleece mentioned in the legend may have turned into an idea of power, a position, or even having authority over time. The myth of the golden fleece and Medea carries many similarities. The mother figure in the myth of Medea is a nurturing figure, but also a destructive-murderous mother figure. And it has echoed in our language for centuries. In psychoanalysis inspired by ancient cultures and myths, the powerful mother who holds life and death is defined as the archaic mother (Parman 2007). The similarity in the event patterns between the myths almost leads both stories to the same ending.

In psychoanalysis, an affective state carries the traces of all events experienced in the past. The reasons why things happened in the past lead us to certain probabilities of endings. Therefore, past events are the cause and determinant of subsequent events. The similarities between the two stories will lead us towards the same ending.

### **The legend of the golden fleece**

Phrixus and Helle, as depicted in the legend of the golden fleece, are the children of the Boeotian King Athamas. After the death of his wife, Nephele, King Athamas marries Ino. Phrixus, Athamas' son, is the heir to the throne. Therefore, Ino devises a plan to have her stepson Phrixus killed. She sends orders to the housewives to roast the wheat grains. The women roast the seeds without the knowledge of the men. Due to the lifeless seeds, the land does not yield its annual crop. Athamas consults the oracles on how to overcome the famine. Ino bribes the messengers sent by Athamas to the oracles and ensures her husband receives a false prophecy. According to the prophecy, the end of infertility depends on King Athamas

sacrificing his son Phrixus to Zeus. Upon this prophecy, Athamas, eager to alleviate the famine and unable to withstand the pressure from the people, takes his son Phrixus to a distant mountain altar for sacrifice. The myth of sacrificing a male child through legends has manifested itself in various forms throughout the ages, passed down from generation to generation.

Meanwhile, Nephele, the birth mother of the children who watches from heaven, wishes for a golden-fleeced ram (the constellation Aries) to be sent from the gods to protect her children. Aries comes to take the children. However, when they come over the Dardanelles, the little girl Helle falls down and dies. Phrixus continues his journey, and the ram Chrysomallos leaves him in the land of Colchis. Phrixus sacrifices the ram to Zeus and presents the golden fleece to King Aeetes, the son of the Colchis. In this part of the legend, it is said that mining is done in the land of Colchis, the sheepskin is placed in the river, gold sticks to this skin, and then the skin is hung on trees. King Aeetes hangs the skin on a tree. The tree is guarded by the Colchian dragon. From the legend, we understand that the ram Chrysomallos, who saves the boy from the stepmother Ino, has become an icon that the whole community tries to protect through dragons (*Ov. Met.*). The golden fleece is a saviour, and when others possess this fleece, they will have the power of salvation. When the male child is wanted to be killed from the mountain, he is removed with the help of the ram Aries. Another male symbol has opposed the father's desire to kill his son. Phrixus, who was once a stepchild wanted to be killed by witchcraft or poisoning, is declared a hero in another country.

According to legend, the stepmother Ino is a mother who cannot tolerate her children. She desires for her own son to ascend the throne. The reason for her desire to kill the son of Athamas is her belief that Phrixus is the ominous person who brings famine. The power struggles between father and son have continued throughout human history. What causes the land to become infertile is not the infertility of nature or the bad luck of a male child, but Ino burning the seeds. However, when we do not know the truth, we tend to lean towards another possibility that is closest to our minds. This is the equivalent of our desire in life that is felt from every part of us that we do not know. The son Phrixus is a threat to Athamas's kingdom.

Through collective unconscious myths, humanity transmits its desires from the unconscious, the unknown places, from generation to generation. In fact, myths tell in words that the Oedipus complex, one of the most important developmental stages of modern man today, is experienced in different ways, in different relationships. As words and consciousness evolved, humans found a way to express their aggressive desires and passed them on from ear to ear. Characteristics such as primitive aggression, the urge to dominate and envy have flowed from inside to outside through fairy tales, and have found their place in the world order, in the symbolic order.

Ino, who wants her own son to come to power, believes that Phrixus is a bad, cursed child. And he must be eliminated. However, Phrixus is not eliminated at the end of the legend. Men or masculinity, coming together, temporarily stop the mother's archaic, cannibalistic, and aggressive elements. The inclusive-saviour father, another part of the competitive father, does not consent to the sacrifice of his son, shown by Ino. The father, who no longer wants the firstborn son to be sacrificed, not to succumb to the mother's desire, transforms into a symbolic ritual, as in the story of Abraham, where instead of killing a son, an animal is sacrificed. This transformation will remain one of the symbols of cultural evolution towards civilisation. It is very interesting that in Islam, the son of Abraham from Hagar, Ishmael, is an unwanted son by his first wife Sarah. Abraham's second wife, Hagar, and her son were exiled. Centuries ago,

Sarah wanted what she wanted, and asked for Ishmael to be sacrificed. Sarah, who is called second-class in Islam, did not give a place in her life to the other woman and her biological son! Yet, is not Abraham, who gave up sacrificing his son to God, the first father to transition to civilisation, a myth common to other religions as well?

Athamas's son Phrixus was saved by a ram sent by his deceased mother. The golden fleece of this ram became a symbol of power. Here, the deceased mother asked for help from a male animal to save her children from the other stepmother. The conflict between the biological and stepmother is like a reflection of the woman's ambivalent feelings. Within the myth, the male is positioned as the one who saves from the stepmother and stops the intended evil. However, the desire of the stepmother to come to power prevailed over the young girl Helle. The saviour ram, Chrysomallos, could not prevent the stepmother's desire to destroy the little girl and the high death drive of the girl.

The patriarchal system, which depicts women as deficient, has, for some reason, also killed their firstborn sons. I see this as the beginning of a developmental stage in human minds, like Oedipus. If the sons were not killed, they would not be able to resist the desire to unite with their mothers, that is, the incestuous desire. The ritual of sacrificing a male child evolved into the concept of sacrifice or offering with civilisation. However, the concept of sacrifice or offering chosen on the path to civilisation could not stop this incestuous desire. When we look at the relationships of boys with their mothers in the world order, being the object of the mother's phallic substitute and power desire confirms this situation. Therefore, in the harsh conditions of nature, where mentality has not yet matured enough and humans do not know their own value, the world order has been able to sustain this order by creating the taboo of incest for thousands of years. However, since the societal order cannot yet stop the desire to unite with the archaic mother (as one) in the intellectual realm, it has continued for thousands of years to not allow it in action, that is, to completely eliminate it.

### **Regarding Oedipus**

The story of Oedipus, as told for thousands of years and staged by Sophocles in 429 BC, is a tragedy of Athens. Oedipus is cursed by Apollo. In his fate, there is killing his father and marrying his mother. The biological parents of Oedipus, upon learning of this, give him to a shepherd; the shepherd, unable to bear the killing of the child, hands him over to a king and queen to raise. When Oedipus learns of this fate, he flees from his country, thinking he is escaping his fate. However, fate does not leave Oedipus alone. On his way to Thebes, Oedipus meets Laius and kills him. Unaware that he has killed his father, Oedipus continues on his way, answers the riddles of the Sphinx, and marries Jocasta. The unconscious does not allow Oedipus to escape his fate, and he marries his mother. When Jocasta learns this, she hangs herself, and Oedipus blinds himself. The Oedipus myth sits at the centre of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. In the universal order, a male child will steer his life with a desire to unite with the mother, abandon the competition with the father due to the fear of castration, and become human by realising he cannot satisfy the mother.

When thought and fantasy are not sufficient, the boy will compete with the father as a way of resisting the incestuous desire and will not be able to resist the desire to unite with the mother, which is at the centre of the Oedipus complex, or will be destroyed by the father. The fear of being killed by the father has led to the development of symbolic practices in civilisation. Male circumcision is a tradition that helps the child escape from the Oedipal complex. Primitive aggression, with civilisation, turns into a threat by the father against the male child. Symbolically, circumcision suppresses the male child's desire to unite with the mother, directs

him to give up on the mother and turn towards life, and directs his libido towards another woman. Thus, the fear of being killed or castrated by the father becomes a symbol for the mother to give up on the male child as well. Because to get out of this complex, it is not enough for the male child to give up, but also the mother must stop her desire for union, control her desire for power, and be content with the existence of her son. The woman gives up on her son in the face of the threat of being killed by the father. The male child can continue his life by resisting the threat from the father and the desire from the mother. Today, the primitive desire of the mother continues to influence the male child to remain attached to her and not attach to another woman. When we think about this, isn't the primitive past of the mother manifested in modern life as not letting go, not allowing the male child to live with another woman, twinning, and castration?

### **Continuing the legend**

When we return to myths, in the previous part of the myth where Medea sets out to obtain the golden fleece, we encounter the myth of another stepmother who wants to kill her children. Here, Phrixus, as the male child rescued from the stepmother, possesses the golden fleece. However, when we consider the chronological order, the symbol of power, the golden fleece, begins with the stepmother wanting to kill her children and a male animal appearing as a ram that saves them. So, the saviour ram that comes to take the children becomes the symbol of power. Again, thinking about the beginning of the pattern of events, the stepmother first appears as a mother figure who wants the male child to be sacrificed out of jealousy and a desire for power. Jealousy is one of the first developmental stages we experience as we transition from primitive instincts to modern life. While the target of jealousy may be specific in the early stages of life, suppressed feelings of jealousy and envy in later years will prevent the mind from seeing the truth. This suppression repeats itself in peer and romantic relationships, as each of us experiences life as either envying or being envied. Who among us is not an object of jealousy? If not overcome, jealousy passes from one generation to another for generations.

In one version of the myth, a word that Nephele says to her children could be an important detail. She asks her children not to look down under any circumstances. Phrixus does not look down, but Helle does, and she tragically falls into the Dardanelles Strait and dies. Did Helle die because she did not obey the rules, or was she a girl who knew she could not escape her mother's wrath, even though her mother was depicted as deceased and good, and threw herself into the water, knowing she could not continue her lineage as a woman? Although this part of the myth is ambiguous, I think it is more accurate to move forward from our initial statement. Nephele could not save her daughter of the same gender as herself and allowed her son to live. When we consider that the anger of mothers progresses towards their own mothers and their own gender, Nephele, who could not provide 'good enough' mothering to her daughter of the same gender and did not allow her to continue her lineage. Helle meets the tragic end of a girl child who does not obey her mother's rules. Defying the mother could be a deadly sin. When we consider that all myths are related to the laws of nature, the most important secret of evolution is to recognise the previous generation, accept its greatness, positive and negative aspects, and dare to make small changes. This way, we can continue our lineage. Here, Helle rejects the rules of the previous generation by not obeying them. Therefore, Helle dies. She will no longer be able to have children. Phrixus, son of Nephele, marries Chalciope, daughter of King Aetes, and gives the golden fleece of the golden ram to King Aetes. According to the myth, Phrixus marries the king's daughter and aligns himself with power. The legend of the golden fleece begins to intertwine with Medea. Because Medea is the daughter of King Aetes from his other wife.

Despite the efforts of the mother, Ino, to kill her son, Phrixus becomes king... Ino's desire is not fulfilled in this generation. That is, when we define the beginning as Ino, Ino wants to kill both of her children, but only the girl child dies. In the next generation, with Medea, two male children will die. There is a generational difference between the myth of Ino and Medea. Suppressed desires and aggressive instincts must be lived out as actions in another generation. Is Phrixus becoming king the unconscious male-dominant desire, or is it the collective power of the masculine libido trying to suppress and stop the evil of the archaic mother? How the patriarchal order came to establish the world order is still an unanswered question for many scientists. From primitive communities to modernism, the development of the incest taboo and the ability to think led to a departure from action, establishing a patriarchal world order that somehow constrained and suppressed the desires of the archaic feminine mother to dominate in the realms of thought and imagination.

Regardless of how and in what manner they have developed thus far, Medea and Jason aspire to possess the golden fleece won by Phrixus, the son of Ino who desires to kill his children... The attitude of the two mothers in the myths who cannot tolerate their children, and their willingness to do all evil to obtain power or reach the golden fleece in the other myth, shows us that the woman's desire for power has been present in the unconscious for thousands of years. When we observe the attitude of women, who are entering into different positions in life as it modernises day by day, it is necessary to examine this issue thoroughly. Revisiting the stories about Ino, the protagonist of the golden fleece myth that began with jealousy, will help us to open up our ideas further.

### **Ino and the Maenads**

Queen Ino later adopts Dionysus, the son of her sister Semele and Zeus. It is said that this myth occurs after the golden fleece myth (Apollod. *Bibl.*). Semele had been intimate with Zeus and become pregnant by him. Zeus's wife, Hera, jealous of this, disguises herself as an old woman and pretends not to believe Semele. Suspicious, Semele asks Zeus to reveal his powers, but when he does, she is consumed by fire and dies. Ino adopts Dionysus and hides him in the guise of a girl to protect him from Hera. Dionysus flees to the mountains and discovers wine there. He becomes a god there and gains female followers.

The Maenads are women who follow Dionysus in Greek mythology. They are depicted as inspired by the god Dionysus, becoming ecstatic and frenzied through dance and the influence of wine. The Maenads wore deer skins, adorned themselves with ivy branches, and carried a thyrsus, a long staff wrapped in ivy leaves and topped with pine cones, a symbol of wine. Due to their devotion to their god, they wore bull helmets and held snakes. The cult rituals associated with the worship of the Greek god Dionysus (Bacchus in Roman mythology) were characterised by music and tambourines. The celebration was a joyous event where their spirits temporarily escaped their earthly bodies, allowing them to communicate with their gods and experience eternity. With the influence of this ecstasy and wine, the ceremonies turned into primitive aggression. They uprooted trees, tore apart a bull with their bare hands (symbolic of Dionysus), ate its raw flesh, and drank its blood. The Maenads believed that they were driven mad by Dionysus and that the god had possessed them. Dionysus declared himself a god, but his aunt Agave did not accept this godhood. Dionysus punished Agave by driving her mad, leading her to kill her son Pentheus. Agave, thinking she was nursing a lion cub, tore her own son apart. Dionysus drove the women mad, even causing them to kill their own suckling babies. Considering that in psychoanalysis, God is often seen as elevated from a father figure, we cannot ignore the issue of the Maenads being related to the father. These women, usually from the upper class, believed that when they did not accept Dionysus as a god, they were punished

with madness. Their power to tear apart animals was a sign of the supernatural abilities that the god could instil in them. As seen in various examples in mythology, they performed the ritual of sparing where a sacrificed victim was torn apart. Queen Ino in the golden fleece myth raised a boy in the guise of a girl. That person was Dionysus. Since Ino raised a god with castration anxiety, she was a woman who did not accept castration in her unconscious. Two important figures torn apart by the servants of the god, the Maenads, were Pentheus and Orpheus. It was a subject that needed to be explored in ancient art and is still said to retain its mystery.

### **Pentheus and Orpheus**

King Pentheus of Thebes, shortly after coming to the throne, resisted the worship of the god Dionysus and forbade it. Pentheus was deceived by Dionysus, who had disguised himself as a woman, and was invited to the ritual to observe sexual activities. After watching the ritual, Pentheus was mistaken for an animal by the Maenads and was torn apart by the women. In fact, in some sources, it is said that his mother, Agave, was the first to attack him. The name Pentheus means man of sorrows (from *penthos*), deriving from the grief caused by the death of a loved one. In many sources, it is written that Pentheus was torn apart (Forbes Irving 1990; Liddle & Scott 1940).

Another figure torn apart by the Maenads and whose death is similar to Pentheus is Orpheus. Orpheus is presumed not to have lived in many known sources, but even if he did not, it is seen that the myths about him have somehow reached us today as a sign of desire. Orpheus was the greatest poet and musician of his time. It was said that when he played music, all animals obeyed him. In the Medea myth, he is said to have been one of the people who went to retrieve the golden fleece with the Argonauts. Orpheus had extraordinary abilities, and he would showcase these abilities on his journey with his companions, thus becoming part of this myth. Orpheus used his music to drown out the music of the Sirens, and this is how the Argonauts passed the cliffs. The greatest known myth about Orpheus is his descent to the underworld to try to rescue his wife Eurydice. While fleeing from Aristaeus, Eurydice was bitten by a snake on her heel, was poisoned, and descended to the underworld. Orpheus asked for help from Hades to save his lover. Hades agreed with one condition: Orpheus must not look back at his lover while ascending from the underworld to ensure that Eurydice does not die again. However, unable to resist, Orpheus looks back just before reaching the surface, and Eurydice dies again. Upon the death of his beloved, Orpheus hangs on a rock for months and is said to have alleviated this pain by singing. This song is described as one that tells of men who are loved by men and women who are rejected (Ov. *Met.* x). Orpheus is described as the first man who was desired by many women but loved men instead and enjoyed the love of men. When we think about the end of the myth, it is actually clear that Orpheus could not be with Eurydice. Because the myth somehow shows us that he allowed his lover's death. The love of a son for his father leads to the emergence of the desire to destroy his mother. This is a negative Oedipus complex. The death of the mother in a male child will allow him to desire another man and not have to abandon the mother. Orpheus, by accepting only male lovers, rejects Dionysus's Maenads. During the frenzy of the Bacchic rites, Orpheus is torn apart by women again. The first known myth that shows a woman rejected and a man loving another man is Orpheus. By breaking the prohibition of not looking at his lover's face, Orpheus has left a woman to die. Being rejected and loving someone else is still not acceptable to women. In mythology, Orpheus is the first man to choose another man, not another woman. And women will never forgive this.

Ino has been accepted as the goddess of the Maenads, ascended to the heavens. When we examine the organised displays, sacrificial rituals, and dismemberment ceremonies, we witness

manifestations of the classical hysteria crisis throughout millennia in these rituals. Primitive women unable to satisfy their sexual desires, rather than seeking completion through a man's phallus, directed their instincts towards aggression. Unreleased energy manifested as hostility towards the opposite sex, while madness induced by envy was attributed to the divine.

### **Regarding Medea**

Medea is the daughter of King Aeetes of Colchis and the Queen of the Colchis Eidyia. She is also the niece of the enchantress goddess Circe. Colchis was an ancient kingdom located in the western part of Georgia. The myth of Medea begins with the departure of a group of Greeks known as the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece, with Jason as their leader. When Jason and his companions arrive in the land of Colchis, they convey their desire for the golden fleece to King Aeetes. Medea happens to be another daughter of King Aeetes, who is the rightful owner of the golden fleece. Medea's step-sister, Chalciope, is the wife of Phrixus, who had previously possessed the golden fleece. Here, we observe an intriguing resemblance or aspiration to resemble between the sisters. Chalciope, as the wife of Phrixus who owned the golden fleece, mirrors Medea, who will become the wife of Jason, desiring to possess the golden fleece. The desire for parity between siblings is manifested in the form of possessing the golden fleece.

Medea immediately fell in love with her husband, Jason, who was seeking the golden fleece (according to the myth, Eros made Medea fall in love with Jason so that she would help him reach the golden fleece), and she did everything in her power to help him achieve this goal. Here, the symbol of power, the golden fleece, would pass from the father to his daughter's husband. King Aeetes, who did not want to marry off his daughter or see power pass to someone else, placed impossible obstacles in Jason's path. Thus, Aeetes told Jason that the golden fleece could be his if he managed to fulfil the tasks set before him. However, Aeetes's demands were so difficult that Jason alone could not overcome them. With Medea's help, Jason managed to complete these tasks. Jason was able to accomplish what was asked of him through magic and superior powers. Considering King Aeetes's demands, it would have been impossible for Jason to complete the series of tasks alone. These tasks were accomplished with Medea's help. It has been said that Jason was a victim of the power ambitions of Greek male-dominated society, but no one has mentioned Medea's own ambitions for power. Therefore, both of them are individuals who seek power or authority. Medea has fallen in love, and love is a partnership, no matter what the purpose may be...

King Aeetes learns that Jason has deceived him and tries to take revenge on the Greeks. Medea's love for Jason and her skills save the Greeks. They could find a way to escape. While fleeing, Jason kills the prince. This means that Medea has lost her brother. Some sources mention that Medea killed her own brother. With the golden fleece in hand, Jason first kills the king of Iolcus to take the throne, but the people of Iolcus exile him. Later, they go to Corinth, where Medea poisons and kills the king of Corinth. Finally, Jason ascends to the throne and has seven sons and seven daughters there. The desire for completion will be solidified in the myth by the number of children. Later, another element is added to this complex myth: jealousy of another woman. This jealousy is caused by Jason once again. After some time, Jason tells Medea that he is in love with another woman, Princess Glauce, and will marry her. Medea cannot bear this, feeling betrayed and abandoned. She had not left her husband alone for the golden fleece; she had caused the deaths of many, including her brother. Unable to control her anger, she devises cunning plans. Despite Medea's desire to leave the city, she tells the king that she wants her children to see their father and the princess one last time at the wedding, and then she will leave for good. In Euripides' *Medea*, the king does not believe Medea's cunning

plans but still agrees to her request. Due to the poison in the robe she sends with the children, the princess and the king die. When she returns home, Medea's anger has not subsided yet. Jason comes to Medea's side. After a conversation full of anger between them, Medea kills her two sons in front of Jason. Jason's children are dead. Medea's greatest evil is not allowing Jason's line to continue. She transforms from a stepmother, Ino, who wanted her own son to rule and couldn't stand her children, into a figure who kills her children out of jealousy and is victimised, 'Medea'. It is once again a matter of power. Ultimately, the children die in both myths.

Civilisation tends to rationalise the inherent evil that humans bring by attributing them to certain reasons, thus changing the nature of all actions. Although the results are the same, the difference in intentions has changed the way humans perceive the consequences, making them acceptable and fitting them into a certain framework. According to Kant, what makes an action good is the good will behind it. The thing that can make good will good unconditionally and absolutely is to submit to the general, universal, necessary, and moral rules set by practical reason and to act out of duty alone. However, intentions have now become more diverse, and despite the same results, people have found the outcome reasonable due to the difference in intentions. Humanity has developed a discourse deeply affecting the universalizability and formation of a common law to obtain pleasure, avoid pain and moral responsibility. Therefore, the diversity of intentions has deeply influenced our entire moral understanding. This expanding moral theory has evolved over time into a social dynamic that denies all evil deeds.

When we consider that intention determines the chemistry of the action, Medea's intention now seems to be grounded in the modern world. In the first myth, Ino is in the position of the stepmother who cannot tolerate another woman's children. Medea's actions leading to this tragic end, however, are her husband's infidelity with another woman. Despite the same outcomes, we can think that the events are interpreted according to the different perspectives of both genders. Nowadays, when women are cheated on by men, they exhibit a united alliance like never before. A woman does not forgive her husband, even tries to take revenge. She quickly develops attitudes such as threatening with the common children, not showing them, wanting the children to be only under the domination of the woman. In recent years, a name has begun to be given to this phenomenon in the world, and this hatred experienced by the woman during separation or divorce is called the Medea complex. The Medea Complex is defined as the urge of the mother to kill her children in order to take revenge on the father. Similarities and common characteristics in social phenomena lead us to develop theories. The urge to kill their children is one of the cannibalistic desires of the archaic woman. From this, one can infer that since the archaic mother cannot fantasise about killing her children and cannot control herself, she will actually start to kill them with her narcissistic illusion of turning her evil side into a perfect human by denying it. Recent studies reveal that mothers kill their children either immediately after birth or up to the age of three. The reasons for filicide can include preventing harm to the child, seeing the child as a burden that obstructs desires and goals, and motivation for jealousy/revenge in marital relationships (Friedman 2008). In cases of seeking revenge from a spouse, male children are more likely to be killed, while in altruistic cases, female children are more likely to be killed (Bourget and Whitehurst 2007). Sometimes events such as cheating, divorce/separation resulting from marital conflicts can lead to filicide.

On the other hand, men, due to their ambitions, see the infidelity of women who do not see anyone because of their desires as a victory over another man or as a weakness because they cannot say no to their wife and cannot leave her. We can see the reflection of the mother's desires of not letting go and not being able to let go on the male child as its cultural equivalent.



The child couldn't pass through the Oedipus period because he wasn't allowed to love another woman. The inability to form attachments in men is actually a result of not being left, and it takes its place in culture as a neurotic act repeated by constantly cheating with someone else. If they attach to someone else, their mother will never forgive them. Therefore, although the act of cheating may not always have the same results, the cheated woman will be the victim for women, and the man who ultimately achieves victory for men.

Jason, who claims to have fled from Medea's ambitions, seeks a solution by turning to another woman. Men and women have sought desire in different ways, and these divergent pursuits have remained separate since the evolution of cognitive abilities. The most significant similarity here is that men with similar emotional and intellectual backgrounds perceive events differently when compared to women with nearly identical emotional and intellectual backgrounds. The approaches of men and women toward each other with different motivations have always distanced both sides, hindering the emergence of truth. Jason, unable to restrain his and Medea's ambitions, attempted to escape his life by clinging to another woman and gained access to another power offered by another woman. Again, it is a matter of power.

Is Medea jealous of Jason or is it the other new woman who now possesses both Jason and the symbol of power, the golden fleece? Did Medea kill the princess to take revenge on Jason for abandoning her, or was it to win the battle against the other woman, to destroy her? If the issue were solely with Jason, the cheating man, would the princess still have died? If the abandoned woman is living out her situation in an action-oriented way on a neurotic basis, attempting to destroy out of envy, the absence of space between past and present will turn Medea into a murderer.

Medea, unable to fantasise about the desire to kill or destroy in her inner reality, withdrew from external reality and instead acted upon it. When we define her psychosis and murders as the reflection of our primary relationships and repressions in life, she is not even aware of which emotion she has suppressed. The relationship of envy towards the woman the father is with, that is, towards the mother, has not been defined, has not been processed. Envy towards the mother will continue as a substitute penis or will continue through the father by trying to destroy the father's penis.

The unfulfilled, unimagined, incomplete parts of envy have made Medea a murderer. If something has been taken away, destroyed in oneself, then what the other possesses must also be destroyed. Medea, by losing her sense of control here and replacing it with a sense of revenge, experiences an impulsive regression. Turning to the past forms a foundation disconnected from the context of external reality. She takes the revenge she would take on a neurotic level as an action, and in reality, the action overrides the suppressed desire...

### **Penis envy revisited**

Klein states, in these secondary forms that the girl's desire to take her mother's place and in the boy's feminine position, envy is directed not towards the breast but towards the image of the 'mother who has taken in the father's penis'; in this image, the mother has the children inside her, she gives birth to them and can feed them' (Klein 1932). Melanie Klein's extraordinary theory has disrupted the status quo, elucidating the envy-gratitude relationship in mother-daughter relationships in detail. She accepted Freud's concept of penis envy, but asserted that genital desires are a desire to have a child from the father, which is a feminine desire and always precedes the desire for a girl to have a penis herself. While agreeing with Klein's theory, the homosexual nature of the mother-daughter relationship has drawn many people influenced by this theory, and instead of penis envy, the nature of this primary

relationship has encompassed its cultural counterpart. An elevation has been made to the relationship with the mother, as if her theory that conveys our desires for unity or how we are united shows that women do not move away from their mothers. Freud, on the other hand, stated, in fact, we must consider that some women remain trapped in their initial attachment to their mothers and never truly succeed in turning into men (Freud 1964 [1931] SE XXI) to highlight the counterpart of this attachment in women. We must accept that the human mind is layered, that the suppressed chemistry of acquired knowledge and knowledge illusions creates an unconscious activeness in adult life, and that the last experienced neurotic foundation must first be experienced. Although the desire for a girl child to have a child from the father comes from further back, the later experienced penis envy will have a greater influence on the girl child's life. It is necessary to expand on the situation of 'having a penis' or 'thinking one has a penis' from an evolutionary perspective.

### **Evolutionarily penis and vagina: Can women actually have been penis-bearing before?**

When we look at the literal meanings of penis and vagina, we see that the two organs complement each other. When the penis is erect, it swells, and the vagina becomes lubricated. If these two organs had different responses to each other, perhaps we could talk more about this. However, the functions of these two organs mainly involve a complementary relationship. Each of them will be incomplete on its own. However, as the human brain develops its convolutions, it tends to distort this initial acquired knowledge over time, supporting it with another attempt at avoidance.

The word penis in Latin means tail. The word vagina means sheath or scabbard. A length sometimes enters into a sheath that can expand. Such a basic explanation unfortunately does not satisfy our minds, which are prone to going astray. Perhaps passing through those convolutions, we might think that there is a meaning when we define one truth through the other. However, as we delve into the winding paths of reality, our consciousness, which begins to confuse even what the truth is, especially for women, does not leave us alone.

According to the research of evolutionary biologists, the latest findings on the formation of sexes lead us towards the chaotic environment of the sea. The sea is extremely chaotic, and many fish must constantly swim to avoid sinking. This reduces the chance of sperm and eggs meeting. Therefore, these fish have developed hook-like structures to cling to the egg sacs with their teeth. As a result of millions of years of evolution, the cavity has widened due to the hooks entering the eggs of females, forming the female sexual organ. So, the reason for the evolution of sexual organs is to allow sperm and eggs to combine more efficiently in a more limited environment. When we think in this way, sexual organs first begin to manifest themselves during meiotic division in the sea. Thus, it seems that the formation of sexual organs emerges conditionally with each other. Psychoanalyst Bernard Penot (2018), in a speech, mentions the contributions of evolutionary studies by biologist and ethologist Jared Diamond of the University of Los Angeles to the human species' ability to understand its own destiny. 'The size of the penis in men has remained limited because if it had grown larger during evolution, it would have caused pain due to the size of the vagina' (Diamond 1992: 64). The author refers to a penis size that is proportional to the limited size of the vagina. In other words, fish have developed the method of entering one another through hooks to hold onto the egg and develop new embryos that will survive in a limited space, and together, they have found the best grip model. In light of this information, we can perhaps agree that the evolutionary process of both sexes may have taken millions of years, and the misconception that women previously had a penis aligns with Freud's theory. When girls notice 'the penis of a brother or playmate, strikingly visible and of large proportions, at once recognize it as the superior counterpart of

their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward fall a victim to envy for the penis' (Freud, 1961 [1925]: 252). Freud, in his essay 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937), states, the female patient has a belief that nothing can help her, in the void of analysis and within herself. 'And we can only agree that she is right, when we learn that her strongest motive in coming for treatment was the hope that, after all, she might still obtain a male organ, the lack of which was so painful to her' (Freud 1964 [1937]: 252).

One of the defence mechanisms against pain is an attempt to believe based on incomplete information. In order to avoid pain or the feeling of inadequacy, a woman liberates herself from the attempt to accept her absence by assuming that she was once endowed with a penis, transitioning into a mentality of being castrated. When we look at this situation from a broad perspective, it can be said that not only men but also women are castrated in Oedipus? Experiencing the masochistic aspect of this castration and the idea of lifelong inadequacy will keep the woman in a position of constant suffering. Erotic desires that could not be resolved with the mother in an active way manifest themselves in other ways. However, penis envy comes later in the developmental stage. Therefore, a change in place in human developmental stages, which disrupts the chronological order, unfortunately cannot serve the satisfaction of primary instincts.

Two separate cells, female and male cells, have formed, but organs have emerged after millions of years of natural selection to provide the best reproduction with both sexes together. Therefore, it is a mystery which one came first. The presence of one and the absence of the other form the basis of the disagreement between both sexes and within each sex. Humanity has also initiated a race through genders; whatever value raises the survival selection, it has ignited the sparks of competition between genders. Evolution will continue to find solutions that will destroy the species, so wars and childlessness between genders will be the cause and result of the transition to a genderless period.

In agricultural societies, men being hunters led them to develop skills to go out and hunt. The development of the ability to observe, experiments to obtain prey in different ways, facilitated men to have more knowledge, and led them to have a skill that would also be of interest to women. Knowledge has taken on a good natural selection task for survival. Scientists are trying to decode the genetic inheritance and the best transfer of knowledge chemically. In the last century, we can see the first traces of knowledge causing a neurotic idealisation, as there has been too much investment in and glorification of knowledge necessary for the survival of the species. Knowledge cannot be the only thing necessary for human survival. Knowledge, along with physical and mental resilience, can only be a necessary skill for the continuation of the species. The notion that each individual is solely captivated by the idea that knowledge equates to power or authority is again a neurotic illusion. However, the desire for each individual to have knowledge in the unconscious leads the knowledgeable to dominate the ignorant. Therefore, knowledge is a neurotic tool of the last century. It is used to gain power over others, power is not shared, and it is a tool of superiority.

While men sought to develop skills to obtain knowledge, women, without reaching the source of knowledge, initiated a new era for their gender by assuming that their female organ existed earlier in the evolutionary process. The inability to tolerate this absence found a place in the form of penis envy. Since then, women have tried to be equal with the other gender in every action rather than having equal rights with the other gender. The result women obtain without reaching the source of knowledge, that is, the attempt to avoid pain, is a situation of belief. Therefore, women's thinking skills are convoluted and contradictory. The feminine position

takes the parts necessary to keep the self from dispersing in the event and combines them in a manner that does not conform to reality. It produces mental constructs not through judgment, but rather in the form of associative calls created by additive words, disconnected from their context. In a fragmented manner, she takes the symbols in her mind and adds them to the symbols in external reality. We see that the fragmented, articulated information created by this belief situation is very effective in the origins of psychosis. Nowadays, so many people are ignorant but think they have knowledge. The state of belief is a psychotic condition.

It must be difficult to accept that a discourse without origin can never reach a conclusion. There is no scientific study yet that shows that the penis was previously in females. The lack of definite knowledge leads to the development of a disconnected new discourse, attaching thoughts to places where emotions suffer, but if you cannot hold onto reality, this seductive madness pulls people towards themselves. Therefore, finding a substitute penis, engaging in cultural actions that will replace the penis in the external world, such as a partner or a male child, desire for money, power, or authority, or having a male child by taking in the penis. All of these are modern equivalents of attempts to avoid pain and complete oneself.

### **Medea legend continued**

In the part of the legend that has come down to us, there are two different narratives. The first one is that Medea, the star of the Black Sea tribes, a sorceress, and a representative of matriarchal structure, somehow dealt with the patriarchal system and destroyed that order. However, unloved by anyone, Medea establishes the Med Empire in the south, taking her son Medus (which is also significant, as if a part of Medea, a limb of hers) with her. Medea later ascends to the sky and mixes among the gods. Through her son, Medea seizes power, ascends towards the sky with deep happiness, and moreover, becomes a god. Again, it is a matter of power...

Medea's motherhood, on the other hand, has been tarnished, remembered as a woman who lost her children because of her husband. However, in order not to think that a mother can kill her child, the legend has expressed that all the strong attitudes she has done or can do are based on the discourse of men. However, sons die and kill for their mothers. The mother-son duo, fused with such intensity, can become dangerous as the child grows up. This situation seems to be an accusation thrown from men towards women, a product of the patriarchal culture developed by the male unity for women. Women continue to define liberation, having knowledge, literature and art, being completed through their children, or not sexually but through penis envy. Attempts to change the body, aesthetic interventions, all the products produced by the cosmetic industry for women that will cause them to stay at home more easily and move less, have not been able to remedy the helplessness and inadequacy of women. Children of women who cannot get out of this neurotic plane are exposed to more and more indifference, depression, aggression, and screens every day.

If Medea is the bad woman who is claimed to have killed her children because she was cheated on by her husband, then the cheating husband, in order to cover himself, has attempted to destroy the woman. That is, the patriarchal system has portrayed the woman who tries to destroy it as a murderer, witch, and sorceress by claiming that she killed her children, and thus has been able to suppress the mother with a sense of guilt for thousands of years. So, if there is a dominant male figure trying to suppress, how should the sense of guilt in women be interpreted? Without consciously knowing the high desire of the archaic mother to kill, has the woman been forced to withdraw herself by living with a sense of guilt in her subconscious? If there is someone who dies, there must be someone who kills...

Could the unconscious societal aspect that forms the Medea myth not be attempting to convey the terrifying aspect of motherhood in all its reality? In other words, when a woman cannot satisfy her homosexual desires, she can turn into something so dreadful due to jealousy and envy that she can even kill her children. When we consider the way in which women suppress, this aggression is projected and transferred onto the spouse or child. Here, I will not express an opinion regarding men killing their children or fathers killing their children because, in my opinion, aggression and the urge for death are more prominently displayed in men and manifested in the form of aggression. Therefore, men can actually kill anyone; the reasons for this lie in the primal relationships of the subject with the object.

From this perspective, I believe there is a correspondence in the evolutionary process of development in the world. We can see the patriarchal order in the Neolithic era. The patriarchal order is a period that transitions us from a system where the strong prevail, which is cannibalistic and aggressive, to civilisation, where we begin to live collectively, discovering new historical artefacts every day from that era, which we are still trying to understand. Here, when men leave the home to acquire knowledge, women begin to open themselves to the outside world.

Oedipus, on the other hand, turns into a shared ritual that begins with the abolition of the totem. When we consider mankind's struggle for survival, after thousands of years of development, we can assume that Oedipus is the best selection. We can assume that circumcision, which can be traced back to around 2500-3000 BC, is a symbol left over from the Oedipus complex.

If the collective unconscious has constantly produced myths to show us the terrifying side of women/mothers and found a way to prevent this by creating the figure of a woman patterned with guilt, how can this idea find its place in the functioning of the world? In other words, if the patriarchal system has suppressed the archaic, terrifying, and frightening killer mother by creating a woman figure woven with guilt, and temporarily stopped the consequences of women's domination and castration problems, can it not be said that the modern woman, who now emerges with the decrease in repression and being repressed, is trying to substitute for the penis or the desire to dominate the world? If so, how will we interpret Medea or the modern woman? Hasn't the problem of castration anxiety in the unconscious evolved into a more feminine, womanly behaviour in male children?

If the unconscious problem of castration issue in male children has evolved into more feminine behaviour, which may indicate that women are attempting to recognise only feminine and womanly elements within the inner world of men. This suggests that gender roles, beyond rigid stereotypes, reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of human beings, showing that gender is not merely a biological construct but also a social and psychological phenomenon. In this context, modern roles for women and men are continuously reshaped and evolved through social and cultural dynamics.

Medea's myth has been deeply examined many times, and psychoanalytic interpretations have been made. In most of these interpretations, Medea is seen as a child killer, but the reason for being a child killer is explained as being betrayed by the man she loved. Medea is a victim who never forgives betrayal but is also a heroic woman. Therefore, in the new century, her killing of her children would be considered an acceptable outcome. This is why the scenes where she kills her children are not acted out by readers; they are just read and passed over. Societies have softened this situation over time, and the fact that a person who kills their children has truly lost control and that killing is a psychotic attack has not been taken into consideration. The

most important stage of humanisation in the real world we live in was to be able to have a common life by either suppressing or confronting our desires to kill and destroy brought about by primitive life. So, how can we bear to live now?

### Abbreviations

- Apollod. *Bibl.* Apollodorus. *The Library* in 2 vols (trans J. G. Frazer). Loeb Classical Library 121, 122. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921.
- Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* Apollonius Rhodius. *Argonautica* (ed and trans) W. H. Race. Loeb Classical Library 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Eur. *Med.* Euripides. *Cyclops. Alcestis. Medea* (ed and trans D. Kovacs). Loeb Classical Library 12. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Hes. *Theog.* Hesiod. *Theogony* in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* (ed and trans) H. G. Evelyn-White. Loeb Classical Library. London/Cambridge, MA: Heinemann/Harvard University Press, 1914.
- Ov. *Met.* Ovid. *Metamorphoses* Vol II: Books 9-15 (trans) F. J. Miller. Revised by G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 43. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.
- Pind. *Pyth.* Pindar. *Pythian Odes* in *Olympian Odes. Pythian Odes* (ed and trans) W. H. Race. Loeb Classical Library 56. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Soph. *Frag.* Sophocles. *Fragments* (ed and trans) H. Lloyd-Jones. Loeb Classical Library 483. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Soph. *Oed. Tyr.* Sophocles. *Ajax. Electra. Oedipus Tyrannus* (ed and trans) H. Lloyd-Jones. Loeb Classical Library 20. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

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