

THE BREAKDOWN: EURIPIDES' *MEDEA* AND AYCKBOURN'S *MOTHER FIGURE*¹

Kağan KAYA*

Abstract

In Greek mythology, Medea is a sorceress who was the daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis, niece of Circe, granddaughter of Helios, the god of sun, and above all wife to the hero, Jason. In Euripides' play *Medea*, produced in 431 BCE, Jason abandons Medea when Creon, the king of Corinth, offers his daughter Glauce to Jason. The play based on the myth tells of Medea avenging her husband's betrayal by killing their children. On the other hand, contemporary British playwright, Sir Alan Ayckbourn's black comedy, *Mother Figure*, the first ring of the *Confusions*, mirrors the traumatic marriage of a contemporary woman, Lucy. The playwright is considered as one of the most significant dramatists who reflect marital and familial problems of modern, but average British women on his stage. That's why the study constructs its main idea over the heroines of both plays. This study suggests that in terms of the protagonists of both plays, there is a close correlation with Euripides' *Medea* and Alan Ayckbourn's *Mother Figure*. It analyses the acts of both mother characters in a similar domestic environment in the face of abandonment considering some former academic works. Through a new point of view it also points out that in emotional and mental terms, there are some differences between Medea and Lucy as mothers. All in all this study puts forward that there are some profound spiritual links while there are some distinguishable characteristics between *Medea* and *Mother Figure* although they are the products of different periods and cultures.

Key Words: Ayckbourn, Euripides, Medea, Mother Figure, Mother and Woman

YIKIM: EURİPİDES'İN MEDEA'SI VE AYCKBOURN'ÜN ANNE FİĞÜRÜ

Özet

Yunan mitolojisinde Medea, Colchis Kralı Aeëtes'in kızı, Circe'nin yeğeni ve güneş tanrısı Helios'un torunu ve en önemlisi kahraman Jason'un eşidir. İsa'dan Önce 431 yılında sahnelenen Euripides'in *Medea* isimli oyununda Medea, Corinth Kralı Creon'unun kızı Glauce'ı ona önerdiğinde Jason tarafından terk edilir. Bu mite bağlı olan oyun, Medea'nın çocuklarını katletmesini ve kocasından oç almasını anlatır. Diğer taraftan, çağdaş İngiliz oyun yazarı Sör Alan Ayckbourn'un *Karmaşıklıklar* isimli oyunun bir halkası olan *Anne Figürü* ise modern bir kadın olan Lucy'nin travmatik evliliğini yansıtır. Oyun yazarı, modern ancak sıradan İngiliz kadınının evlilik ve aile sorunlarını yansıtmada en önemli oyun yazarlarından biri olarak görülür. Bu çalışma, başkahramanları bakımından Euripides'in *Medea'sı* ile Alan Ayckbourn'un kara komedisi, *Anne Figürü* arasında yakın bir bağ olduğunu öne sürer. Bu nedenle bu çalışma temel fikrini oyunun iki kadın kahramanı üzerine kurar. Önceki akademik çalışmalar ışığında terk edilme karşısında iki annenin benzer bir yuva ortamında sergiledikleri eylemlerini analiz eder. Bu çalışma, aynı zamanda yeni bir bakış açısıyla duygusal ve mental bakımdan anne Medea ve Lucy'nin aralarında farklılıklarının olduğuna işaret eder. Neticede,

¹ Bu çalışma Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat Üniversitesi ev sahipliğinde düzenlenen 2. Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Sempozyumu'nda (ASOS) sözlü bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

* Yrd. Doç. Dr., Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, 58140 Sivas-Türkiye

bu çalışma her ne kadar farklı kültürlerin ve dönemlerin ürünleri olsalar da, aralarında ayırt edici bazı özellikler olsa da, *Medea* ve *Anne Figürü*'nün bazı derin düşünsel bağlarının olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anne ve Kadın, Anne Figürü, Ayckbourn, Euripides, Medea

Introduction: Behind a Black Comedy and a Fearful Tragedy

This study mainly suggests that some similar profound roots between Greek dramatist Euripides' great tragedy, *Medea*, produced in 431 BCE, and British playwright, Alan Ayckbourn's comedy piece, *Mother Figure*, staged in 1974 firmly cling together although they are the products of different periods and cultures. It principally analyses the acts of the married and mother heroines, Medea and Lucy, in the face of abandonment by their husbands, and simply makes the connection between the mother roles of their protagonists seeking how either dramatists approach their women figures in similar domestic settings. Despite their differences in style and genre, both plays share some common characteristics in terms of their mother protagonists' reactions to abandonment. They experience a kind of mental breakdown because of their problematic marriage and familial lives. Thus, this study initially puts forward that both heroines have the same reflection of Hera, the goddess of marriage, the often-betrayed wife of Zeus. That is, this study focuses on the common motif of those plays; the breakdown of the protagonists as the result of abandonment and loneliness, and the affects of abandonment in both families in *Medea* and *Mother Figure*.

Lucy, the mother of Alan Ayckbourn's *Mother Figure* is the heroine of the first piece of his *Confusions* (1974). She is the representative of both spiritual and physical loneliness of a stereotyped twentieth century British middle-class woman. Lucy's family story, which starts with her running from one room to the other, and ends as it starts, is bitter but comic. Even though she is a lonely mother brings up her three children without a father in a tiny house, she behaves as if she were the mother of all adults around her. Ayckbourn has only three women characters transferring their preoccupation with the children onto adults: *Season Greeting*'s Belinda, *Henceforward*'s robot Nan and *Mother Figure*'s Lucy. That is, the plot is mostly based on her ridiculously disturbing mental breakdown. From the very opening of *Mother Figure*, as asserted by Whiteley: "we are given an indication of what is to come. The frenetic running around after the children, the baby talk, the visual image of the untidy, dressing-gowned, unprepossessing housewife tearing great lengths of paper from a toilet roll all set the scene for us with great immediacy." (1983: x) Similarly, Billington reminds that "*Bergson's theory is borne out by the five plays in Confusion*" (Billington, 1990, p. 91) whose one piece is *Mother Figure*. For *Mother Figure* he adds that "*So we laugh at Lucy because she is incapable any longer of distinguishing between a child and an adult*" (ibid., p. 92). Lucy assumes everyone around herself as if they were her own children just like her little baby, Jamie who is always seen in the arms of the mother, and Sarah and Nicholas who were rarely seen on stage when they play together. Lucy's other most recognisable act is picking up the receiver when it rings, and putting it down without answering. It is not just because Lucy is busy, but because she probably guesses that the call is from the offstage father figure of the family, Harry. However, it is obscure why Lucy never talks to him on the phone, and why Henry is out of the house. Lucy does not actually let anybody enter his isolated world. Nobody knocks at Lucy's door to help except for her neighbours, Rosemary and Terry. Although this couple constructs the sub-plot of the play, this work mainly concentrates on Lucy's roles.

On the other hand, Euripides' *Medea* is a great Greek tragedy that is based on a Greek myth, Medea and the keen observation of Euripides as he gives the most valuable information about the cultural life, and man and woman relationships in the Greek world in his era. Mastronarde (2010, p. 246) suggests that

“Euripidean plays in particular contain a greater number of major female roles, they more frequently explore domestic and personal themes, and they show pervasive engagement with contemporary intellectual trends, among which was the provocative analysis of nature and culture and the questioning of accepted norms, including those pertaining to gender”. Therefore, it is the mixture of “myth and social realism” (Mitchell-Boyask, 2007: xii).

Euripidean drama reflects the best sample of gender conflicts and domestic intrigues of its time. Euripides pushes “*the limits of what is possible in the tragic theatre*” (Mitchell-Boyask, 2007: xii), that is why his *Medea* is more tragic than any other familial tragedies of his period. The plot revolves around the tribulations of the marriage of a couple, Medea and Jason. Jason, Medea's husband, after arriving in Corinth with Medea, espouses Glauce, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. But, Medea, on the point of being dismissed from Corinth by Creon, having requested to remain one day, and having reached her will, sends to Glauce, by the hands of her own two sons, presents, as an appreciation for the favour, a robe and a golden crown, which she puts on and passes away; Creon also having embraced his daughter is destroyed. Medea lastly avenges her husband's betrayal, but when she has murdered her children, has to escape to Athens in a chariot drawn by winged dragons, and there she marries Aegaeus, son of Pandion.

The Mother and Father Roles of Two Women Figures

This work initially focuses on both women figures of the plays rather than the plots. From the opening scene of *Mother Figure* Lucy seems that she has lost her senses as a woman character, but she just keeps her motherhood characteristics. It is known that Ayckbourn's most woman characters have not proper mother senses. That is why Lucy is an exceptional Ayckbourn heroine. Her existence depends on the existence of her children. Her world with her “*maternal mask*” (Billington, 1990, p.92) neither belongs to her husband nor anyone, but her children. After Lucy's neighbours, Rosemary and Terry's visit, her world becomes more understandable. As Lucy hears the name of her husband for the first time from this married couple, she behaves that she does not want to hear his name anymore. This makes Rosemary feel pity for her. Terry also has the view that there is something wrong with Lucy as Lucy behaves them as if they were her own little children:

Terry : Yes. Mrs. Compton. How are you?

Lucy : I'm very well, thank you, Terry. Nice of you to ask.

Terry : And what about Har-Mr Compton?

Lucy : Very well. When I last saw him. Rosemary dear, try not to make all that noise when you drink.

Rosemary : Sorry (Ayckbourn, 1983, p. 5).

It is reasonable that Lucy tries to take her “*errand husband*” (White, 1984, p. 74) Harry out of her mind, but this is not so easy for her. Her breakdown mentally affects her. Holt says: “*In Ayckbourn's world, the married state itself frequently becomes a weapon of destruction – and not only for the husband or wife. For when marriages break down, they rarely implode*” (1999, p. 16). Then Lucy's behavioural problems may be tragic and disturbing for the people around her though it is entertaining for the audience. However, she does not torture her children like Medea. On the contrary, she turns

into a lovelier mother. That is why it is not nonsense that she behaves all people around her as if they were children. She probably develops such behaviour as she considers that children are more innocent than adults, and she feels nothing for Harry.

Ayckbourn's comedies "*are straight plays with a sense of humour, often saying much the same thing only more enjoyably and therefore to a wider audience*" (Karlson, 1993, p.11). Therefore, he not only colourfully pictures the man and woman relationships through his female figures, but also his male figures. Terry, the only on-stage male figure of the play expresses his own feelings about the nature of man and woman in general. Even though his words seem to give an opinion about his own life style regulated by his wife, it also reveals any husband's unhappiness and imprisonment within the restrictions of a wife in general:

"Take me, I'm home on the nose six o'clock every night. That's the way she wants it. Who am I...? (Pause) Yes, I think I could quite envy your husband, sometimes. Getting about a bit. I mean, when you think about it, it's more natural for a man. His natural way of life. Right back to the primitive. Woman stays in the cave, man the hunter goes off roving at will. Mind you, I think the idea originally was he went off hunting for food. Different sort of game these days, eh?" (Ayckbourn, 1983, p.6).

Unlike Euripides, Ayckbourn mirrors any sort of pain caused by a problematic marriage in a more complex but entertaining way. One of the most entertaining exchanging occurs after Terry finishes expressing his thoughts about the man and woman relationships. He furiously tries to go back to his home as he is bored with the happenings at Lucy's. However, he cannot get in as the keys are at Rossie. When he gets back to Lucy's, he is wanted to make an apology for Rossie by Lucy. At first he does not accept to apologize as he thinks that he has done nothing wrong. Yet, he has to apologise to take the keys. Lucy tries to save Rosemary against Terry's words and deeds. She precisely wishes that Rosemary would be a tough woman before her husband like herself. Ayckbourn believes that a wife should be as mentally strong as a husband is in a marriage. Rosemary does not give the key to Terry, when he demands it turns into such a child play that demonstrates an entertaining power show of a wife against a husband because Terry is wanted to drink milk though he hates it like most children:

Terry : *Oh, for the love of... All right. (To Rosemary) Sorry.*

Lucy : *Say it nicely.*

Terry: *I'm very sorry, Rosie. Now give us the key. For God's sake.*

Lucy : *When you've drunk your milk. Sit down and drink your milk.*

Terry : *Oh, blimey... (He sits)*

Lucy: *That's better.*

Terry: *I hate milk.*

Lucy: *Drink it up (Ayckbourn, 1983, p.10).*

Then Terry drinks all his milk, but sticks her tongue out at Rosie, Lucy lets him take the key. Rosemary finishes this childish play in the end, and Lucy sends them to their house singing happily hand in hand. The play ends after Lucy is back to her lonely life with her children within the rings of the telephone again. Lucy does not answer the phone as usual. At that time Harry is seen for the first time while going out of a telephone box.

Unlike Ayckbourn's Lucy, Medea could be regarded as a loving ex-wife at first. However, this is decisive both for Jason and the audience. Although she actually has strong feelings for her husband even if she is a discarded wife, this image is well known by Greek community because it is such a

powerful metaphor “*connoting the otherness of females and, therefore, their dangerous potential*” (Vasillopoulos, 2014, p. 45). Therefore, it is better for not being deceived by such a witchy figure. In fact, neither Jason nor his sons will be aware of such a danger even if Jason is an adult man from the culture that created Pandora and Medusa. But more dangerous thing for Jason and his sons is that this discarded woman is also naturally jealous like Hera. This undoubtedly paves the way for what happens to Jason and his sons.

The Breakdown of Two Women Figures

Ayckbourn for whom Michael Billington (1986) dubbed “*our leading feminist dramatist*” places Lucy within the heart of his play. Lucy isolates herself from the outside world except for the relationship with her neighbours. It appears that she can only communicate through the language of infancy. Ayckbourn indicates: “*This play, the first of the five to be written, underlines in a masterly way the utter desolation which must overwhelm any harassed mum from time to time*” (1983: ix). Lucy has become the victim of circumstances.

Similarly, at the very beginning of his play, Euripides makes clear that Medea is a victim in the hands of her husband, Jason. Yet, he hides what kind of ill plans Medea has in her mind against her husband or the children. Euripides was “*a radical who subjected all aspects of his society to a withering critique*” (Mitchell-Boyask, 2007, p. xviii). Morales indicates the radicalism in Euripides as: “*Certainly Euripides, perhaps the most radical of classical Athenian playwrights, created new myths, or changed the old ones so drastically that it must have seemed to some to be a travesty*” (Morales, 2007, p.23). For Medea, Euripides intentionally directs Medea’s anger against her husband. The Nurse of the children tries to keep them away from their own mother as Medea frequently cries and curses loudly. She also tries to get some help for her revenge plans from Zeus, Themis and Artemis, the gods of sky, justice and law, and compares her husband with Sisyphus who is notorious for his tricks against Zeus:

“*Aaaah!*
The pain that I’ve suffered, I’ve suffered so much, worth oceans of weeping.
O children, accursed, may you die-with your father! Your mother is hateful. Go to hell, the whole household!
Every last one!” (Euripides, 2007, p.66).

Unlike Lucy and Harry’s, Medea and Jason’s marriage details are observed through their talks and quarrels and Medea’s soliloquies as well. As Inchley indicates while she is on her own, her voice “*wracked with uncontrollable private emotion, lamenting the loss of Jason*” (2013, p. 195). When they come face to face for the first time, Medea yells what she has done for her husband; how she has become the enemy of her own family. Although she wishes Jason to back her, she actually knows that this would be impossible. Besides her complains about him to the gods, her long unforgettable exclamation to the whole women in Corinth is also significantly shows that like Medea, Greek women have no exact democratic rights as men have in this era: “*There is no justice in human eyesight: people take one look and hate a man, before they know his heart, though no injustice has been done to them*” (Euripides, 2007, p. 69). In fact, she has done nothing wrong against Jason. “*The whole point of Medea is her opulent otherness. She is herself foreign milk. As a Colchian princess, she is always already an outsider at Jason’s court, and as such she is doubly a problem*” (Purkiss, 1999, p.59). That is she is just an ordinary “*woman that loved not wisely but too well*” (Inchley, 2013, p.196) and in another conversation with Jason she reminds in her own interest that they have

children. She just seems to try to hurt Jason verbally, but not physically: “*You wanted a new bed, even though I’d born you children. If you had still been childless, anyone could understand your lust for this new marriage*” (Euripides, 2007, p.80). However, Jason, as a usual patriarchal member of the Greek world of the era, never reasonably responds her. He, in the end, demonstrates his misogynistic face deserving a kind of tragic punishment even in Greek culture, indeed:

“But you’re a woman—and you’re all the same! If everything goes well between the sheets you think you have it all. But let there be some setback or disaster in the bedroom and suddenly you go to war against the things that you should value most. I mean it – men should really have some other method for getting children. The whole female race should not exist. It is nothing but nuisance” (Euripides, 2007, p. 83).

In fact, Medea believes that Jason’s words are not true. She thinks that Jason feels that he deserves a royal wife rather than a barbarian as Medea comes from Colchis on the Black Sea, now lives on the margins of Corinthian society. According to her, Jason “*imagined that for an older man, a barbarian wife was lacking in prestige*” (Euripides, 2007, p.84). Her being not noble resembles Lucy’s being from middle-class as an ordinary woman. Besides Medea’s feelings for Jason, his wish to have royal children causes one of the most unearthly revenge in the history of drama. Medea’s revenge could be considered the worst of all drama in the world so far. After she poisons the royal family, she kills her own children. When Jason learns that Medea has murdered his own sons, his grief is as large as Medea. As Medea thinks that Jason as a Greek father has never fathered to his sons except for thinking of their future, she does not even let Jason see the faces of his children, and even bury their bodies in Corinth. Their last painful but revengeful conversation reveals how Euripides warns Greek mother and fathers against such madness:

Medea: *O Sons, you were destroyed by your father sickness.*

Jason: *My right hand is not the one that killed them.*

Medea: *Your outrage, and your newfound bride, destroyed them.*

Jason: *The bedroom was enough to make you kill?*

Medea: *They exist no longer. That will sting you.*

Jason: *They exist. They live to avenge your crime.*

Medea: *The gods know who was first to cause this pain.*

Jason: *They know your mind. They spit on it.*

Medea: *Go on and hate them. I detest your voice.*

Jason: *I feel the same. That makes it easy to leave you* (Euripides, 2007, p.117).

Euripides, on the one hand, reflects the grief in a more shocking way, on the other hand lets an ordinary Greek woman be heard clearly and vividly. Euripides digs into psychological drama, differs from the playwrights of his time as his deeply pictured characters are women. Sirola says that he is the first playwright “*to dare to put a woman’s interior world on stage with all her wishes, anxieties, joys and adversities*” (2004, p. 95). Similarly, Inchley (2013, p.192) asserts that throughout the play “*the invisibility and inaudibility of women, the patriarchal structures of society and language have been discovered, and the lack of representation of women’s voices and experiences therein*” whereas Ayckbourn’s reaction to the breakdown of her protagonist is in silence. In his conversation with Bernard Dukore he admits that he is not a feminist writer: “*I think what am doing is trying to reflect [women] as they are, not as the feminist movement like them to be, because I think a lot of them fall very short of that*” (Dukore, 1991, p.8). This does not mean that he is taking side of men. In contrary, he is one of the most prolific dramatists of contemporary British drama who gives voice to ordinary British women in the face of injustice without showing their unreal faces on his stage.

The Victimised Children

It is in fact the subject matter of psychologists what the affects of divorces or any other familial problems of a family on children. However, the affects of marital problems also builds one of the crucial subject matters of any dramatic work which is born either in ancient Greece or in contemporary Britain. The children who become the exact victims of any problematic marriages lead to a great deal of dramatic conflicts in theatre. *Mother Figure* and *Medea* must also be analysed through the exact victims of those plays as both plays have five stage children figures.

Mother Figure has three children characters although it cannot be considered among the children plays of the playwright. Those children are mostly off-stage. That is, it is just realised that Sarah and Nicholas have not demonstrated any kind of reactions against the changes in their family although they are elder siblings of Jamie, Lucy's little unaware baby. However, one cannot refrain from thinking that this disturbing silence is constructed intentionally by Ayckbourn. The playwright attentively draws the attention not to the children, but to his heroine. In fact, in his most family plays children are on the stage, and they even react when some unusual things happen in the family. Then, Ayckbourn's children plays are relatively boisterous. For instance, his little girl, Lucy, in *Invisible Friends* is unusually different from any children characters of *Mother Figure*. She mentally reacts her environment after being neglected by her real family instead of staying calm and playing with her doll and toys. She makes up a new fictitious family instead of her real family. Similarly, Suzy, the adventurous girl of *Mr A's Amazing Maze Plays*, experiences a kind of mental breakdown after losing her father in the sky. She starts to wait for him relentlessly night after night fixing her eyes on the black sky. It is not probable that the silence in *Mother Figure* depends on that Ayckbourn hinders the desperate faces of the children.

Euripides also draws the attention not to children, but to *Medea*, a skilful witch. The main focus of the play is on Medea rather than her relationship with her two sons whose names are not mentioned in the play. However, Euripides may wish to conceal their identity because of their tragic end. In fact this may be because even "*contemporary accounts of motherhood are a mosaic of religious images, Victorian ideals, Freudian psychology, and 1950's sitcoms*" (Simone de Beauvoir 1949/52; Stephanie Coonts, 1992; Julia Kristeva, 1986; Sara Ruddic, 1995; Shari L. Thurer, 1994), which idealize mothering as the most extreme feminine accomplishment. Besides, this may depend on ancient Greek as "*The ancient cult of Dionysus and its world of chaos encouraged a belief in female forms of evil*" (Brinzeu, 2011, p. 251). The most disturbing thing in Euripides' tragedy is that both Medea and Jason are not warm parents for their sons. Their pride keep them being real parents for them. Both of them are responsible for the murder of their sons. Moreover, they are of that fault. That is why they often accuse each other after the familial tragedy:

Medea: *O sons, you were destroyed by your father's sickness.*

Jason: *My right hand is not the one that killed you.*

Medea: *Your outrage, and your newfound bride, destroyed them.*

Jason: *The bedroom was enough to make you kill?*

Medea: *Yes, to one with wise restraint. To you, it's everything.* (Euripides, 2007, p. 117)

Medea's illogical refusing reveals that even after the death of their children their traumatic pride has not been extinguished. This also shows that maternity is not regarded as self-sacrificing act forever. That is, Euripides' tragedy is more severe than *Mother Figure*. The play ends with the deaths of

innocent children just because of the parents' mutual faults. Like Lucy's children Medea's sons are voiceless; nobody knows and hears what Medea's children would say if they had chance to speak. However, the Greek playwright reveals the breakdown of a family more harshly than in *Mother Figure*. Understandably, one can easily think that even the safety of children may be meaningless for a Greek family in the society. *Mother Figure*, on the other hand, presents a physically safer world for children. They may not be physically tortured on a modern British stage, but may always be the psychological victims of modern world, even of Alan Ayckbourn's stage.

Conclusion

Both married mother figures of Ayckbourn and Euripides experience similar breakdowns. While Ayckbourn ironically reflects the entrapped life of Lucy as an ordinary woman and mother, Euripides' tragedy theatrically creates the most colourful woman of all times in a far more bitter way. Ayckbourn creates his black comedy by the help of Lucy's mentally dark life. Her life is constructed as two dimensions; being a lonely wife and a courageous mother. Lucy might be more powerful than many other Ayckbourn's women characters. Yet, she seems another victim of the marriage and family life in Ayckbourn plays. It is clear that she experiences a sort of mental problem, but never tries to solve this problem. Although her mental problem makes the audience laugh at her, all her behaviours indicate that she is not happy because of her abandonment by her husband. On the other hand, she is a tough mother. She feels that she must be more powerful as she lives just for her children. She never reflects her unhappiness while she is together with them. That is why Lucy is completely different from Medea as a mother. She does not load her unhappy life on the back of her children as Medea does though in modern sense they may be seen as victimised children of that modern British family.

On the other hand, the Greek dramatist, Euripides reflects the experiences of Medea who expose to the oppressiveness of patriarchal Greek culture. She has the Greek version of the breakdown of Lucy. The play mirrors the transformation of Medea from a sympathetic abused woman to a dreadful sufferer and a monstrous child-killer. Besides Medea's being onstage since her first entrance, she has remained through the negotiations, meetings, supplications and choral odes which explain her exact grief in detail even after slaughtering her own sons. Unlike the obscure marital background of Lucy, the whole disastrous marriage story of Medea is experienced throughout the play, and she proves her heroic greatness in her punishment of Jason. Like Ayckbourn, Euripides warns his entire nation not to punish their children because of their own faults as irresponsible parents in their marriage and familial life. Similarly, Euripides must be considered the voluntary saver of marriage and family life in his community throughout his era.

References

- Ayckbourn, A. (1983). *Confusions: Five Interlinked One-Act Plays*. London: Methuen Drama.
- Beauvoir, S. D. (1949a, 1952b). *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Billington, M. (1986). Review: *Woman in Mind*. *The Guardian*, 5 September.
- Billington, M. (1990). *Alan Ayckbourn*. London: Macmillan.
- Brinzeu, P. (2011). *Hidden Esotericism*. *European Journal of English Studies*, 15: 3, pp. 251-265, DOI: 10.1080/13825577.2011.626954.
- Coontz, S. (1992). *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*,

New York: BasicBooks.

Euripides. (2007). *Euripides: Alcestis, Medea, Hippolytus* (Dianne Arnson Svarlien trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.

Dukore, F. B. (1991). Alan Ayckbourn: *A Casebook. An Interview with Alan Ayckbourn* (pp. 3-23). New York; London: Garland.

Holt, M. (1999). Alan Ayckbourn. *Relative and Other Values* (pp. 12-29). Plymouth: Northcote House.

Inchley, M. (2013). *Hearing the Unhearable: The Representation of Women who Kill Children*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 23:2, 192-205, DOI: 10.1080/10486801.2013.777049.

Karlson, E. K. (1993). *Laughter in the Dark: The Plays of Alan Ayckbourn*. London; Toronto: Associated University.

Kristeva, J. (1986). 'Stabat mater', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, trans. S. Hand, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 160-186.

Mastrorarde, D. J. (2010). *The Art of Euripides: Dramatic Technique and Social Context*. Cambridge; NY: Cambridge University.

Mitchell-Boyask, R. (2007). *Euripides: Alcestis, Medea, Hippolytus*. Dianne Arnson Svarlien (trans.). *Introduction and Notes* (pp vii-xxxvii). Indianapolis: Hackett.

Morales, H. (2007). *Classical Mythology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Purkiss, D. (1999). *The Children of Medea*: Euripides, Louise Woodward, and Deborah Eappen. *Law & Literature*, 11: 1, pp. 53-64, DOI: 10.1080/1535685X.1999.11015586.

Ruddick, S. (1995). *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*, 2nd. ed., Boston; MA: Beacon.

Sirola, R. (2004). *The Myth Of Medea From The Point Of View Of Psychoanalysis*. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 27:2, 94-104, DOI: 10.1080/01062301.2004.10592947.

Thurer, S. L. (1994). *The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother*, Boston; MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Vassilopoulos, C. (2014). *Through A Glass Darkly: Medea as a Reluctant Goddess*. *Jung Journal: Culture&Psyche*, 8: 1, pp. 41-56, DOI: 10.1080/19342039.2014.866033.

White, H. W. (1984). *Alan Ayckbourn. Absent Friends and Confusions*, (pp. 67-79). Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Whiteley, R. (1983). *Confusions: Five interlinked one-act plays, Alan Ayckbourn*, auth. *Commentary* (pp. viii-xxiii). London: Methuen Drama Student Edition.