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Araştırma makalesi/Research article

Lament of Medea: A Kinesthetic Performance

Medea'nın Ağıtı: Kinestetik Bir Performans

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Abstract

This study shows how the language of lament liberates a woman from a socially constructed murderous identity. By using stylistic analysis and mainly focusing on the method of singing lament, this article shows the possibility of undermining the socially constructed identity of the ancient Greek heroine Medea. As the 19th-century thoughts in England about women acquired the most exacerbated misogynist overtones, the problem for the women artists was a desperate search for a new identity and, thus, for language. Two crucial Victorian poets, Amy Levy and Augusta Webster, turned to Greek mythology to explore the collective cultural constructions, recognized the power of lament as a literary device and used it to provide a new perspective to ancient Greek playwright Euripides' Medea. They formulated their poem using the linguistic and contextual rules of lamentation, such as interrogative questions, alliteration, assonance, phonetic structuring, highly metaphorical language, wordplay, parallelism and antithesis. Due to the figurative devices and deviant use of language, they made the reader witness the melancholy and mourning of heroin. They got the reader to think that they should reconsider

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Medea. Thus, this study focuses on the poetic language of Levy and Webster to provide a different angle to the concept of identity and give the reader a better sense of what Medea is all about. This article provides critical insight into the power of the language of lament in the deconstruction of rigid and stable identity. Moreover, it shows the critical role that language and the performance of lament play in the construction of the self-perception of the speaking subject.

Keywords: *lament, subjectivity, Medea*

Öz

Bu çalışma, kimliğin dil ile inşa edildiği teorisini tartışmak amacıyla yazılmıştır. Bireysel kimliğin değişen, dönüşen ve kurgusal bir olgu olduğu fikrinden hareketle, okuyucu veya dinleyici de duyusal izlenimler yaratma suretiyle, kimlik algısının değiştirilebileğini göstermektedir. 19. yüzyıl İngiltere›sinde kadınla ilgili düşünceler en şiddetli kadın düşmanı imaları kazanırken, kadın sanatçıların yeni bir kimlik ve dolayısıyla dil arayışı çabaları bu araştırmanın motivasyonu olmuştur. Özellikle ağıt edebi türünün hem görsel hemde işitsel algı yaratarak, kimlik kavramına etksini tartışılmaktadır. Üslup analizi tekniğini ve ağıt yakma yöntemini kullanarak, antik Yunan kahramanı Medea'nın sosyal kimliğinin değiştirilmesi olanağını göstermektedir. Bu makale, Viktorya döneminin iki önemli şairi Amy Levy ve Augusta Webster'ın şiirleri aracılığla kimlik kavramına postmodern bir bakış açısı kazandırmaktadır. Webster ve Levy kolektif kültürel yapıları keşfetmek için Yunan mitolojisine döndüler, ağıtın gücünü edebi bir araç olarak kabul ettiler ve onu eski Yunan oyun yazarı Euripides'in Medea'sına yeni bir bakış açısı sağlamak için kullandılar. Şiirlerini sorgulayıcı sorular, aliterasyon, asonans, fonetik yapılanma, yüksek metaforik dil, kelime oyunu, paralellik ve antitez gibi dilsel ve bağlamsal ağıt kurallarına göre formüle ettiler. Mecazi anlatımları ve kuralları yıkan dil kullanımıyla okuyucuyu kadın kahramanın hüznüne ve yasına tanık edip Medea'yı yeniden düşünmek gerektiğini düşündürdüler. Bu şairlerin şiirlerini çözümleyerek, bu makale, katı ve istikrarlı kimliğin yapısökümünde ağıt dilinin gücüne dair önemli bir içgörü sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, ağıtın kinestetik algı oluşturarak konuşan öznenin benlik algısının inşasında oynadığı önemli rolü kanıtlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Amy Levy ve Augusta Webster'in şiirlerini inceleyerek, Medea'ya yeni bir başış açısı sunar ve Medea'yı kötü ününden kurtarır. Böylece, ağıtın sosyal yaşamın kurguladığı kimliğe yıkıcı etkisine dikkat çeker.

Anahtar sözcükler: *ağıt, kimlik, Medea*

Introduction

A lament is a form of art that is simultaneously a fundamental form of human expression: crying and weeping. It is a medium where one can cry and sing at the same time. In other words, it is a kind of singing which is a way of expressing deep grief. Singing lament is an integral part of ancient epic poetry. To be a true epic, epic must integrate the voices of men and women singing

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a lament. Otherwise, it becomes a mock epic; it is desensitised and cannot explore the depths of grief expressed by lament. In ancient Greek texts, many heroes, heroines, wives and husbands, mothers and sons sing laments to express their sorrow, pity and even love. In Homer's *Illiad*, not only Achilles, the protagonist and the hero of the *Illiad*, sing lament, but also Andromache, the victim of Achilles, and Kleopatra, the wife of Meleager, are important figures who sing laments to relieve their sorrow. While Achilles is playing the lyre, he also sings lament because he kills Andromache and has the pain of Andromache. He also sings a lament to question and understand why there is so much at stake for himself to be a hero. He cries and sings that he has to kill his friend, and he also has to die at a very early age to be a hero. Andromache and Kleopatra sing laments for the loss of their husbands. These oral poetics show that people lament the loss of something or someone valuable. In these laments, the sorrow of the performers can modulate into anger or a kind of frustrated anger and find expression as a lament. Although the dominant emotion is sorrow, it can become a performance of much more intensified feelings.

Lamentation emerged as a critical element of late nineteenth-century poetry, particularly under the influence of the New Woman movement of the 1880s. This period saw many women poets challenging the prevailing values of Victorian society. Sarah Grand, who coined the term "New Woman" in a 1894 article entitled "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," defined the concept as an outcome of heightened awareness of self and gender distinctions, leading to shifting views on topics such as marriage, sexuality, and fertility. The New Woman movement, which stemmed from the increasing availability of education and evolving status of women, encouraged poets such as Amy Levy and Augusta Webster to reject the traditional female identity and seek a new sense of self. Recognizing lamentation as the primary medium in ancient Greek verbal art for expressing inexpressible, profound emotions, these poets employed laments of mythic heroines to create poetic recitations that visualized a strong speaking voice and gesturing body as the modern equivalent of the ancient Greek lament. Lamentation imbued the discourse of Webster and Levy's poetic speakers with emotional intensity, characterized by melancholic, angry, and dreadful moods. By utilizing lament, the poets sought to create a speaking voice that defended itself by describing and evoking vocal tones, gestures, and bodily placement. These moods spread from performers to readers, who became witnesses, infecting judgment and demanding a response. Thus, lamentation was a critical tool for these poets to express the struggles of the New Woman and challenge existing societal norms.

Euripides' ancient Greek tragedy of Medea has been reinterpreted by poets Augusta Webster and Amy Levy, who utilized the power of lamentation to create a kinesthetic performance that amplifies the emotional depth and resonance of the original narrative. According to the original story of Euripides, Medea is a princess of Colchis. She meets and falls in love with Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, when Jason comes to her country, the land of Colchis, to capture the Golden Fleece from her father, the King of Colchis. Providing Jason with a magical potion to prevent him from being hurt, Medea helps Jason succeed in stealing the Golden Fleece and runs away with him. Jason lives with Medea and has two sons; however, he then determines to marry Princess Glauke, the King of Corinthia's daughter, out of political ambition. Moreover, he calls Medea a shrew when Medea strongly reacts to the news in the public space of her dwelling's

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threshold. As a result, Medea ultimately murders Glauke, the princess of Corinthia, the king of Corinthia, and then her sons by Jason. Though many literary historians find Euripidies' tragedy written to create sympathy for Medea's plight, the figure of Medea and her inner struggle remain unexplored in the story. Therefore, Edith Hall comments that Medea is remembered through the act of filicide (48). Nevertheless, the classical story of Euripides cannot go beyond the portrayal of Medea as a murderer of children at most terrifying and as a woman who embodies demonic power and cleverness. However, Augusta Webster and Amy Levy reconsider Medea. They draw Medea as singing lament to assert that we are not giving this character a chance, and if we see the angle from which the poetics of lament provide, we get a better sense of what this suffering young woman is all about.

By reimagining the character of Medea through the use of lamentation, Webster and Levy were able to construct a new identity for her that aligned with the changing values of their contemporary society. The poetic renditions of Medea by Webster and Levy utilize kinesthetic reading strategies, employing bodily positions, movements, and physical sensations to create a more immersive and emotionally resonant experience. By doing so, the poets sought to evoke a sense of empathy and connection with the character, allowing readers to more vividly imagine the inner struggles of Medea. The use of lamentation in the poetry of Webster and Levy grants power to the character of Medea, allowing her to express herself in ways that challenge the traditional patriarchal norms that defined her character in the original story. Through this approach, Medea is transformed into a complex and multifaceted character, one whose struggles and experiences are felt kinesthetically by the reader. In this way, Webster and Levy's creation of lamentation as a kinesthetic performance breathes new life into Euripides' original story, giving it a contemporary relevance that speaks to issues of identity and empowerment that resonate even today.

Two Victorian women poets: Amy Levy and Augusta Webster

Augusta Webster and Amy Levy were prominent late nineteenth-century women poets whose highly personal verses have encouraged many early Modernists. Their poems are particularly distinctive for their forcefulness and psychological and intellectual acuity. What is remarkable about Webster's verse is her giving authority and power to woman speakers. In his book *Victorian Poets*, Edmund Clarence Stedman comments that Webster's real potential as a poet was realised when she discovered the dramatic monologue. The woman speakers of Webster seem to possess a coherent and objective consciousness which push the reader to take side with her argument (65). Thus, Webster departs from the nineteenth-century dramatic monologue form's defining element, calling attention to the speaker's situation but often leading to judging her utterance. Her dramatic monologues signify the validity and integrity of female discourse. Webster wrote *Dramatic Studies*, eight dramatic monologues and *A Woman Sold, and Other Poems* in which women speak through their assertive identities. Among these monologues spoken by women, "A Castaway" —a striking sketch of a prostitute— is the most controversial and exciting of all. The poem presents the problem of weakened, attacked and harmed, either physically or emotionally, female subjectivity. The most interesting thing about

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the poem is that Augusta Webster's representative prostitute offers a pragmatic explanation for her position. "Medea in Athens" reflects the same tone and purpose to justify Medea's act of filicide and make readers sympathise with Medea. The poem consists of thirteen stanzas and two hundred and eighty-three lines. When we look at the composition of stanzas, the long dramatic monologue is constructed of multiple stanzas of different lines. In the dramatic monologues, the shift in the perspective and mood of the poetic speaker is paralleled by a similar change in the length and density of the stanzas that create the poem.

Amy Levy was a modern poet who defied Victorian mapped patterns of female subjectivity by emphasising the modern woman identity's multiplicity, instability, and liminality. Levy represents traditional myths through their characteristics susceptible to abstract, subjective, self-conscious, and self-reflective stylisation. Levy self-consciously inscribes a speaking voice and bodily positions as suggested in the kinesthetic reading strategies, one of the central principles of aesthetic Modernism at the turn of the twentieth century. Amy Levy employs kinesthetic reading strategies, which involves an emphasis on bodily positions, movements, and physical sensations. Through this approach, Levy aims to evoke a felt sense of her subject matter in the reader, creating a more immersive and emotionally resonant experience. One example of Levy's use of kinesthetic reading is her inclusion of bodily positions in her poetry. In her dramatic monologues, she often describes characters' physical gestures and movements, such as their postures, facial expressions, and hand gestures. These details help to bring the characters to life in the reader's mind, making them more vivid and tangible. It provides a felt sense rather than merely an exclusive and singular signification. Levy also uses kinesthetic reading to convey a sense of emotional intensity and immediacy. For example, in her poem "Medea: A Fragment in Dramatic Form," she uses visceral descriptions of Medea's physical and emotional state to create a powerful sense of empathy and connection with the character. Through such techniques, Levy seeks to engage the reader's senses and emotions in a more direct and immersive way, creating a deeper and more profound reading experience.

Levy's first two verse collections, *Xantippe and Other Verse* and *A Minor Poet and Other Verse*, include her dramatic monologues written between 1874 and 1885. Amy Levy wrote the mythic poem "Medea: A Fragment in Dramatic Form" in 1883 and included it in her second collection. The poem tells the tragic story of a passionate Medea who is beguiled by Jason, who is planning to be the King of Corinthia. Conforming to the Modernist idea that encourages the theatrical stage as the setting for the poetry, she rewrites Euripidies' myth of "Medea" as a closet drama involving a few characters; Medea, Jason and two Corinthian citizens. What is remarkable about Levy's version is that Levy changes the image of Athenian Euripides' Medea. In her study *Women Writers and Dark Side of Hellenism*, Tracey Olverson asserts that contrary to a semi-divine woman with magical powers, Levy defines a "sympathetic portrait of a woman compelled by circumstance to act against her intolerable maltreatment at the hands of a hostile society" (72).

Among many performers, it is not surprising that Augusta Webster and Amy Levy concentrate on the lament of Euripidies' Medea. Under the influence of the New Woman Movement, they attempt to construct a new female identity and subvert the stereotypes

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created by male writers. Moreover, they endow Medea with a proper voice against the background of Decadent ideas to provide a new perspective to Medea's story by drawing her as a performer singing her beautiful lament. The ancient Medea is one of the most forceful women figures who is charged with the murder of his two sons together with a king and a princess. She is the figure who is hard to defend her character and actions because ancient Greek narration constructs her as having a very rigid murderous identity. However, Levy and Webster reconsider Medea and create a new identity for Medea by drawing her as singing lament in their poems. Webster published her interpretation of "Medea in Athens" in 1870 in a dramatic monologue form. However, Levy publicised her "Medea: A Dramatic Fragment" as a closet drama in 1884. As New Women poets of the late nineteenth century, they both wrote to cultivate a new identity for Medea and challenge the Victorian idealised female identity through two different generic constructions. Their hallmark in their attempt to create a new Medea is the device of lamentation.

The ancient Greek version of Medea narrates a male-dominated story of a civilisation of glory. However, Webster and Levy freshen the convention of epic lament in the modern context. They write poems in which Medea, the poetic speaker, sings a lament to articulate her concern and give voice to her indignation and suffering to find healing. The word healing derives from an ancient origin, meaning "whole". To heal is to become whole. Medea becomes whole by singing lament as lamentation includes both body and soul. It is a performance which combines the body and soul of the performer. As such, lamentation becomes a modern device to undermine the body-mind dichotomy in the hands of these two New Women poets of the late nineteenth century. As lament has psychological and physical dimensions, it combines the body as a gesture and the soul as an emotional expression to convey deep sadness. As the reader witnesses the suffering and pain of Medea emotionally and visually, a new identity is attributed to her.

In their rewritings, Augusta Webster and Amy Levy describe Medea differently from Euripides's story. The reader is fascinated by Medea's forceful personality, who makes her way in a world dominated by men through sheer force of intelligence and mystical power. The reader's preoccupation with Medea becomes both the subject of the story and the motivator of the poem's plot. In compliance with the different poetic forms of their poems, we as readers see a Medea who is lamenting in both poems. Medea takes the expressive opportunity that lamentation affords to articulate her concern and to give voice to her grief and suffering. Medea is represented as speaking, her words on the page imply the living voice. As the expression of a living character, the poetic text creates the natural signs of feeling, the modulation of the voice, and the actions of the body. The text is created as an oral performance as it tries to evoke a response in the reader as the speaker unconsciously reveals herself. As such, her lament creates sensory experiences in verses. Levy and Webster use the device of lament to manipulate the senses to make the reader create a visionary scene. They mainly use lament, a medium usually practised by women to express sorrow, pity and even love. Drawing their poetic speakers lamenting, they achieve expressions that appeal to several senses of sight, hearing and touch.

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To draw Medea as performing her juridical case by singing a lament, Levy and Webster formulated their poems by the linguistic and contextual rules of lamentation. Firstly, they focused on specific figurative devices to form formulaic and improvised laments. Their poems display stylistic conventions such as "interrogative questions, alliteration, assonance, phonetic structuring, highly metaphorical language, wordplay, parallelism and antithesis" (Saunders 80). These figurative devices are standard conventions used to create laments by ancient poets. Upon close examination of these figurative conventions of laments of ancient texts, nineteenth-century poets Webster and Levy also use these figurative devices. However, a distinct pattern becomes evident in their poems. Apart from the ancient poets, they use them to create a sensory-engaging discourse. This reference to senses to create a sensory experience in verse functions as a way of representation by constructing subjective perceptions rather than describing the world. That means they use and arrange the words and phrases that stimulate the senses to create an imaginative reality. This imaginative reality comes into force because of the sensation that simultaneously turns into effect and thought. Secondly, Levy and Webster create a mood which stands in-between spaces of melancholy, anger and dread, another aspect of the convention of the lament tradition. In their rewritings, Levy and Webster consciously employ the metaphors most used to describe unforgettable grief or interminable mourning in the form of deep melancholy.

By drawing their speaker as a performer who creates a kinesthetic experience, Levy and Webster show that the truth about Medea is discoverable through their poetic performance. The poetic truth that Medea's laments provide involves imagination and intuition. It is a form of truth, which is discernable only in poetry of lament as it is cut off from mundane or practical concerns about Medea's life. Both poets bring the gestures and physical placement of the monologic speakers to the forefront with the help of figurative devices in these poems. Their engaged sensory language heightens senses more realistically than ever an authentic experience can provide. They use and arrange words and phrases that stimulate the senses to create an imaginative reality. This imaginative reality comes into force because of the sensation that simultaneously turns into effect and thought. As a result, they revise Medea's notorious identity, challenge the Victorian fixed female identity, and create numerous roles and identities for the protagonists according to the everyday experiences in her poetry.

Lament of Medea

Webster's "Medea in Athens: A Dramatic Monologue" begins with the news through which Medea learns of her former husband Jason's death. After years she is now the wife of Aegeus, King of Athens, when she takes the news of the death of Jason. Webster's focus on death as the beginning is an excellent beginning to write a lament, as lament is a traditional response to the loss of the loved one. It has been accepted by anthropologists who study living traditions on women's lament that a woman may feel sadness and anger at the loved one for abandoning her, whether the abandonment was intentional or not, upon losing a loved one. In this sense, the death of Jason becomes the engine of Medea's lament in Webster's poem. Although Medea seems ignorant of the news, she really mourns for the death of Jason.

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The opening of the poem and Medea's response to the messenger hint at the complexity of emotions of Medea and confirm the compliance of the monologue with the tradition of lament:

> Dead, is he? Yes, our stranger guest said dead--
> Said it by noonday, when it seemed a thing
> Most natural and so indifferent
> As if the tale ran that a while ago
> There died a man I talked with a chance hour
> When he, by chance, was near me. If I spoke
> "Good news for us but ill news for the dead
> When the gods sweep a villain down to them" (Webster,1999, lines 1-8)

Upon hearing the death of Jason, Medea expresses her confusion and disorientation through a language formulated in interrogative form in the first line; "Dead, is he? (line 1)". The same question is repeated in the third stanza to draw attention to Medea's mourning. In her book *Lamentation and Modernity in Literature, Philosophy, and Culture*, Rebecca Saunders asserts that "lamentation is tentative and interrogative and its tentative and interrogative gestures bear the imprint of trauma" (86). Jason was the man for whom she once sacrificed her life, and he was simultaneously the destroyer of her life. Therefore, her sarcastic response in the form of the question is a weave of deep pain and vengeful self-satisfaction. Addressing the dead and the public with her, the question "Dead, is he?" is the imprint of the trauma she has experienced a long time ago. The news reminds Medea of the traumatic memories and violates her mind's experience of time and the world around her. It is noteworthy that in literature concerning loss and mourning, the lament is the manifestation of trauma. In this sense, the first line refers to the insidious abuse Medea suffered at the hands of others. It implies the beginning of a process of mourning, the stage before the expression of intense emotions of fear, loss, grief and longing.

Moreover, Webster uses the figurative device of antithetical parallelism with the line "Good news for us but ill news for the dead when the gods sweep a villain down to them (line 7)" to draw attention to Medea's inner conflict in the first stanza. In it, two opposite ideas of excellent and ill or bad are put together in a parallel structure. An antithesis expresses the thought in the first part of the line in the second. The illness of the same news in the second part counterbalances the goodness of the death of Jason. While the death of Jason satisfies her feeling of revenge, it worries her because of the memories they experienced during their short but intense life together. The contrast created by the opposite concepts is meant to express her sorrow which takes the form of a lament. Webster's purpose in using this parallelism is to transfer the usual perception of Medea as a heartless, merciless and ruthless woman to a new perspective. These lines create a new perception by introducing the idea of Medea, who comments on the death of Jason as good news, but then semantically shifting the focus in that idea to another angle. The contradiction between the lines forces the reader to question the constructed image of Medea.

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The trauma integrated into Medea's unconsciousness becomes clearer through lines: Can he be dead? It was so strange a world/With him not in it (lines 35-36). The emotional experience of trauma does not allow her to accept the death. The trauma caused by the loss of her former lover results in melancholia. Her depression seems to function as a form of resistance against the necessity of letting go of memories of Jason. In other words, Medea's melancholia is a response to her loss of Jason and the disappointment connected with him. Medea remembers her memories of Jason after experiencing a kind of tranquillity upon hearing the news about the death of Jason. She cannot believe that all these things happened while asserting that she killed Glauke as Glauke, together with Jason, destroyed her life "Grudge him to Death as though he had died mine" (37). Medea also gives reason for her act of murdering Glauke by saying that her behaviour is a kind of response. She kills Glauke because it is Glauke who first destroys her life with Jason. Here Webster gives us the reason behind her depressed mood. The reader identifies that the pain Medea feels and the motive behind her murders is her traumatic experience of being rejected by his former husband. What is essential is that she is not condemning herself for being that crying, deprived and humiliated. It is that assertive and confident attitude her lament foregrounds that undermines her socially constructed identity.

Medea's memories of Jason and her past life turn into a nightmarish vision in the following lines of the poem. Her murder and escape from Corinthia and all events that create a trauma not available to her consciousness, but they impose themselves repeatedly in the nightmares. She imagines that Jason has been lost and embittered beside the rotting remains of his ship. Besides, she imagines herself that "whereby great Aegeus she sits queening it,/be like a joyful mother of two sons" (123). She requires that Jason calls out, "where is my Medea? /Let her bind my head" (135-136). Medea's hallucination and dream are a delayed response to the overwhelming events of her past. Her nightmarish vision cannot be understood in terms of any wish or unconscious meaning but is a purely literal return of the traumatic events against the will of Medea, which find expression in her lament.

> With love, with hate, what care I? hate is love---
> Ever to think and long. Oh, it was well!
> Yea, my new marriage hope has been achieved;
> For he did count me happy, picture me
> Happy with Ægeus; he did dream of me
> As all to Ægeus that I was to him,
> And to him nothing; he did yearn for me
> And know me lost---we two so far apart
> As dead and living, I am envied wife,
> And he alone and childless. Jason, Jason,
> Come back to earth; live, live for my revenge. (Webter, 1999, lines 154-163)

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These lines prove the wound inflicted upon the self of Medea. Her ego is split into two; one part of her self merges with her lost love Jason and the other criticizes and hates him. Her depressive and self-destructive tendency is the result of an intensification of ambivalence between love and hate as regards Jason.

Medea's monologue evolves into a final admission that she once loved him – at which point, she is confronted by Jason's ghost. Until she sees the ghost of Jason, her lamentation is a kind of invocation and calling out; it seeks a witness. Upon meeting Jason's ghost, Webster's protagonist Medea addresses him directly. Medea's lamentation turns into a call to see and consider the truth seething beneath her anger. Together with the direct addressing, the first-person narrative of the lament creates an eye-witness impression and gives immediacy, persuasiveness and realism to her discourse.

> What, thou!
> Have the dead no room, or do they drive thee forth,
> Loathing thee near them? Dost thou threaten me?
> Why, so I saw thee last, and was not scared:
> Think not to scare me now; I am no babe
> To shiver at an unavailing shade.
> Go, go, thou canst not curse me, none will hear:
> The gods remember justice. Wrongs! thy wrongs!
> Thy vengeance, ghost! What hast thou to avenge
> As I have? Lo, thy meek-eyed Glaucé died,
> And thy king relative Creon died: but I,
> I live what thou hast made me.
> Oh smooth adder (Webster, 1999, lines 185-199)

As lamentation is a traditional response to the feeling of loss, it evokes a mourning mood. Three moods play a central role in the lamentations: melancholy, anger and dread. Any speaker who sings lament reflects a psychology that combines the feelings of melancholia, anger, and anxiety. Levy and Webster both consciously employ the metaphors most used to describe melancholy which is the background of the mood of lament. Melancholy is the reflection of Medea's unforgettable grief and interminable mourning in both poems. Her language of lamentation is also comprised of anger. The grief turns into anger mostly and is seen in the forefront. Medea curses and blames the dead in deep grief. The loss or the feeling of loss also produces a sense of fear. Together with poetic rhythms, the melancholic, angry and dreadful moods that characterise the lamentation function to invoke a kinesthetic experience which creates a physical sensation in the reader to make them sense the performer's bodily pain and deep feelings. These moods spread from performers to the readers, turning the readers into witnesses. By arousing the speaker's mood in the reader, the lament of Medea becomes a way of passing the sorrow on to her audience. This is how the mood of lamentation creates a kinesthetic aesthetic experience in the reader. Whenever the audience and the reader react to something unfortunate, it is not just their reaction but the reaction of anyone else who hears that song and empathises with it and then will sing it and apply it to their sorrows. As such,

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the song of lament seems interchangeable and transferable. This transference of the inherent sorrow to anyone who listens to the lament is the germ of the whole mood of lament.

Like Webster, Amy Levy starts her poem by giving voice to an intense feeling of loneliness and sadness of Medea, who stands in front of her home in Corinthia in these opening lines of her poem.

> Media:
> TODAY, today,
> I know not why it is,
> I do bethink me of my Colchian home.
> Today, that I am lone and weary and sad,
> I fain would call back days of pride and hope ;
> Of pride in strength, when strength was all unprov'd,
> Of hope too high, too sweet, to be confined
> In limits of conception. (Levy, 2004, 36)

The juxtaposition of opposite feelings through the words "weary"-"strength", "sad"-hope", and "lone-pride" force the reader to draw a connection between Euripides' Medea and Levy's Medea (36). When the reader tends to link the juxtaposed images to visualise the heroine, they are drawn to Medea because the poem provides a perspective which is different from Euripides' Medea. As the poem progresses, Medea utters renunciations that give voice to the events and evoke more intense emotions in the reader.

> By which their hearts are melted into love,
> I'd strive to learn it. I am very meek.
> They think me proud, but I am very meek,
> Ready to do their bidding. Hear me, friends!
> Friends, I am very hungry, give me love !'
> This all I ask! is it so hard to give?
> You stand and front me with your hostile eyes;
> You only give me hatred? Yet I know-Ye are not all unloving.
> Oft I see The men and women walking in the ways,
> Hand within hand, and tender bated breath,
> On summer evenings when the sky is fair.
> O men and women, are ye then so hard?
> Will ye not give a little of your love
> To me that am so hungry? (Levy, 2004, lines 38)

These lines suggest that Medea makes others suffer because of the ignorance she experienced. When she asserts that "they think me proud, but I am meek" and "you stand and front me with your hostile eyes", the reader recognises that she suffers more than she makes others suffer. As such, the monologue turns into the voice of the figure who experiences physical suffering and provides a deep insight into her story. Thus, the reader's engagement with Medea increases, forcing them to care intensely about the protagonist's sufferings and psychological

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pain. Levy uses figurative devices to reflect the pain of Medea she is suffering. As in Webster's first stanza, the reader is presented with many interrogative forms to reflect the intensity and complexity of Medea's feelings. The unrhymed lines also contribute to a feeling of disorder and unbalance that Levy tries to reflect the feelings of Medea. The constant repetition of two words, "love " and " give ", and the repetition of the line "I am very meek" in this opening stanza helps again foreground the notion that Medea suffers more than the people who make them suffer. These figurative devices in the lines also suggest that there is no harmony and order in Medea's life and her feelings. This internal battle is the driving force behind her lament.

In her poem "Medea: A Fragment in Dramatic Form", Levy creates a gloomy atmosphere using images of darkness and heaviness throughout the poem. Beginning from the poem's opening lines, the melancholic tone of her soliloquy becomes evident. She defines herself through the lines "I am alone and weary and sad" (36) and her environment as "all the place is drear and dark with hate?" (37). Throughout the poem, she asserts, "Have wrestled in the darkness and wept my tears" (43). The words dark, night and weary are repeated throughout the poem. A gloomy and grim atmosphere of haziness dominates two scenes of the poem and the sentences of Medea. Besides the imagery, Medea uses adjectives which signify her lack of pride, and dignity and how she sees herself as a victim becomes another way of Levy's construction of the speech of melancholia.

> Lo, I who strove for strength have grown more weak
> Than is the weakest. I have poured the sap
> Of all my being, my life's very life,
> Before a thankless godhead ; and am grown
> No woman, but a monster. What avail
> Charms, spells and potions, all my hard−won arts,
> My mystic workings, seeing they cannot win
> One little common spark of human love ? (Levy, 2004, 43-33)

As these lines illustrate, Medea sees herself as a weak monster devoid of any charmful beauty and someone unworthy of love. This description functions as an invocation for understanding. She cannot tolerate the loss of dignity and power because of the environment and society in which she lives. Greek social conventions and society's gaze cannot understand and accept Medea. Medea's failure to maintain adequate, attuned, emotional contact with the environment creates a melancholic mood. Her melancholy is characterised by her calling out to find an addressable other.

According to Freud, the mood of melancholy conceals aggression, anxiety and fear. In Freud's account, Medea's lowered self-respect, which reflects the loss of her being, culminates with anger. For Freud, the melancholic "represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any effort and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and chastised" (12). The opening of Levy's Medea draws a Medea who internalises society's discourse of her, which sees her as an object of fear, a passive, weak monstrous woman. Until the end of the poem, Medea uses her melancholic language as an invocation for help to regain her power and identity. Upon the loss of her dignity, the most valuable part of her, her lamentation

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takes place. Levy's kinesthetic language invokes her melancholy which is supported by anger, fear and disorder in the reader. After taking the reader to her side, her lamentation deconstructs the melancholic mood by disrupting the social order of Corinthian society.

Webster's poem invokes the mood of melancholy, providing a description of Medea's inner conflict. Medea defines a world which is poor and empty, just like herself. Medea's loss of her lover Jason is transformed into a sense of the loss of the ego, which causes a conflict within herself. On the one hand, she continues to love Jason in her inner world at the cost of blaming herself because of her feelings. On the other hand, her hate is aimed at Jason in the external world. She is devoured by the love for Jason- a love which can not be given up and then the hate comes into play on both herself and Jason. Her self-criticism through the lines "What, thou, this whimpering fool, Medea! This kind meek coward! Sick for pity, art thou? (lines 137-138) is a way of attacking Jason and exacting revenge on him. Her split is the result of the loss of her love object. In other words, the idea of splitting proves that Medea suffers from melancholia. The splitting manifests itself through the fact that one part of her ego denies the reality of the loss while the other part can accept it, and one part of the ego loves Jason, and the other part hates him.

Conclusion

The literary style of lamentation plays a prominent role in the poetic works of nineteenth-century authors, Amy Levy and Augusta Webster. The lamentation form, a literary style that intertwines verbal and visual art, combines both composition and performance as integral aspects of its process. As such, this literary form creates a distinctive connection between the written word and visual depiction, enabling the reader to experience the written work through an auditory and visual lens. Through this style, readers can perceive the textual content on the page through their ear and form a vivid mental image of the character being described, leading to a deeper and more immersive reading experience.

This investigation delves into Amy Levy's "Medea: A Dramatic Monologue" and Augusta Webster's "Medea in Athens," with a particular focus on their deconstruction of the traditional male-dominated portrayal of the ancient character of Medea. Using lamentation, the authors' poetic renditions position Medea as a speaker in dramatic and emotional situations, depicting her as a multifaceted and complex character. The oral and performative nature of lamentation serves to immerse the reader in the physicality and emotions of the speaker, making her words all the more persuasive, despite the potential for negative perceptions of her character. Through their poetic adaptations, Levy and Webster challenge the traditional portrayal of Medea, providing alternative perspectives and interpretations of this mythological figure.

This research presents a detailed examination of the poetic works of Levy and Webster, demonstrating the techniques they employ to convey a distinct perspective on the fallacy of the ancient character of Medea. By utilizing the literary device of lament, the authors evoke a sense of mourning and sorrow in the reader. The lamentations of Medea in their poetry work to reframe her identity, destabilizing the patriarchal social order that had

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previously dominated the narrative. Through this approach, Levy and Webster present a new interpretation of the ancient heroine, challenging the preconceived notions and patriarchal norms that had previously shaped her portrayal in literature.

Levy and Webster's poetic employment of the lament form imbues Medea's discourse with an emotional intensity through two distinct features. Firstly, the figurative devices utilized within the lament are specifically designed to elicit a kinesthetic experience for the reader. The language employed in the lament includes the use of interrogative forms, alliterations, and repetitive language, which serve to foreground the gestures and movements of bodies, allowing for recognition and expression of the speaker's inner world. The foregrounding of these bodily and gestural expressions reveals what has remained hidden in the history of Medea, lending an added depth to her character portrayal. Secondly, the language of lamentation grants power to the speaker by engaging a range of melancholic, angry, and dreadful moods. Amy Levy's use of metaphors conveys a sense of darkness and haziness, while her depiction of the setting in "Medea: A Dramatic Monologue" reflects a life of monotony and gloom. On the other hand, Augusta Webster situates her moment of lamentation in the threshold place between memory and illusion, serving to intensify the melancholic mood in "Medea in Athens." Overall, the use of lamentation in the poems of Levy and Webster bestows a public presence and social power on Medea, traditionally reserved for male characters in ancient Greek literature. The act of lamenting allows Medea to redefine herself, presenting a new identity to the reader, and defying previously established patriarchal norms.

In summary, this research establishes the constructive and deconstructive role of language in shaping identity. It highlights the fundamental relationship between language and the construction of identity, specifically in how language can be used to redefine previously established identities. Through the linguistic transformations undertaken by Amy Levy and Augusta Webster in their reimagining of the character of Medea, it is possible to assert that Medea, as a literary figure, underwent a process of identity formation. The study demonstrates how readers' responses to language patterns and rhythms in Medea's lament contribute to a greater appreciation of the character's inner struggles, fostering empathy and a potential for a shift in perspective. The transformative effect of this process lies in the ability of the reader to project themselves onto the character of Medea, which can ultimately alter their perceptions of her.

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement:

This is a research article, containing original data, and it has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The author followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants and the privacy of the participants was protected.

Araştırma ve yayın etiği beyanı: Bu makale tamamıyla özgün bir araştırma olarak planlanmış, yürütülmüş ve sonuçları ile raporlaştırıldıktan sonra ilgili dergiye gönderilmiştir. Araştırma herhangi bir sempozyum, kongre vb. sunulmamış ya da başka bir dergiye değerlendirilmek üzere gönderilmemiştir.

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