



Duplicate Image of Electra in French Theater of the 20th Century*

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AS a literary theme, the duality of the personality can answer philosophical and psychological questions. Thus, the mythical figures of Greek antiquity play important roles. Full of contradictory feelings, hatred, revenge, crime and punishment, the duality of their personality is a starting point to portray the dual vision of human nature. These figures arouse imagination and arise philosophical or political reflections in connection with the serious problems of the time. Among these figures, women capture imagination and contain particular symbolic values. Real, legendary or mythical, these luminous figures of women expand admiration and hatred, not because of their sexuality, but for the power and the skill of their minds. In this regard, according to M. Morel, these dual figures correspond to two opposite personalities each having their alternating personality and multiple personality disorders. The study of the ancient myth female figures in twentieth-century French theater and the analysis of their dual character reveals not only the reasons for the modern playwrights' tendency toward the ancient myth, but also helps us to unveil the hidden characters of the human being discovered experimentally by the archaic human being.

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One of the most representative figures of the ancient myth is Electra who rebels while heading towards his tragic end. From ancient times to the present day, playwrights and writers are attracted by the image of this woman. From Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides to French playwrights of the twentieth century, the dual personality of Electra was so fascinating that the ancient gesture of Electra was reviewed several times by French playwrights such as Jean Giraudoux (1937), Anouilh (1942), Jean-Paul Sartre (1943) and Marguerite Yourcenar (1943).

The personality of this figure of antiquity fluctuates between logic and madness, between evil and good, between divine and satanic spirit. She does not remain passive and submissive in the face of the injustice that has been imposed to her, rather vengeance must be served against the agent of wrongdoing by the superiority of her intellectual power. This mythical woman cries, screams silently and shouts inside her. And when she is not heard, she reacts by murder and revenge.

In this article, we analyzed the double image of Electra on the three social, psychological and philosophical levels. On the social level, we studied the restrictions of Electra, this mythical woman, who does not look like the majority of women of her time and who goes beyond the red line set by the society thus leaving her inner prison. We found that she is a girl full of love and hatred that cause a contradiction which push her towards a bipolar nature and a psychological complexity. Thus, all these attitudes could be explained by a kind of revolt.

The treatment of the role of Electra by each of the playwrights of that time gives us a glimpse of the place that we will give to or recognize women in this new society. Despite the loneliness, Electra refuses to get married. This slave girl shows an eternal hatred towards her mother to whom she blames her crime and adultery.

All her feelings nourish the dual notion, and this is how the dual image of Electra has fascinated playwrights. So, many literary and artistic works have appreciated such a great heroine of the Greek scene that passed through the centuries. The image of this mythical woman is not very clear because of her double face. She oscillates between evil and good, hope and defeat, and love and hatred. She remains the prisoner of her criminal and affective impulse and she can never escape either from her origins or sex. Therefore, Electra's problem is twofold: she is full of love towards her father and hatred towards her mother. Thus, her love toward her brother is exclusively pathetic. Electra is at the origin of the Electra complex and she shows a disproportionate love for her father whom she venerates and, on the contrary, she hates her mother. She is not an obedient and passive woman who laments her fate, but a woman full of revenge who confuses vengeance with justice that will make her look like her mother. This mythical figure brings down the masks by her special attitudes.

It is important to mention that myths still remain in our unconscious, so for the woman, the challenge is to rediscover her mythical strengths. Thus, Electra, as a mythical woman is in the unconscious of women with all her miseries and magnitudes. From this incarnation, we can conclude that a mythical woman, like Electra, is created by human being to represent their unconscious.