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Trabajo Fin de Grado

**EURIPIDES' RUPTURE IN
TRADITIONAL GREEK
TRAGEDIES: AN
INFLUENTIAL
PLAYWRIGHT IN
SHAKESPEARE.**

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1. ABSTRACT

This essay deals with the influence of Greek theatre in the renaissance's tragedy. Concretely, it is focus on William Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Firstly, there are some researches where Euripides is distinguish from Greek authors as Aeschylus and Sophocles, raising some plays of Euripides like Electra, Orestes and Heracles. Moreover, this essay takes into consideration the repression that those plays had to

philosophers and the audience in that time. On the one hand, joined features of Euripides and Shakespeare are analyzed in a tragedy written by the second one: Macbeth. In addition, a comparison will be made among the subversive aspect in Shakespeare and the rupture of Euripides, representing both issues a parallel development on their plays, in the sense they were pioneers of their age. This work finishes with a brief conclusion, accompanied by the bibliography where all the sources and quotes are contrasted.

The importance of the essay resides on how Shakespeare can be so joined to Euripides' plays in Macbeth if he did not know so much about the Greek tradition, because coincidences are so obvious among their plays. That means Shakespeare could have studied Greek author deeper than it is known nowadays. Mainly, *the English bard* could read some of the Euripides' plays, who broke with the general conventions of the Greek tradition. The same Shakespeare did in the English renaissance.

Key words: Greek tragedy, tradition, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Orestes, Electra, murder, Shakespeare, Macbeth, the chain of blood-lettings, madness, audience manipulation strategies, Greek authors.

2. AESCHYLUS AND SOPHOCLES: TRADITIONAL GREEK THEATRE.

Before Euripides, so important playwrights as Aeschylus and Sophocles were the main figures of the traditional Greek theatre. The case of Sophocles is more complex because some features of his plays are used in Shakespeare's also, but it is clear that he followed the general convention of the age the same way as Aeschylus.

a. Greek structure of a play: Features and innovations.

The Greek theatre presents several characteristics which could be gathered after by Shakespeare in some plays.

As a point of departure, it has to be taken into consideration the actions realized by the performers in the Greek theatre, so the relevance of this first comparison resides on gestures and spontaneity of the actors in the representation of a play. It is important to remark that, at both ages, exemplification was distinct from the one people know nowadays. Exaggerate actions or describe an event only using words moves us to a kind of theatre where an audience can notice the artificial meaning of the performing issues taking place. In other words, there is no reality in acting, so the characters are only a product of the author's voice. The relevance of the audience is reflected on imagination. Through the description of an event, they imagine

what is happening out of the scene. This is clearly seen on Oedipus Rex, by Sophocles, when Oedipus is informed of his wife's suicide after she knows that his current husband is, really, his son: "Sec.Mess. Quickest for me to speak, and thee to learn; Our sacred queen Jocasta,--- she is dead." (pg.47).¹ This death is not realized in front of the audience because it is described by a performer and imagined later by his crowd.

As Oliver Taplin, in his book Greek in Action, comments: "in Greek tragedy, as in Shakespeare, the stage-directions are incorporated in the words of the play (with the notable Shakespearean exception of dumb-show). People say what they are doing, or they are described doing it, or in one way or another, the context makes it clear what is happening." (pg.12)². Only the exception of the dumb-shows appreciates a little innovation in respect to the Greek performances. They are gestures which do not need any monologue or dialogue among characters. It can be compared with mimic actions. In the Greek theatre, there are some small events: the entrances and exits of the characters in the stage, the actions of sitting down, running, kneeling, etc. They are used on an aggravating way, which is part of this artificiality. In the case of Oedipus Rex, there is not almost any gesture and most of the acts are described by a performer. Stage-directions can be also non-human as sunrises. They are even more difficult to do, but so simple to describe. The use of these in Shakespearean plays occurs in an emphatic way because there are actions not only described using words, but performed with this exaggeration, typical also in Greek theatre. Events, as killing someone in the stage, are not in a secondary place at that age. It is Euripides the only ancient Greek playwright that uses more stage-directions, as it is seen in Orestes when the main character has a knife on the Hermione's throat and they are in front of the audience. It is an innovation that it is not related to the traditional development of the plot.

The chorus is a fundamental piece in the play's development. Its relevance deals with gods and their perception of the world, alternating on its discourse divine justice and the supremacy of them, which are above of mankind. In The Oresteia, by Aeschylus, Zeus is represented as the god of judgment who controls the acts made by the performers. Apollo and Dionysus are characters who show their judgments to the audience and the rest of people who participate in the play. Their orders change the destiny of every hero, the same as his or her friends, through thick and thin. That is the reason why chorus is an extension of the divine decisions which make the audience participant about god's power. So these kinds of plays

¹ Quotes marked with this number come from: E. H. Plumptre, *Oedipus the king* [in, *The Tragedies Of Sophocles. A New Translation, With A Biographical Essay, And An Appendix Of Rhymed Choral Odes And Lyrical Dialogues*. By E. H. Plumptre]. London, 1821-1891 (orig.). Second Edition, Revised.

² These references and quotes, which are marked by this number, comes from Taplin, O., *Greek Tragedy in Action* (California 1978), pg. 16.

have a moral subject also. There is a simplistically moral use of the myth. As an example, in the Oresteia, by Aeschylus, the chorus becomes into a central part of the plot's development when Aegisthus died and the chorus' voice appears: "When Aegisthus' death-cry is heard at Cho, / the chorus leader says: / Listen! What has been settled for the house? / Let's stand clear of this business till it's done, / to appear innocent of all this trouble. / For now the final battle has been reached. (869-74)" (pg 44).²

The chorus is the one that announces the future Orestes' revenge against Clytemnestra, catching the audience because they are anticipating the future events, equally as the gods do when they controls the destiny of all characters. The chorus, in Shakespeare, is replaced by the soliloquies, which appears in Shakespeare's Hamlet and Macbeth. Soliloquies are defined as sharing the actor's thought with the audience, in many occasions anticipating future events. That is the case of the most famous sentence of Hamlet: "To be, or not to be, I there's the point, / To Die, to sleepe, is that all?"(pg. 216).³ He is anticipating his own death. Here is the comparison between both strategies, which are simply matters to catch crowd's attention.

Dionysus, Apollo and Zeus are the most relevant gods of the ancient traditional Greek tragedy. These divinities act to manipulate the hero as they please. In the play of Aeschylus, The seven against Thebes, Eteocles describe the opponent of Typho-warrior Hyppomedon as a messenger of Zeus, protected by him, who will cause the vanquished of Hyppomedon. With this prophecy, he anticipates the defeat of mankind against the wishes of the gods. The following quote represents also the divine justice because the protagonist falls from grace and nothing good occurs to the performers when they do not remain gods' orders: "for man with man they shall engage as foes / and on their shields shall carry enemy Gods. / The one has Typho breathing fire, the other, / Hyperbius, has father Zeus in station / sitting upon his shield, and in his hand / a burning bolt. / No one has yet seen Zeus defeated anywhere. / such on each side are the favors of the Gods; / we are on the winning side, they with the vanquished / if Zeus than Typho mightier prove in battle." (pg 26)⁴

The concept of humanism, coined in the Renaissance, makes those gods almost disappear in Shakespearian plays because they are not concerned with the thoughts of that age. However, Shakespeare uses those pagan gods, but in a decorative way, because he writes some plays about the Greek time. Those are the cases of A Midsummer's Night Dream,

³ Quote marked with this number comes from: Shakespeare, W.: *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1866). Cambridge 1997-2006. Literature Online Drama.

⁴ These references and later quotes come from: Faas, E. *Tragedy and After: Euripides, Shakespeare, Goethe*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984. Montreal.

Troilus and Cressida or the famous poem Venus and Adonis. They are not images of morality. On the contrary, they are symbols of art and nature.

b. Aeschylus and The Oresteia

He was born in the 520s and produced his first set of plays in 499 B.C. In his 43 years of productivity he created more than 60 tragedies. Of these we have just 7, the 7 selected for pedagogic purposes in late antiquity (and the vagaries of transmission almost lost us a couple of those). All come from the second half of Aeschylus' output, and the earliest is his Persians of 472 B.C.; so we have no early Aeschylus and no early Greek tragedy. In 472 B.C. it is already a highly developed and accomplished art-form. Aeschylus may not have the deftness and facility of Sophocles or Euripides, but he has a richness of expression, especially of imagery, a sure sense of theatre, and a depth of insight into human hopes and fears, which make him for some (including myself) the greatest of the Greek tragedians.²

The Oresteia is a trilogy composed by three books: The Libations Bearers, Agamemnon and The Eumenides. They represent a triadic sequence, based on a relation of murders where vengeance is the main theme. There is a thesis, defined as the first conflict between characters; an antithesis, which deals with revenge; and, finally, a synthesis, referred as a reconciliation that avoid future murders (normally, peace comes with the entrance of a god). These homicides are among members of a family, in this case, Agamemnon's family. They are conditioned by some level of importance in the person who is death. That is, if the king died, it would care more than his wife's death by the hand of Orestes (his son). The crime committed by Orestes against his mother Clytemnestra is forgiven by Apollo while the consequence of killing her husband is the revenge of his own son. In Aeschylus plays, there is a conflict in applying justice. So, it is appreciated a different perception about what murder is right or wrong. In his plays, there are commentaries about human behavior, performers' destiny (influenced by the gods) and justice. The author guides our attention and causes some future questions or expectation. The chorus is the main common thread. An example within The Eumenides is the chorus realized by the Furies: "Farewell, farewell. / High destiny shall be yours / by right. Farewell, citizens / seated near the throne of Zeus, / beloved by the maiden he loves, / civilized as years go by, / sheltered under Athene's wings, / grand even in her father's sight. (996-1002) (pg 32)"⁴

Aeschylus tries to get the audience back on track towards an end, which is the reconciliation of gods (Apollo in The Eumenides) and heroes (Orestes in The Eumenides). For him, deaths and suffering only have an answer: learning. In the case of The Oresteia, Agamemnon is seems as the blind instrument of justice, but his sacrifice makes Orestes learnt

that he cannot trust his mother and makes Clytemnestra learn also that Orestes has to be executed. However, she refuses to do that and finally Orestes gets exiled. So that, Clytemnestra is analyzed as a half blind instrument of justice because she learnt too late that she cannot trust his son and daughter. Finally, Orestes is the conscious instrument of justice because he achieves the contact with the divine will. Not only characters learn, but also the audience learns that they cannot commit these crimes because suffering will be part of this whole life. The image of Apollo is fundamental in this play, inferred in the salvation of Orestes. He suffers a lot, but at the end he is forgiven and obtains Menelaus' daughter as wife, which means that Orestes will be king of Esparta after all his suffering.

Revenge appears even in Shakespeare's Hamlet. It is the main topic as in Aeschylus' Oresteia, but the clearest distinction between both is the consequence of killing by the English author, which is your own death. There is not a god who can save your life, so you are condemned to madness and, finally, suicide. No mercy is given to the characters that kill their relatives, even if the protagonist is a murderer. His vengeance only causes death. In The Eumenides, Orestes tries to escape for saving his life, but in Hamlet, the main character only has the purpose of murdering his uncle though there is a moment in which he thinks about leaving Denmark in the same part he thinks about commit suicide. Finally, Hamlet decides to stay on his castle. He obeys his father requirement. The figure of the father (a phantom) could be a symbolic comparison to the god who orders a murderer in Aeschylus' The Oresteia. Both plays share the notion of an influential person that only fulfills what others want. (Hamlet: Prince of Denmark, pg. 36)³

Sophocles and Euripides also writes about the same theme and it is more important their influence in Shakespeare than Aeschylus' work. Towards the rupture of Euripides, this influence is increasing in following plays.

c. Sophocles: Oedipus Rex.

Sophocles (c. 496 - c. 406 BCE) was one of the most famous and celebrated writers of tragedy plays in ancient Greece and his surviving works, written throughout the 5th century BCE, include such classics as Oedipus the King, Antigone, and Women of Trachis. As with other Greek plays, Sophocles' work is not only a record of Greek theatre but also provides an invaluable insight into many of the political and social aspects of ancient Greece, from family relations to details of Greek religion. In addition, Sophocles' innovations in theatre

presentation would provide the foundations for all future western dramatic performance, and his plays continue to be performed today in theatres around the world.⁵

In *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles gives importance to the facts. That is to say, his characters are involved in an investigation process to solve a conflict. Oedipus looks for the murderer of Layo and, as the events are produced, he begins to suspect that the resolution will not be beneficial for him. There is a dialogue among Creonte, Jocasta and Oedipus where the last one changes his mind about his own research: "*Oedip.[Trembling.] Ah, as but now I heard thee speak, my queen, / Strange whirl of soul, and rush of thoughts o'ercome me.* (pg 29)"¹

This also occurs in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, who guesses his suicide.

Sophocles centres his plot into the murder of the previous king. At the same time, the audience perceives that they are participants also in the research process, because they solve the mystery in a parallel way Oedipus looks for the killer during the play. The audience asks and answers their own question until the play finishes. This is called *prolepsis*: the author's skill to make his characters foresee future actions that the crowd cannot see on the stage, but they inferred on their minds. Both Sophocles and Aeschylus, the action is described by performers and it is not realized in front of the spectators. They maintain the Greek tradition, but it is Sophocles which is on an intermediate side between this absolute tradition, seen in Aeschylus, and the progressive rupture in Euripides' plays. However, his work opts for traditional issues.

Even though, Sophocles could show how to pave the way for Euripides because there is not only a moral importance in his play, but a surprised feeling arises in the audience with the figure of Oedipus as murderer of his father. He creates this expectation at the beginning with a prophecy, but, along the play, Sophocles tries to avoid that thought using a research made by the own Oedipus to certify, at the end, that he is the actual murderer. Sophocles plays with the audience the same way Shakespeare does: making expectations. An example is the refused behaviour of Oedipus about the prediction which is done by Tiresias (an oracle): "Teir. I say thou art the murderer whom thou seek'st / Oedip. Thou shalt not twice revile, and go unharmed." (pg. 17)¹

This dialogue makes the audience doubt about who is telling the truth. Oedipus accuses his friend Creonte of being the instigator of such a lie. The same occurs with Macbeth

⁵ The Sophocles' biography comes from Mark Cartwright, "Sophocles," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, last modified December 10, 2015, <http://www.ancient.eu/Sophocles/>.

and Banquo because the first accuses the other of trying to kill him. Friendship turns into a conflict between performers as it is referred in both quotes: “(Oedipus The king, pg.23)”¹

Oedipus does not trust his friend and shows doubts in the audience again, because he had to be sure that is right when Oedipus accused Creonte. Otherwise, he, as Macbeth, will be punished for that behaviour, which is accusing someone without any proof. So, there is an importance in morality issues at the end when Oedipus and Macbeth know that they were wrong. This is a traditional feature of Greek tragedies. Sophocles creates two opposite factions: those who think that Oedipus is the murderer and those who believe that Creonte kills Layo. Through Oedipus Rex, it is the man (Oedipus) the one who tries to solve the mystery.

With this dilemma, the image of the god wastes relevance. Oedipus applies his own justice and thoughts to find out the killer of Layo. That is the reason why there is an attempt of rupture, done by Sophocles, with the tradition, so important in Aeschylus’ plays. Nevertheless, gods are present in Oedipus Rex because Apollo orders the protagonist to rip their eyes out as a punishment of his crimes and finally he orders to exile Oedipus from Thebes: “Apollo, oh, my friends, the God, Apollo, / Who worketh out all these, my bitter woes; / Yet no man's hand but mine has smitten them. / What need for me to see, / When nothing's left that's sweet to look upon? (pg. 50)”¹

In the final lines, the chorus speaks claiming that his suffering is a way of learning for the man. The chorus urges the audience to avoid in their real lives the acts committed by Oedipus. It is again appreciated a moral use of the play: Ye men of Thebes, behold this Oedipus, / Who knew the famous riddle and was noblest, / Whose fortune who saw not with envious glances? / And, lo! in what a sea of direst trouble / He now is plunged. / From hence the lesson learn ye, / To reckon no man happy till ye witness / The closing day; until he pass the border / Which severs life from death, unscathed by sorrow.¹

As innovations, Sophocles uses the beginning of the play *in media res*. Before, this kind of start had a character that tells all the precedent story of the hero to give the spectator a notion of the events which would be represented after. In contrast, Sophocles does not tell anything about Oedipus’ life at the beginning. It is during the play when the audience knows more about the origin of the protagonist. Some features of Sophocles’ plays are reflected on the Shakespearian comedies of The Merchant of Venice and Measure for Measure. From the beginning, there is an anticipation of future events, as it occurs when Antonio asks himself about his trades. He guesses that something bad is going to happen: “In sooth I know why I am so

sad. / It wearies me, you say it wearies you (pg. 1)”⁶. About the second comedy there is a research during the whole play because twins do not know their kinship, but the crowd knows it.

3. EURIPIDES: RUPTURE OF THE CONVENTIONAL FEATURES

In this third point, tradition is broken in great quantity with the changes of Euripides in the Greek tragedies. Some aspects of his literature will be analyzed through plays as Electra, Orestes and, finally, Heracles. This part is a specific description of the author and his comparison with the classical theatre of that age. The influence of Euripides in Shakespeare is presented along this analysis, but it is not the main topic here. It will be more relevant in the next chapter “Renaissance’s theatre: Shakespeare”.

a. Context of the author

During the fifth century BC, theatre was no more consider as a key element in the political material and in democratic devises of the country. It looks like a unique genre which had its own purposes. Playwrights claimed the authority with the same emphasis they tried to catch the attention of the crowd. This subject made them earning a reputation. It is a matter so close to the intention that Shakespeare had when he began to write. He looks for fortune and fame at times of Elizabethan theatre.

Every innovation was important in the literary improvement of the Greek playwrights, taking each of them a distinct road, which were a mark of their literary style. In the case of Euripides, he tries to manipulate the audience through strategies which were not appreciated in any playwright before. The use of the myth is limited to a secondary position in the tragedy in order that there are a new variety of universal themes which can cause in the audience a dispute so debated in their age, as were the genre-criticism. According to Aristotle, who follows the classical conventions of the tragedy, this needs good resolution despites the fact that suffering is the main topic of it. Along this time, anonymous critics speculated about these happy endings, making scepticism his main weapon because all these suffering cannot be interrupted and eliminated from the scene so easy with the coming of a powerful god. Another innovation is that morality is not the only topic that matters in the play. It can appear or not, but if it is presented in the play is not an important part of it. There are new possibilities of expressing ideas and tragedies are conducted to an aesthetic interpretation for

⁶ Quotes marked with this number are referred to Shakespeare, W. *The Merchant of Venice*. Oxford University press, 2010 (Reprinted ed.)

the spectators. However, joined with this, there is a repression among philosophers and defenders of metaphysical and ethical theorems.

The chorus also changes in its level of importance because in the fifth century is more a musical element than a symbol of divine justice. It appears often out of the play, maintaining no relation with the plot. Some characters even realize the work of the chorus. It presents a relationship between the audience and their own acts of cult using dances. Mastronarde D. refers to this in his book, "The art of Euripides: Dramatic technique and social context (pg. 90)", as a power of "vertically" and "horizontally". Dealing with "vertically", there is a reference to the connexion of the chorus with the supernatural power of the gods. "Horizontally" represents a relationship between the action of the chorus and the exaggeration of the events of the play, which have not this notion of musicality and harmony. Songs of cult about a god functions only like a praise during these libations. However, the chorus gets aside of the real plot of the play. It takes a sit next to the spectator in the sense that it does not have an important role in the events realized by the performers: "let us distance ourselves from the deed that is being completed, so that we may seem to be without responsibility for these evils. (pg.100)"⁷

There is a heterogeneous mixture in the level of style that broke with the putative classical form of the play, where the plot is more uniform. It is also taken into consideration the tragic hero in the play, in the sense that it is less common to find the traditional type of end represented by Aeschylus, for example. Reconciliation among characters is not the usual way of finishing a play, but the criticism obliges authors to modify it into the classical end. In the case of Euripides, he had to alter his words to be in concordance with the metaphysical sector of the audience who saw his play in the way that these sentence, "Zeus, whoever Zeus maybe for I know not save by hearsay. (pg. 42)"⁴, was changed by this one "Zeus, as truth itself has said (pg. 42)"⁴. Here it is seen the modifications that an author had to do to avoid protest. Socrates used to read Euripides' plays before they were alter and even in a representation of Electra, he left the theatre after he listen to a changed sentence. It cannot be certain about all the innovation made by Euripides because of these modifications and the loss of many of his plays. Only a global perception may be done, without going deeper to specific alterations. He manipulates the plot though it is present this traditional end. However, he does not try a complete rupture with tradition because his main subject is to rise as a known playwright.

⁷ Quotes marked with this number are referred to Mastronarde D. The art of Euripides: Dramatic technique and Social context. Cambridge University Press. Ed. 2010.

Euripides looked for new mediums that varied the way of interpreting theatre, the same way he tries to increase the recruitment of the Greek audience.

To conclude with the context, there is a series of anticlimactic strategies that arouses certain expectations in order to frustrate them. Some hints are given to the audience at first, but along the play they become a “conglomerate failure” (pg.45).² *Ion* shows the distance of the gods, Hermes in this case, towards the mankind conflict. He is hidden behind some bush and it is a mere spectator of the human problems.

b. A subversive issue: Plato and the sophists.

Euripides (c. 484-407 BCE) was one of the greatest authors of Greek tragedy. In 5th century BCE Athens his classic works such as *Medea*, cemented his reputation for clever dialogues, fine choral lyrics and a gritty realism in both his text and stage presentations. The writer of some 90 plays, Euripides was also famous for posing awkward questions, unsettling his audience with a thought-provoking treatment of common themes, and spicing up the story with thoroughly immoral characters. This is probably why Euripides won only a few festival competitions compared to his great tragedian rivals Aeschylus and Sophocles, although he was tremendously popular with the public. The popularity of Euripides' work has never diminished and his plays continue to be performed in theatres today.⁸

Despite the fact that he was an original author and disposed to stir up the Greek tragedy as it was known at that age, Euripides was involved in many conflicts with philosophical references in Greece. They did not see the work of Euripides a beneficial advance in tragedies, which were distinct from the tradition. Most of them thought about the possibility that these plays try to manipulate the minds of the audience not only in a moral way, but in the sense that they put in doubt which were considered right before in these plays, and even in real life. The fact of being a playwright who did not follow the laws and patterns of representation of this age was considered as a challenge towards philosophers, who saw it as a threat to the values which guided people over time. Authors that encouraged an incorrect perception of the world were seen as offensive playwrights. In this case, there is a difference between the metaphysics and the sophists. On the one hand, Plato is the defendant of gods, because he believes in their real existence, and traditions. On the other hand, Socrates is an icon of the humanist beliefs the same way as he thought that the essence of a play resided on art and beauty.

⁸ Euripides' biography comes from Mark Cartwright, “Euripides,” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, last modified December 10, 2015, <http://www.ancient.eu/Euripides/>.

The playwright who wanted to rupture the tradition appears as a man who deserves incarceration for the ideas he writes because he includes scepticism through the belief that gods have supremacy above human being in his plays. Authors of the second half of the V century (B.C.) wanted to stand up for a new plot where divine justice was a secondary, or even tertiary, aspect to take into consideration in the development of events along the play. That is, obviously, the case of Euripides. On the contrary, Plato only accepts a type of theatre, the classical one. The main model of the traditional convictions of metaphysics and defendants of the divine justice was the truly image of the right way in real life. These thoughts, performed by the chorus in tragedies, go beyond that because they became real characters who punish ignorance with incarceration and discriminate different beliefs, being causes of repression to some authors, because their work is considered rude and seditious. This fight appears more or less equally in Shakespearian times closing theatres and condemning writers whose purpose were to control the crowd thoughts into an individual one, centred in the power of human beings and the figure of mankind as guide of his or her own destiny.

There is no doubt that Euripides was one of the condemned playwrights because his work was a result of subversion from authors as Plato since he did not spread the traditional and moral message of the age. Plays provoked deeper feelings than a philosophical discourse and, through the metaphysics' points of view; a repressive issue had to be created. A word which was said by a character can go inside the soul of the spectators, and even it can change his mode of seeing the world, on an incomparable way. It is more attractive than concepts taught in a class or a monologue made in the Athenian Senate. Here resides the danger of theatre by politics. That is the reason why plots are modified and in some cases, plays are destroyed. These acts of censure could be done to avoid a rising from the population because the thoughts of a playwright can change the behaviour of the whole crowd who attempted only to see a play. It was considered a treat for those who have great part of the power and politicians and philosophers. Plato establish in his book Laws the pattern of conduct needed to acknowledge a respected position among the citizens. If someone did not obey, we would be against the system and by the way he or she would be punished. It was something so repeated through writers once and again because repression drew fame and fortune, which was the main motif that motivates them to break the chains of the tradition.

The issue that interested more to the Greek authors was the decadence of the divine figure in their plays during the fifth century BC, more concretely, in the second-half of it. In

order to authors like Aristophanes, the presence of gods out of the play was a conflicting device. At the same time, the tragedy of Euripides shows mercy in gods in prologues and epilogues, but in any way they are determining characters in his plays. For this, religion takes part in the discussion in themes like the loss of faith in performers who were not helped by gods until the situation becomes unsustainable. They help the heroes only as a mode to give some relevance to them in the play, which centres its plot into the mankind's problems and worries. Greek religiosity cannot be compared to the current definition of religion nowadays. It is more the practice of a cult than truthful guidelines about the right thoughts and behaviours. Even so, the treatment that gods had in these types of plays, were considered offensive because they deserve more than this in the opinion of metaphysics. What they wanted to avoid was that scorn became an excuse of losing faith: All tragedians will have innovated in smaller or larger aspects of the plots they created. Euripides' long career of dramatic production demonstrates that for him the mythological mode was a flexible and enduring arena in which to entertain and move his audience while stimulating them to think about important cultural and ethical issues. (pg. 156)⁷

This was Euripides' thought about the use of the myth, giving it an aesthetic value more than the moralist importance which aroused among Greek citizens along this time. Gods beliefs are not fixed structures, so authors changes their vision in respect to the appearance of gods as a main part of the plot. This tolerance creates distance, using their presence to manipulate the audience in the sense that the crowd leaves the main plot to think whereas the gods or the chorus speaks (or sing). In other words, the divine voice distracts the audience as a way of rest between the events that appears in the play.

Ultimately, Euripides tries to innovate in his work beyond any traditional belief. He goes through an almost unexplored field which leads to a conflict. However, their plays question the tragic vision and have to dismantle this ideological meta-structure imposed on the myth. He looks for a deeper interpretation by the hero who has his or her own decisions, where wrong or right. During the post-analysis of *Electra*, *Heracles* and *Orestes*, the common points with tradition are only a strategy to avoid censure at that age.

c. Electra: the same title for two distinct plays.

Electra, written by Euripides, is a play which offers some changes in relation to the work of Sophocles which receives the same name: Electra. Sophocles innovates a little in respect to the trilogy of the Oresteia, by Aeschylus. However, he maintains the classical concept of the Greek tragedies. In Sophocles, this innovation that he made was considered as several nuances where he gave his own perspective. That is to say, when the audience saw the

play firstly, they knew some aspects which appeared always in this playwright. In the case of Euripides, the tradition he preserved in his plays was speck and even it creates some contradictions between the characters. He pretends to revolutionize the myth of Electra (making it worldlier) and he got this thanks to a series of features added by the author at that time and which are not presented in the Sophocles' tragedies, with the exception of some few points in common. He looks for a rupture with the general notions of the Greek theatre and he acknowledges it with Electra, though he remains keeping some relation with tradition as an attempt of containing the grade of revolution in his plays.

The different characteristics like the little number of similarities are distinguished by means of the division in hyphens:

- The chorus is the main point of distinction between Sophocles and Euripides. Foolish they who in silence sheath / their parents brought to wretched death. / [150] But me the dolefull one contents / Which *Itys* still, *Itys* laments: / Afflicted bird, *Joves* Messenger, / Sent for the Summers Harbinger. / But, O distressed *Niobe* ! / I thee adore my Deity, / Which weepst still, / from rocky tombe a teary rill. (pg. 8)⁹ Electra is agreed with the chorus words.

Sophocles' Electra shows the tradition chorus, which is formed by a group of maidens that raise the image of gods as the ones who transmits the events perform in the stage. They are figures who guide the way of the different characters that hardly ever complain about their decisions. When the oracle gives to the performers a prophecy, they fulfill it without any remorse, expressing their gratitude for the gods' support and for the divine advises. Generally, the image of a god is the classical one (a symbol of justice): Unlesse I be much deceived. / And of reason quite bereaved, / before is come the Harbinger, / *Justice* self at hand is near, / and will shew her dreadfull pow'rs (pg. 19)⁹

The gods' plans are hidden by the chorus, who keeps the secret. Then, no one can intervene in the divine orders and the characters who realize them because both form a linking unit between humans and gods. Their acts are not seen as marvelous, but as *fair* actions. Revenge is forgiven, and there is not any regret that provokes Orestes to falter in his duty in the play of Sophocles. He does what it is required by the divinities without asking why, establishing his mother's death as the only way to get justice and, finally, happiness because Orestes does not cry for Clytemnestra. The chorus knows the events that affects performers

⁹ Quotes with this number come from: Wase, Christopher, 1625?-1690 (trans.) / Sophocles (orig.) : : *Electra* (1649)

and they are represent as part of the plot because the maidens are the responsible for what is happening in the palace.

Nevertheless, in Euripides' Electra there is a new image of the chorus. Mainly, they are not so present in the play. Some monologues are realized by some characters, like Electra. In the fragments where they speak, the chorus tells myths of other gods since an example related to the real events of Euripides in Electra (pg. 199 CHORUS [...]) (Harvard University Press. London, 1998). It is a description of divine occurrences that has the subject of separate the crowd from the facts that occurs in the play. There is not only morality in their acts, but an entertainment for them, using songs and dances what are contrary to the climate of suffering which covers the audiences and the play. A loss of faith appears also, which is actually expelled with the appearance of the chorus, allocating more importance in the events; an aspect which is only an attempt of the author to keep some relation with the classical Greek theatre. This type of rupture shows a change of the paradigm that present gods like the centre of the play. Electra speaks about no believing in divinities and after the chorus goes to calm her spirit, saying Apollo the originator of Orestes' return. As Sophocles, Electra and his brother praise before they vengeance his father Agamemnon. This situation is lack of sense because they contradict themselves about their beliefs in gods. It appears more like a daily act which is done among the Greek civilization that cannot be out of the play, though the characters think in a different manner. The chorus does not know the events out of the stage and it is a messenger the person who informs Electra about it. A new issue in the play is the feeling of remorse in Orestes. He questions revenge as a solution for his own problems. Before he kills his mother, Orestes asks why he has to do that. However, any god convinces him. It is Electra who finally drives him in the way she wants to. He even forgets his father's death by the hands of Clytemnestra and he only thinks in the consequences of his acts. During Orestes' discourse, the divine figure is put in doubt; treat them like repulsive: ORESTES. Phoebus Apollo, there was much folly in your oracle... (pg.259). The performers do not understand how these facts can award any kind of happiness. At the end of the play, the chorus refers to happiness in the traditional way (the suffering which finishes in happiness), but again it has no sense because performers have already shown their annoyance previously. The finishing part of the play is the most distinct issue of tradition because Orestes complains Apollo about his commands: ORESTES. I cannot believe that such an oracle is good (pg. 261). The plea and the last caress of Clytemnestra to his son make Orestes to question his own action and, finally, Apollo is blamed about all these deaths caused by him. This event confirms Euripides' point of view,

which is that characters are puppets guided, by gods, to disaster. The reconciliation is done by Castor, but there is no joy in his words, though human performers have achieved their duties. Destiny is the guide of mankind (Orestes was destined to kill his mother.) and gods do not do anything to stop the murders. They limit to see the scene like a spectator.

- Another change worth to mention is the attitude of the female character, represented by Electra. She also has some newness in respect to the play of Sophocles. In Sophocles, braveness and mental strength are main features of Electra. She is presented as a male character; because Electra is even ready to vengeance her father when she knows that Orestes is dead: Hark then vvhich vvay my resolutions fal. / Our *store* of friends, you knovv that *none* vve have [...] Well to be born and live in foul disgrace. (pg. 37-38)⁹ She is not a frightened woman. On the contrary, weakness and caution are exposed in the figure of Chrysothemis. She does everything she can to stop her sister, but she finally fails. Chrysothemis stays next to her mother's position because she is not able to murder her while Electra has so clear her revenge against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Even though Orestes appears in the scene, Electra decides to participate in her brother's plans.

However, the image of Electra in Euripides' play is so distinct. She is shown as a woman who is more preoccupied of regretting herself about her poverty than revenge her father. She loses her hope and resigns to the life Aegisthus imposed to her. It is a woman who cannot do anything in a men world. This was more or less a critic to the real situation of women among the Greek population. Euripides describes women's life to the audience and this is the reason why Electra's attitude pretends to be compared with reality in the play, without showing any kind of happiness during all the scenes.

- Clytemnestra is a character with some nuances in Euripides. Sophocles, this woman tries to justify her murder in a vast and no convincing way, taking as excuse Iphigenia's death by hands of Agamemnon. She does not pretend her daughter to trust her, so Clytemnestra defends her explanation like an act of justice. In the case of Euripides, Clytemnestra shows her love to Orestes and Iphigenia and she says that Iphigenia's death was the determining fact which makes her kill Agamemnon. It was not her marriage with Aegithus. Revenge was her answer, the same which occurs to Orestes and Electra. She tries to save her life though Clytemnestra does not know she will die.

- The character of the peasant gains importance in the play through the middle because Euripides uses him like a critic to society: "This poor man can be richer in spirit than those

who have power”. Orestes speaks about spiritual nobleness (Electra, pg. 193-95 ORESTES [...]). In this monologue, the author tries to convey his message and also his thoughts to the crowd through these fragments where the peasant appears. It is something which was not done by any playwright at the age because they should follow the moral patterns, concerned in the play as classical. It makes the audience think about the importance of the real-life peasant because his nobleness can be compared with the powerful people of a city. Euripides creates a new kind of critic which had a repression from philosophers and politicians of the age, taking his works as offensive. Using the relevance of the Greek theatre, Euripides can publish his own ideas.

- There are two different stances related to Orestes’ actuation. First of all, the strategy of the character who acts was used previously by Sophocles. Nevertheless, Sophocles represents the traditional story of Orestes (he dies in The Pitic Games) to raise the image of Electra as a brave woman who does not depend of a man’s arrival who saves her. A foreigner carries Orestes’ ashes to his mother, who does not cry for his son’s death and even she cheers up it: Not *idle* neither, how can't *idle* be, / That you of his decease sure signes have brought, [...] Survive, nor shall her threats *impeach* our joy. (pg. 30)⁹

Electra is the one who suffers for her brother’s pass away. In Euripides, this trick is softer in the sense that love makes Orestes finish his role as messenger, but he does not said directly and it is an Old Man the one who informs Electra in a dialogue on page 212-213 of this book. He acts as a foreigner who goes to Electra’s home to inform her that Orestes is alive. Euripides stops in this case the notion of “with suffering, learning”, an aspect which represents another innovation.

- Finally, two common points join Sophocles and Euripides’ plays. They deal with the classical features of theatre: the first one is the description of events out of scene; a second confluence is the prediction of future actions by characters. Referred to *prolepsis*, both authors are similar choosing the way Electra knows Orestes is alive with the monologues of Chrysothemis (Sophocles) and an elder man (Euripides). They comment this possibility as a real one.

To conclude, these aspects prove that Euripides begins his own rupture with the tradition. The chance of compare both plays make Electra a visual example of his contribution to the Greek theatre which causes fame and subversion from the part of the audience.

d. Orestes: the chain of blood-lettings.

This play is a remaining one of Electra, which narrates the later events to Clytemnestra's murder. There are many points in common between both as the behavior of the chorus and a negative perspective of the characters about gods. In Orestes, Euripides realizes the same strategies of rupture performed also in Electra. The chain of blood-lettings is an action needed to save characters' lives. In this play, they do not act for a divine command, but they use their own instinct to solve every problem. Instinct is a guide to planning their escape. Orestes asks for help to Menelaus, which is a man. Menelaus does not cooperate with him and, finally, Orestes has to look for another solution. It is Apollo the god that stops the murders at the end, seeing him as an image of subversion because, along the play, Orestes blames him about his decision. The author contradicts character's opinion about gods because they save lives thanks to Apollo. This scene appears as containment, determined by the previous event: the action takes place in front of the crowd, so there is any description and the acts are performed foreground. The scene implies Orestes, Pylades and Hermione (Menelaus' daughter). The hero has a dagger around Hermione's throat. It shows a new feeling in the Greek tragedy, which is *despondence*; a feeling that makes Orestes commits this act in presence of other characters. MENELAUS / What! wilt slay her?; ORESTES / Right once more.¹⁰ Even Menelaus doubts about what his eyes are watching. It is not needed a description of this event because he is looking at it. This innovation shows a complete rupture with tradition.

ORESTES / Fly we never will, but will fire the palace. [...] ORESTES / To prevent thee getting it I will, offering this maid in sacrifice upon its flames.¹⁰. This new concept of desperation has a subject: Orestes does not care about anything, he only tries to escape and no matter the consequences of his actions. This end requires the figure of Apollo to put an end to the chain of blood-lettings and, then, avoid some critics of the classical audience. The play rises an unsustainable level that there is not any human force that can stop it. Remorse, which is presented in Orestes in the first part of the play, disappears and his survival is essential for him during the rest of the tragedy. A change of attitude is performed by the hero to save his own life. Orestes is nourished by murders in order to follow his plan and avoid his death by the citizens. This sentence is vital because he changes remorse for his mother's pass away in the way Orestes even calls her wicked and also to Hermione (a girl who has not done anything to Orestes). Electra and the hero are free to do what they think that is right to evade danger. That is why

¹⁰ Coleridge, E.P. *Orestes* [Recurso electrónico] (by Euripides). Translated by E.P. Coleridge. (<http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/orestes.html>)

the chain of blood-lettings changes a lot in this play because the main subject of killing or threaten someone is not revenge, but survival.

Desperation is the most important feature of Orestes and he does all to get freedom for him, his daughter and Pylades. Suffering, presented in the initial words of Orestes, is eliminated because there is not pity after murdering Helena and even Hermione if it were necessary. Killer instinct is inside the hero, a feature which centers the play in the mankind. The divine figure appears only when there is no other option and in a rude mode, that is, it appears almost as if this end was imposed to cover up the real one, which would be even more dramatic. Orestes' purpose is to set fire to the palace and kill Hermione in front of his father. It is a new kind of scene that has to be repressed in this age. This end can be considered as a challenge to Greek democratic institutions and a critic to the high society. The action of burning up the most relevant building to prevent Menelaus to govern it must be eliminated of the main plot. That is what Euripides did at that time, to avoid repression and a prolonged detention. The chain of blood-lettings described by the author deals with another perspective; cut off from tradition and the general convictions in the Greek population. Not only the end is an important innovation in the theatre of the age, but this aspect, in relation with other own strategies of Euripides, runs into a rising fame among the citizens. Even his plays are a challenge for the metaphysical critics of Greece.

Another event which is worth to mention is Helena's murder. Orestes does not only kill his mother, but his aunt too. This shows a lack of sympathy during the play and, at the same time, he sees that action as an opportunity to exempt his acts. The reason is that Helena was hate after the Troy war by all the relatives of the warriors who died in this battle. Orestes thought that Helena's death would quench citizens' thirst of revenge. They see Orestes like a mad person and also a "matricide". It is not a death to vengeance, but to avoid people revenge Orestes. All the kills are committed out of the classical purpose because the chain of blood-letting would conclude in Orestes' death. That is to say, his mother's murder has to cause his own pass away by hands of population of Argus. Euripides changes this situation in a distinct way to mark Orestes as a victim of god's orders. He is not a murderer, only a producer conditioned by extern divinities. He blames the divine figure while he is realizing the kills. It is the final rupture of the playwright, who put an end to the chain of blood-lettings in the way that Apollo is guiltier of Orestes' murders than the tragic hero. At the end, he is forgiven and regarded for Apollo instead of being killed for his crimes.

The chain's outline is summarized as follows:

AGAMMEMNON ← CLYTEMNESTRA ← ORESTES ← 

As a conclusion, Orestes breaks another traditional concept, which is this chain of blood-lettings, typically used in Aeschylus and Sophocles. Hero's death does not produce since it should be and this is treated like a victim of the events that happen along the play.

e. Heracles: the tragic hero.

Dealing with this play, some changes can be noticed in respect to actions which are committed by the hero. There is a feeling of madness towards the rest of characters. In this work, Heracles kills his family and then he rescues them from the Hell. The main character is considered again a murderer and, as it occurs in Orestes, remorse marks Heracles, who finally decided to solve his murders. However, this hero can create doubts in another sense. It is part of a manipulated process of the audience and the play has as the most relevant theme a feature of mankind: the dark part of the soul, which provokes terrible events as kill your own family; an unnatural action. This kind of madness is not presented in Orestes' plot because there is not any cause which justifies Heracles' murders.

Heracles, a hero that defeats every kind of marvelous creatures becomes in one of them with these kills. Nevertheless, facing this behavior of madness without any rational sense, it rises up again the subversive issue; because Heracles is the person who goes to the Hell to rescue the family he previously kills in cold blood. Another tragic hero in Euripides destroys the excuse of revenge as main subject in the play because, in this case, he kills overcome by an insanity provoked by Hera (a goddess). She is the cause of every misfortune in the life of Heracles. The divine figure appears again like responsible and savior of human's bad actions. There is also a lack of faith which is repressed when characters are in real danger. Here, Heracles is condemned for the same people that love him before. Gods do what they want to without any kind of remorse and they order terrible things to satisfy their aims: IRIS / Hera has not sent you down to show your sanity; MADNESS / O Sun, be my witness / I act against my will. (pg 58)⁴

In the case of Hera, her spell, which conditions Heracles madness, it is only a result of his hate feeling towards the hero. That is, there is not any kind of justice in her acts. Madness is a weak symbol of the human being which is in charge of the game, which is that gods play

with mankind. The evil part of the soul is raised in Heracles, changing a classical perception of the world, seen in Homer's works; where monsters control the man.

The chorus, in Heracles, is a parody represented distinctly the traditional mode. No witness, only dances and songs are features of the chorus that seem shocking during the performing events of death in the play. The chorus loses its essence because it is performed by elder men and not by young maidens, so the image is more comical. These dances are presented to the audience in a grotesque way that is not in concordance with scenes of killing, which are more dramatic. There is a mixture of feelings in the play. A black humor is characteristic of Heracles because the chorus represents a lack of sensibility towards the tragic actions of the Greek theatre: What dirge, what song / shall I sing for death? / What dance shall I dance for death? (pg. 56)⁴ This kind of humor is a key element in Heracles, which can be compared with later playwrights as Shakespeare. Euripides adds comic elements to the tragedy as if it were a comedy. Although it cannot be considered a tragicomedy, this type of play appears with the image of Euripides, an innovation that was not so understood at this age

[...] I do not believe the gods commit / adultery, or bind each other in chains. (pg.60).⁴ It is Heracles the one who speaks and he asks himself if gods are adulterous when the audience knows that the answer is "yes". Moreover, this absurd question is the consequence of all the problems that occur to Heracles along the whole play; because he is the result of a romance between Zeus and a human, instead of Hera, the goddess that hate the hero. Heracles recognizes that gods cannot commit adultery and this sentence may be interpreted in an ironic way. These jokes, comical issues, are present in other Euripides' plays; comic aspects that appear the same way in the theatre of the English Renaissance, and even it is used in the current one.

The concepts of madness and insanity are so new in Greek tragedies and it was Euripides the author who got fame using this strategy. In Heracles, human nature is mixed with divine designs, treating these previous features as another god that impulse the actions of the hero. There is again subversion in the play because of contradictions in some aspect of it, in the sense that it is the protagonist the one who kills his family, fault of madness, which is a feeling that every man has in his soul. This feeling is now increased by Hera. As occur with the rest of monsters, no mercy appears to forgive Heracles.

To conclude this point, Euripides progress little by little in his work through a unique distinction in relation to other authors. He achieves the subject of obtaining fame and fortune, using features and strategies which were not presented before. He restyles tradition till the

contradiction among characters in his plays in order to avoid some critics and a repression by the metaphysics defenders. In any case, Heracles is a notorious innovation and it follows in the later Renaissance playwrights' footsteps.

4. RENAISSANCE'S THEATRE: SHAKESPEARE

Towards the end of The Middle Ages, the influence of classical authors had been more notorious in the work of William Shakespeare. Education and literary customs in Elizabethan times could have contributed to a first approach by the playwright through the kind of plays they will begin to write because of, even, to the appearance of the Italian Renaissance and the English one later; times when Shakespeare were in London. The lack of erudition in Shakespeare's learning could be an important fact in his comparison with Greek playwrights because he uses the few he knew about them to create his own strategies, which agrees in great measure with authors analyzed previously: Euripides and Sophocles (less relevance). Some of their strategies are captured in many Shakespearian plays, but in the Elizabethan society perspective, which is so distinct from the Greek customs.

A curious datum is the deep ignorance of Greek playwrights, as it is the case of Euripides, whose presence in English education was not appeared until 1671 by John Milton, in his book Sanson Agonistes¹¹. Although Shakespeare would have not studied him, translations into Latin and some discussions among other highbrow playwrights could have given a wider perception about antique themes more used in the Greek classical period. In the same way as Euripides, Shakespeare looked for unique kind of plays to develop his style as writer, but his main subject was to obtain fame and fortune by the use of different methods that distinguished him from the rest. A greater demand of plays by the English population made authors even perform some of his competitors' plays in order to add some mixed strategies to his style of writing. That is the reason why Shakespeare began as an actor when he went to London. During this part of the essay, *the English bard* is going to be analyzed comparing the common features where he is near the classical figure of Euripides and, moreover, Shakespeare's novelty puts in two plays: Macbeth and Hamlet, which are tragedies that concur with some typical rupture strategies used in Euripides' days.

¹¹ The reference to this book appears in Díaz Fernández, J. *El mundo clásico en Shakespeare*. Universidad de Málaga.

a. *The dark ages of William Shakespeare.*

Following the words written by Leggatt, Alexander in his book: Shakespeare's Political Drama: The history plays and Roman plays: "how does Shakespeare's medium, which is drama, shape his political thinking? For Shakespeare does think about politics; but he thinks in the way a playwright thinks. He works through a form that deals not in theory but in practical demonstration, and his medium is the actor." (pg. 10)

William Shakespeare was convinced that he will get fame when he went to London after marrying his wife Anne Hathaway. His short time as an actor can give the change to put him on the map. At the beginning, his stay was based on performing plays with the help of some distinct benefactors who introduced young visionaries in the theatrical world. To start your career on a good foot, a person that wanted to stand out needed a protector who guided him into the correct way. For Shakespeare, the fact of arriving London was not enough because he was decided to success in the theatre's universe. He left his family to centre his future in getting profit as a playwright. It is in the dark about the fact that Shakespeare knew his own effect in the English theatre at that age. However, he inverted his money in building a bigger theatre to represent plays, The Globe, and he became even more famous because no one did the things he realized. This construction is the image of his physical and internal hubris because such a theatre like it needed to be managed in a sublime manner to make profit, so Shakespeare showed that he was a skillful entrepreneur too.

During his whole live, the English playwright had so clear his main subject and his success was joined to his personal abilities, not only in his business, but also in his plays because their themes were in concord with the historical chronology of Elizabeth I and Jacob I's reign. Shakespeare performed events and worries that occupied his audience's minds and conditioned their thoughts. Some examples are the spectrums that represented Banquo's descendants in Macbeth or the social discrimination to black and Jewish people in Othello and The Merchant of Venice, respectively; just like images of forbidden love affairs and disproportionate madness both caught the attempt of a crowd who were thirsty of parallel stories to real life. Shakespeare treated theatre more than a political devise: he gave spectators what they want to listen and see in a stage. If the comedy was popular, as it occurs firstly when he began writing, he would perform it with a piece of art which was not seeing before (The Comedy of Errors). Another example was the historic tragedies in a moment where politics conditioned the poor citizens' lives. Plays about tyranny as Richard II and Richard III

made people question their wishes and how a simple human can be so relevant in the life of many.

In fact, Shakespeare innovated in his play with the pass of time and he made things that can be considered a rupture with the thinking of the religious part of population. Such is the case of Romeo and Juliette, a love tragedy written the whole in iambic pentameter and with an action so regretted by the Church as suicide appears at the end of the play with both protagonists. He broke up with the barriers of his strict way of living and realized works of an incredible relevance in times theatre was considered a vulgar and rude art. His themes were so wide that they are immortal because the same worries concern people today. His mechanism of rupture consisted in a constant manipulation of the audience, whose eyes saw a main plot but his minds were full of subthemes that made every sentence which was performed an individual perception of the world. For example, a tragedy can have more than one comical action (use of irony and double senses) indeed, but also the political questions of the population can be hidden inside the play, in some particular moments. The humor that appears in Macbeth is a dark one in such cases where a murder takes place in front of the crowd. Shakespeare mixed the emotions in order to confuse people, which were *assembling a puzzle* during the whole play, but at the same time, they were listening to a discourse about the behavior of kings and noblemen who did not care the poor people, only their single ambitions. Shakespeare created a new style that was imitated by some of the most important playwrights in history like Goethe or even, George Bernard Shaw. However, the English bard could not establish his own style without taking into account some previous authors that he may consider relevant to study or read. The added merit is related to the sharing point with the classical theatre of Euripides. Although his education was so simple, Shakespeare obviously was not the only playwright of the age.

In the case of Christopher Marlowe, they had a close friendly relationship that can be the key to study the Greek and Roman authors directly (with books) and in an indirect way, that is, using discussions among authors. The antique myths can be referred by some of them and that would be the influence which Shakespeare had before he wrote his first plays. The critics are unable to explain exactly if this influence is truth because any hand-writing of this author, that is their first folios, were not found in a resolute manner. These suppositions are determined for a mysterious part of the Shakespeare's life which is called *Dark ages*, a time where there is not almost any reference to the author development as a playwright. What most people know is that he did not actually learn Greek, but Latin (his knowledge is joined to laws more than literature). The access to some translations in this language could be the way to

read Euripides translations of his plays. He also published some poems when these were considered a symbol of erudition and intelligence, such as Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. Both are myths with a personal nuance of the own Shakespeare. So, since his starting works, he knew some aspects of the Greek tradition that scholars think nowadays. Werth A. writes on Lesse Greeke (The Oxfordian Volume, 2002) that: By far the most overwhelming amount of material written on Shakespeare's use of Greek has focused, not on the appearance of specific words or phrases that appears in his plays and sonnets, but on ideas, plots, philosophies and situational parallels that derive ultimately from Greek sources and woven in, around and behind many---perhaps most--- of the works. (pg. 22)

Then, his union is not perceived in specific grammatical points, but in a wider feeling when critics put in common the used themes and the manipulation strategies by Shakespeare and Euripides, both sharing many aspects in their styles of writing. However, how can he capture these classical ideas in the presence of an audience that were so ignorant in their myths' knowledge? What is clear in the work of Shakespeare is a contact with the Greek plays, but he used them to improve his style, not to imitate the previous one, so he transferred the themes, not the complete myth itself. The truth is that the education of his crown was so limited and he had to adapt those classical ideas of rupture to an understood dialogue which was not so technical (though his plays are considered masterpieces) and his characters were more known by them (English Kings like Henry IV, but even some famous Roman characters as Julius Caesar). This author turned to methods that were successful in the past and he uses them to perform plays adding his own style and similar worries of his age.

Within every translation, there were some nuances that distinguished one translator to another, creating the variability which can be so important to the adaptation of all into unique plays where people can learn and have fun at the same time. Doubtlessly, Shakespeare took his partial studies about the Greeks and realized the most expression of literature in English. Macbeth and Hamlet are examples of this influence. The case of Hamlet's confluences are more notorious than Macbeth's ones, so his comparison with Oedipus Rex has been more analyzed the shared points between Macbeth and Orestes, written by Euripides. The singularities that both presents are exposed in these plays because the figure of the hero and the female characters (Electra and Lady Macbeth) as the appearance of witches, spectrums and even Hecate (which is a Greek goddess) makes both author worthy to be compared. Macbeth is so known by critics, but not his common features with the Greek theatre of rupture that Euripides performed almost two centuries before Shakespeare was born.

b. Shakespearian play: Macbeth and Orestes:

1. The mankind's decisions: Ambition, madness and remorse.

The beginning of the play is based on the presentation of Macbeth as a savior of Scotland and the king regards him with the position of a traitor, who is lord of Cawdor. From this moment, the author is anticipating the end of the play because Macbeth becomes a traitor too. All this treason is conditioned by many marvelous decisions making by the protagonist during the whole play. This chooses taken by characters in Macbeth are manipulations of others, but at the end the one who realizes those actions is Macbeth himself, or using murderers. The hero shows a weak feeling at first, because of the remorse he will suffer after the kill of his own king (King Duncan). There is an influence of secondary characters in the life of Macbeth. However, they do not control him and finally they create a monster who murders every human that tries to stop his ambition. By the way, these murders are decisions which Macbeth finally takes, though he doubts about them because Lady Macbeth is the character that impulse him into these kind of disgraceful acts. Along the play, Macbeth's subject is to become King of Scotland by force and as sooner as he could do because of the prediction of three witches. Equally like in Orestes, this subject includes an own benefit: to occupy a throne (Macbeth) or to escape from a palace, avoiding death (Orestes). These matters are not seen farer than their own egoism. Macbeth begins to conspire just after his dialogue with the witches, taking their word as truly and accomplishing little by little what they foresee. These witches are called "the Weird Sisters". They look like the Greek gods represented in the ancient classical period and, equally, they only can predict what could occur to Macbeth in the future. However, it is the mankind himself who believes faithfully them. The same happens in Orestes: it is the human decision that matters at the end of both plays. It will condition to later events. The figure of the Weird Sisters seems to the divine one in Euripides' plays because they domain both heroes with the simple fact of throwing a series of ideas that the recipients obey without making almost any question.

Despites all his doubts, Macbeth finally kills Duncan. Remorse only appears in the hero in the first part of the play, the same that occur with Orestes (he suffers a depressive feeling after killing his mother and being condemned by mostly citizens of Argos). Nevertheless, the consequences of murder someone weights heavily in Macbeth's mind and along the play other characters marks his attitude as unnatural; a feeling that is hidden in Macbeth and it is only found out when he dies. Predict is not the unique feature of witches, but the secondary performers play an important role because they even foresee events that are

going to come later. This is the case of Lennox, a nobleman of Macbeth's court who predicts Duncan's death at night: The night has been unruly: where we lay, / our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say / Lamentings heards i' the air (pg 454).¹² This is a strategy used by Shakespeare to remember every time the concept of murder as an immoral atrocity. Secondary characters' words are constantly an indirect remorse of the main performer in the voice of less relevant characters. In the Greek theatre, monologues were used in other that they expressed the inner thoughts of the hero, but, in this case, the large amount of characters makes disappear some of these monologues with secondary role-players that show and criticize the acts committed by Macbeth, and more concretely, the night where Duncan dies.

The *asides* in Shakespearian plays are key aspects along them because the audience connects directly with the characters. It is like they were talking to them. The crowd can be inside the hero's mind. In Euripides, *asides* are not literary part of his play, but it is the character that realizes the action the one who in a direct way speaks to the audience with his monologue, like occurs in Orestes when he shares his pain and remorse with the audience too, in Electra. The innovation that Shakespeare did was to separate both: on the one hand, he speaks to other characters as if he was acting and, on the other hand, his real behavior is shown to the crowd. In Euripides, he joined both type of speech into a monologue which is listened by the performers and the audience. These hidden feelings represent the image of an introspective character. Macbeth analyses his first murder before committed it: "Here lay Duncan, / his silver skin laced with his golden blood" (pg. 457).¹² In this quote, the protagonist not only surprises himself when he finds out the corpse of Duncan, but roles a play like he was an actor who is also worried about that marvelous fact, committed by him previously. Act within a tragedy is another strategy of the Euripides' theatre because Orestes plays the role of a messenger when he arrives at his sister's house.

Banquo is the one who reprimand Macbeth's actions. He treats his rising to the throne like a wretched fact. However, his interest resides more in the part of the prediction concerned with him and his own benefit: Sent forth great largess to your office / This diamond he greets your wife withal (pg. 446).¹² He guesses that if the king obtained all which was foreseen by the Weird Sister's, he would be regarded equally. This is his main anxiety. Banquo also refers to the rain in a double-sense way because he predicts that the "bloody rain" is an omen of death, which

¹² Quotes with this number belong to "Shakespeare, W. *Macbeth* [Recurso electrónico] Cambridge: ProQuest Information and Learning, 2006".

affects him and his son's life. This is a strategy to maintain the spectators waiting for future events.

Just as the storyline goes on, Macbeth displays his madness. The feeling of remorse is radically changed by hate towards every person that tries to defeat him, in a direct way (Malcolm, which is Duncan's son) or indirectly (Banquo and his son, Fleance). This ambition dominates the character perception about what is right during the play. This new feature makes him kill everyone. This appears also Orestes in Euripides because, along the play, he forgets completely his mother's death and uses the chain of blood-lettings as the only mode to escape from the palace. Equally it occurs to Macbeth in the sense that he changes from a worried and doubtful man to a monster which has no mercy with anyone who ambition his throne. Madness turns Macbeth into a crazy devil character that kills even his own friend Banquo because he feels his throne is threaten by him and his lineage. Banquo is murdered in front of the audience, which is an unnatural act, so close related to the attempt murder that Hermione suffers in Orestes. Hermione is a character who does not do anything against Orestes and he uses her like a tool which provokes her father's change of mind. Both murders in Macbeth, Duncan and Banquo's death, has not any subject of revenge. They are doing to satisfy the hero's wishes during the whole play. These kills, *in cold blood*, are as shocking as the scene of Hermione and Orestes at Euripides' ages. So the comparison is important to understand the common points between Shakespeare and Euripides. Events at the forefront added authenticity to a tragedy because the audience can see what it is happening with their own eyes, creating an expectation among them about the consequences of this unnatural action.

The chain of blood-lettings in Macbeth is determined by the thirst for power that results in desperation and insanity, proper features also of Orestes when he is going to kill Hermione in front of Menelaus. This chain has a subject which is far of the tradition of death by revenge, previously commented and part of some plays as Electra by Sophocles and Shakespeare's Hamlet. Madness is conditioned by the murders that continually appear in Macbeth. This feeling provokes that all these repressed thoughts take the form of a spectrum which stays quiet and makes Macbeth regret about his terrible acts using his own voice and not an aside. He fears the spectrum and it is the only manner of bringing up some beliefs that are hidden in a mask of murders and performances. The spectrum shows his real behavior and his kills: "Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that which might appal the devil" (pg. 475).¹² However, does insanity acquire a more profound nuance if it is compared with the Greek tragedies? The

answer is that there is a constant change of perspective in a character that does not know why he is committing these murders (people who were his friends before), but finally Macbeth makes even the spectrum disappear like all his mankind thoughts, related with remorse for killing human beings. This is a consequence of his unstoppable ambition; a feature that ends with any trace of regret. The same happens in Orestes, by Euripides, because at the final part of the play he does not show any kind of remorse also about his kills. In the case of Macbeth, he feels only tricky by the witches, but he feels not affected by murdering people.

“Blood hath been shed ere now, i’ the olden times / ere humane statute purged the gentle weal; / Ay, and since too, murders have been perform’d / too terrible for the ear: the time has been, / that, when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end: but now they rise again,” (pg 475).¹²

This quote deals with kills as an action which has always been done in the world. It refers even to the ancient period, where the concepts of tragedy and theatre people know in Shakespeare was born centuries ago. This fragment could be a way of the author to establish the real creators of the tragedy, putting him in the role of a simple imitator of strategies that were previously seen, before Shakespeare uses them. It is like an excuse that the playwright, in this case, makes to justify the quantity of murders which appears in this play. Apparently, he pretends only to capture the essential style of the Renaissance, but he is going beyond the classical authors to discover his own style; the same that Euripides did in his ages. Finally, Shakespeare uses Macbeth’s voice to express the *fake* idea that what he is writing was played a long time ago by other people.

Music appears in the play in a distinct way compared with Euripides. It is an advisor of the entrances of characters and even he anticipated a murder, which is the case of ringing a bell. This symbolic perception of musicality has more to offer than a decorative feature as it occurs in the classical theatre. It is also curious that both types of music’s use are not a harmonic one because the events that have been played do not concur with songs and dances. It is a tragedy and in the moments which the play is more dramatic, the music appears as a balm. That is the situation of the witches and Macbeth because they all sing and dance though this scene performed is so obscure and tragic:

- “[*Music and a song within:*” (pg. 480)¹²

- “[*Music and a song ‘black spirits’ &c.*” (pg. 484)¹²

The figure of Hecate also keeps some relation to the Greek theatre. Specifically, the presence of Gods in the play makes Shakespeare been in concordance with Euripides because both perceptions are so likely. In *Macbeth*, Hecate appears to blame about the braveness of the Weird Sisters to do an action which is characteristic of divine images since her. She is the goddess of magic and mystery and magicians praise to her: “And, which is worse, all you have done hath been but for a wayward son, spiteful and wrathful” (pg. 479).¹² Along the play, Hecate is not worried about Macbeth and she does not order him anything. Her purpose is to ruin his life because witches were wrong in their decisions. They choose Macbeth to be part of witches’ entertainment; a puppet of their magic powers. As Hecate does not participate in these decisions, she uses his anger in order to revenge against the Weird Sisters for electing a marvelous man to be King of Scotland. She does not try only to stop their pastime (because they move the acts of Macbeth with three sentences), but she will destroy the ambitious usurper. The divine image looks like the figure of Hera in *Heracles*, who pretends to take revenge of a character that does not do anything to her. Heracles realizes acts which were ordered to him by other people. However, the destiny is decided finally by the protagonist and the only thing that Hecate and the witches do is to come to light these hidden feelings that Macbeth has in his mind.

Tricks are also important in *Macbeth* (The Spanish version): “MACDUFF / ¿Cómo está mi esposa? / ROSS / Pues bien / MACDUFF / ¿Y mis hijos? / ROSS / Bien también / MACDUFF / ¿No ha turbado su paz ese tirano? / ROSS / No, estaban en paz cuando los dejé” (pg 70)¹³. As it occurs in *Orestes*, tricky words and ignorance are key factor in the events which are performed because the audience and Ross (a relative of the nobleman Macduff) knows, for example, what has happened to Macduff’s family in the same way that the Greek crowd has the knowledge that the messenger who speaks to Electra was her brother Orestes. Some lines later, the nobleman is informed about the killer of his wife and son. From now on, revenge is the subject of Macduff, a strategy that appears in the classical theatre too: “¿El cielo fue testigo y no los defendió? / Macduff pecador, murieron por tu culpa.”(pg. 72).¹³ He reproaches the Christian God that he does not help him, so close related with the complaints of Greek heroes to their Gods. This is used punctually in Shakespeare. Turning back to the prediction of events, Macbeth is an influential character that does not stop remembering the witches foresee and he takes these words literally as his destiny. He does not ask why he will be king and only obeys, like Greek heroes that did the same with the wishes of gods.

¹³ These references in Spanish appear in Shakespeare, W. *Macbeth* Austral, 2006. Madrid.

“And be these juggling fiends no more believed, / that palter with us in a double sense / that keep the word of promise to our ear, / and break it to our hope.” (pg 517-518).¹² At the end, Macbeth complains about the devil witches who have tricked him. As in Euripides’ plays, the tragic protagonist looks for an excuse for these atrocities committed, when the real thing is that all he has done was caused by his own decisions.

To conclude, Macbeth is the one who decides what to do with his life. He is free to choose his destiny, but the hero is conditioned for what other characters want, in the case of the Weird Sisters and Lady Macbeth, who will be analyzed in the following point. Macbeth’s murders provoke his own madness and hide his remorse; killing the rational man and becoming himself a monstrous traitor.

2. A weak and influential protagonist: The figure of Lady Macbeth.

With no doubt, the female second protagonist of this play is the wife’s Scottish tyrant: Lady Macbeth. She can even be analyzed like the real most relevant performer of Macbeth because of the weak and influent nature of her husband by other characters that use the hero as a key element in their own aspirations and desires. Lady Macbeth directs his husband’s decisions by means of a psychological attack to Macbeth’s manhood in a constant manner. Her own minded strength is the perfect complement to his hidden ambition that continually is represented by Macbeth. Both form the essence of a traitor. There is a quote about Lady Macbeth’s personality in the first part of the play: she acts as the main instigator of the future murders, which finally are committed by Macbeth: “yet I do fear thy nature; / it is too full o’ the milk of human kindness / to catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great; / art without ambition, but without / the illness should attend it” (pg. 437).¹² No one can question that she appears like a dynamic woman who makes his husband becomes a man only worried about his rising power. She gets then a fundamental relevance in the events because Lady Macbeth has the duty of avoiding Macbeth to waver when he is going to murder the king of Scotland. As a matter of fact, mercy is a feeling that goes on the man before he kills Duncan. This shows a weak human and it is taken by his wife like a symbol of cowardly. He is a general of the Scottish army that kills people almost every day, but in this case, he is not able to murder a person who shows his confidence in Macbeth when he is fighting in his name. That is, there is an internal conflict in this man, proved in the way he feels remorse. Finally, he is convinced by his wife to realize the action that she, as a woman, cannot do in her age. She was unable to the queen doing such a thing,

but if she uses Macbeth, queen will be her new title without killing anybody. Her subject is also to obtain her own benefit and Macbeth's doubts do not care at all.

"I would, while it was smiling in my face, / have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, / and dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you / have done to this." (pg. 444)¹²

There is no compassion in Lady Macbeth's words because she will sacrifice his son to be queen of Scotland. Only ambition is the "driving force" that moves both characters; an ambition which will make Macbeth become a marvelous inhuman creature. The future queen swears in order not to fall into mercy and regret, which are wimpy feelings for her. There is not any kind of remorse too, so the figure that Lady Macbeth performs is a strong woman who is above his husband in every single sense. She uses her love towards Macbeth as her final trick to convince him. Love is a symbol of weakness too because he acts in the way she desires to please her.

This type of woman was represented already by Sophocles and Euripides in the character of Electra. The hero is absolutely not the most relevant piece of the play, but the importance that Lady Macbeth acquires is unique and it proves the power that every female has in the decisions of a man. Despite the fact that Shakespeare and Euripides are so far in time, they share this theme in respect to the kind of woman that it is performed by them. She is even more determinant than gods because Macbeth acts according to the plan that his wife has imposed on him. He is then a puppet, equally represented in the image of tragic heroes in the Greek ages (Euripides' times). Lady Macbeth is presented in the play as a mixture of both *Electras*: on the one hand, the brave woman of Sophocles; on the other hand, a guide that conditions the Euripides hero's decisions looking for death of other characters; an act which could provoke that she will be spat out or even hanged by her enemies. However, Lady Macbeth realizes her action through his husband, being her situated secondly and without getting her hands full of blood. This mix of personalities creates the figure of a plotter and manipulative woman, so important and used by Shakespeare. The playwright searches the balance between both female types in order to form his own one. There is an example where Lady Macbeth is referred to as a brave woman: "What breast was't then / that made you break this enterprise to me? / When you durst do it, then you were a man" pg. 444).¹² Nevertheless, this initial force loses in its level of importance while the events are developed by the performers. Lady Macbeth becomes a defendant of her husband's criminal facts and she tries continually to hide Macbeth's madness. This occurs in the spectrum's scene, whose Lady Macbeth's intention is

to carry his husband out of the banquet saying that he is indisposed because she does not want anyone to reveal the acts committed by the protagonist and then condemned both to death. She thinks she controls her husband, but finally the reality is that Macbeth has become a monster that cannot be controlled by anybody: “Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth challenges her husband’s qualms about killing Duncan by asking him, ‘Are you a man?’”³¹ In antiquity, status as well as gender informs the construction of martial masculinity, on the premise that a named hero who fights on the battlefield must be of noble birth. Greek ideals of an elite warrior caste are echoed within medieval chivalry and Renaissance rituals of aristocratic dueling”. (pg. 267)¹⁴

In the second part of the play, she comes to the conclusion that her husband is so different than the one who, at first, has remorse and mercy. Here, female suffering is more powerful than the desire and ambition in the mind of this character. In this moment, Lady Macbeth discourse changes because she shows to the audience her disappointment and regrets. However, she notices that her husband follows the wrong way; a way where he cannot turn back. Embarrassed is the feeling appears in herself because now there is no cowardly in Macbeth. The extreme he has acknowledged does not satisfied Lady Macbeth. Remorse appears also firstly in her when it is too late: “Nought’s had, all’s spent, / where our desire is got without content”. (pg. 467)¹²

Finally she commits suicide because she is unable to tolerate more this situation that has been created by her. In this occasion, love disappears in the mind of Macbeth because he does not cry at all his wife’s pass away. The reason is that he is only worried about the enemies that try to kill him and finish his short reign. Then, this feeling becomes eclipsed for retaining his power as king; something that destroys the protagonist in the way devotion to Lady Macbeth is not the main issue that affects the hero. The acts even as she does not exist. Suicide shows how she has lost her faith in solving an unsustainable situation. The same occurs in Orestes, where the hero even pretends to commit suicide to put an end the evil actions that he did (Clytemnestra murder), though the only thing that permits him stay alive is his sister action; a fact which is totally unreal in Macbeth.

Since final point, characters roles change along the play so both genres are also differenced (dealing with the psychological features of men and women established in this age) because Lady Macbeth’s attitude shows men strength, whereas Macbeth’s manhood is questioned by his wife. In fact, this concrete character, who does not look like a man (even he

¹⁴ This quote belongs to Silk, M., Gildenhard, I. & Barrow, R. *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2014. West Sussex (UK).

is mocked by his wife), goes over a creature that has no feeling at all. He kills as an animal which does not think. The female performer finally suffers a process of subversion in front of an audience who has pre-established behaviors about genres. She changes radically her mind towards a weakness at which she previously laughs because his husband had it. Shakespeare tries to show, through this kind of shocking strategies, his style of expressing ideas. This contradictory plot is made to avoid censure because the author describes a woman so above the man figure. She treats him like a woman (the perception considered in this age). These subversive issues were used before in the same way by Euripides, whose contradictions were so repeated in his work during the times of criticism and repression in the Greek theatre; features commonly presented in the English Renaissance. Both show their ideals, which are quickly hidden or eradicated by means of the traditional conventions of the population.

3. The social criticism of a tragedy: Corruption and power.

One of the fragments of this play has a kind of theme that comes from the past. More concretely, it was coined before in the Greek theatre of Euripides. This part of Macbeth is concerned with the use of a play in order to criticize indirectly the high statements of a society that suffers a lot through a process of subversion: the characters speak about social problems in a mode which can be compared with the audience's everyday life and their current situation. This is subversive because there are not any reliable evidences that demonstrate the author is criticizing corruption, ambition, luxury, etc. Playwrights only commented his work as a story which is told in front of a crowd with the main purpose of entertainment. However, plays always have a subject and authors have something to say in every word they write. Shakespeare looked for get in the minds of his audience to institute an idea which is perform in some actions and by characters that have a pre-established behavior. Mostly, they are represented in another age and place (Scotland, Venice, Rome, Denmark, etc.). Both are used like an excuse to avoid the authorities' repression. The same occurred to Euripides with the metaphysics critics. They were not unique in this type of devises; along history, many methods had being searched by playwrights to criticize society without being punished. These authors are only two more examples. However, the continued critics to power are secondly represented in the audience and the main themes are wider and traditional ones. With this devise and concretely in the case of Shakespeare, the audience cannot loss any word which the performers said along the plays.

Dealing with the analysis of Macbeth, there is a critic to corruption and the ambitious men, who lead in great amount the honest ones: "Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are

liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and ha up them" (pg. 491).¹² Here, Macduff's son knows the evilness of his world and, using a mature discourse, he says so sensitive words. His mother even gets astonished facing the proved intelligence of the young man. The audience did not know his name, but his words acquired an impressive relevance. However, this character is a mere broadcaster of Shakespeare's thoughts and the playwright used him to manipulate his spectators because these sentences said by an infant were more shocked than if they were pronounced by Macbeth. People would be perplexed when this performer speaks because, paraphrasing a popular proverb "children and drunks always tell the truth". Though it could be sound funny, there is a strategy in these words, so Shakespeare looked for innocent characters who asserted his own feelings and worries because they have appeared like figures of credibility.

Another important dialogue has been determined by a conversation between Malcolm and Macduff while they were exiled in England. They were obliged to leave Scotland because Macbeth wanted to kill them. Their monologues are also a critic to the society, hidden in an "apparently" fictional story. In this part, subversion is so clear because performers do not mention in a direct way the comparison with the current social problems of the population though the manipulated crowd feels the same when the characters talk each other. This fact does not give any option to repression because this dialogue did not refer to any concrete statement (Shakespeare did not named any particular person of his age). If someone got interest in finding out some equivalence, the author could answer that it is only a fictitious tragedy in a far space with the use of entertain an audience. This type of strategy was done by Euripides too, but in his particular case, the method consists on the final presence of a god that sorted out everything; a god who is criticized along the whole play by the characters. However, time changes and humanism (men as the universal centre) became the way of understand life by the artist. That is the reason why the end is so distinct in Macbeth. Death was considered a fundamental part of a tragedy which added action and a higher drama to the play. Shakespeare's tragedies shares many aspects with Greek ones because kill someone was a repetitive act that the English playwright uses to murder his own heroes during his works, as he case of Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, ...

In the final lines of Macbeth, the protagonist criticizes the devils that corrupted him, referred to his hidden ambition and the help of other characters, whose only purpose consisted in ruining the hero's life. The initial image of savior disappears and it is changed by the evidence of tyranny. Malcolm gets the image of the real hero that will murder Macbeth.

However, he does not consider himself worthy of his inherit privilege because of his weaknesses, which are related to the sin of carnal desires. The same doubts appear on him before he is going to claim the throne of Scotland. "Macduff, this noble passion / child of integrity, hath from my soul / wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts / to thy good and honour." (pg. 498).¹² As occurs with Macbeth, he is finally convinced by Macduff.

*Final monologue: Malcolm (pg. 518-519)¹²

A last section of this point deals with a little commentary to the end of the play. The prophecy has not been achieved and this can be analyzed as a subversive feature. In a time marked by all those religious problems, only the Christian God could play with the destiny of the human beings and the Weird Sister's are not able to realize that, because their main subject is moving Macbeth into the wrong way. Their predictions provoke death. However, Malcolm's final words show the audience that these pagan witches were looking for Macbeth's death. Banquo's sons do not reign in Scotland at the end of the play, but they are considered predecessors of King Jacob I because of his Scottish origin. In fact, when the spectrum appears in front of Macbeth, the last descendant of Banquo is featured more or less equal than him. Jacob I is performed with a bright crown in his head. The conclusion is that a fictional premonition became a real devise in the English society of Shakespeare.

c. To the Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us: A brief poem of Ben Johnson.

In a matter-of-fact manner, it is interesting to comment on the poem dedicated to *the English bard* by his friend and playwright too, Ben Johnson (1572-1637). Along these lines, he wrote about a series of aspects used later to understand the influential Shakespeare in Greek and Roman plays and other points of his life. The focus on these references to the classical period makes worth to mention a fragment presented in this kind of ode to William Shakespeare's figure: "And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek / from thence to honor thee I would not seek / for names, but for thund'rind Aeschylus / Sophocles and Euripides to us [...] / leave thee alone for the comparison / of all that insolent Greek or haughty Rome" (pg. 1557)¹⁵

These lines are so important because they define the relation that exists between the Greek authors and the most successful English playwright in the Renaissance. The reference to the classic period is notorious despites the fact that Shakespeare did not study them at

¹⁵ This quote belongs to Greenblatt S., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature v.1* (9th ed.) W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York.

Stratford. The poem names the three playwrights who were previously analyzed in this essay. Euripides is so used because of his rupture with the tradition that can be so relevant by Shakespeare in the point that he did the same in his age. However, the forecast of events is a clear feature in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, and this method is also presented in one of the most famous play of the English author: Hamlet. Both have an unceasing quest of the murderer that can even cost their own lives.

In this fragment of the poem, the supposition that Shakespeare knew the classic authors is joined to their work, not their personal life and history. He takes their legacy and uses its essence to triumph. "I would not seek for names" have also a meaningful sense in the way that he called his characters with Greek names. However, Shakespeare did not perform the figure of the hero which was represented by Euripides and Sophocles because they used both: the name and the myth. Ben Johnson has clear the knowledge which his friend needed about the Greek playwrights was not so deep. From this, only speculations and investigation can be made towards the truth. These lines were dedicated to him and they appeared in the first folio of Shakespeare's plays (1623).

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude definitely with this essay, there are more similarities between Shakespeare and Euripides than can be appreciated in a very first moment. If we centre our minds into the past, the previous authors were so important in the later works because of a simple fact as a direct, or indirect, influence; not only in theatre, but in all type of artistic representations. Renaissance was certainly the raising point from which many authors based their whole work (narrative, poetic or dramatic). It did not finish and the classical influence has been performed by most of the contemporary artist because this is treated like a universal system of manipulate the audience, readers, etc. When a concrete aspect of literature has a positive result in many part of history means that it is timeless; something which occurs in the case of murders' novels or plays, and also in detective stories.

People have these themes so assimilated that they do not look for the pioneers of these methods and do not take into account its precedence. The Greeks were the first in narrating events of such caliber and despites the fact that a latter author does not read any of the classical playwright, he or she can be influenced by another one that studied them. Not a long time ago, I read a Miguel Mihura's (1905-1977) play: Maribel y la extraña familia, which makes me compare an action the characters perform with the Loetus-eaters' myth. The reason

is that Maribel, the protagonist, is trapped in a house for the attraction to baking by the mother of his supposed husband, who uses biscuits to change the behavior of the girl. Then, her friends appear to visit Maribel, but she is no longer the same person. So, the author cannot know the myth, but someone who uses an object to manipulate the mind of a character.

With this final reference, the essay ended pointing at that a great amount of literary works may have a casual influence to the ancient authors, such as the case of the analyzed Macbeth by Shakespeare, which has not been so compared with Euripides' Orestes, though their unions clarify the possible study of the most well-known Greek playwrights in the ancient times. I would like to finish emphasizing that my extension could have treated more plays, but I have to adapt my essay to the pages established by the university's regulations.

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