

METALANGUAGE FOR MEDEA

Antagonist: The primary opponent of the protagonist. In *Medea*, Medea is the protagonist while Jason is the antagonist.

Agon: Conflict, especially the dramatic conflict between the main characters in a literary work. In *Medea*, the conflict between Medea and Jason.

Antistrophe: The portion of an ode sung by the chorus in its returning movement from west to east. It is sung in response to the strophe (see below) and has the nature of a reply, balancing the effect of the strophe.

Arete: Virtue, or excellence of some kind.

Catharsis: Purification/purgation of emotions through art or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal and restoration.

Choral ode: A poem or lyric sung by the Chorus, in a number of stanzas and verses (see below).

Chorus: A group, usually men (women in *Medea*), who describe and comment on the main action in the play with song, dance, and recitation. The Chorus functions to express the fears, hopes, and judgements of society.

Dialogue: A conversation between two characters.

Dike: Behaving in accordance with nature or how your group normally behaves. Sometimes translated as 'justice'.

Deus ex machine: "God from the machine", where an unsolvable problem is suddenly resolved by a contrived and unexpected intervention by a new character, event, object, or ability. In *Medea*, the deus ex machina appears at the end of the play, where a dragon-drawn chariot sent by the sun god is used to transport Medea away from Jason.

Episodes: 'Scenes' where one or two actors interact with the chorus. In ancient Greek tragedies, there are typically 3 - 5 episodes which are usually, at least in part, sung or chanted. Each episode is terminated by a *stasimon* (see below).

Exode: The exit song of the Chorus after the final episode.

Filicide: Killing one's own children.

Foreshadowing: When information provided suggests what will happen later in the play or story (e.g. The Nurse foreshadowing that something bad will happen to the children).

Hamartia: A tragic flaw in, or mistake in judgement by, the *hero*. An example in *Medea* is Medea's decision to murder her children.

Hubris: Extreme pride or self-confidence. In *Medea*, an example of hubris is Jason's pride, which contributes to Medea's emotional irrationality.

Irony: Broadly, where what appears on the surface differs radically from what is actually the case. In *Medea*, *tragic irony* - where the words and actions of the characters contradict the real situation - is a key component of the play

Monologue - A solo speech by a character.

Parode: The entrance ode sung by the Chorus as they appear on stage for the first time.

Parados: Entrance of the Chorus.

Playwright: The author of the play. In *Medea*, Euripides is the playwright.

Prologue: A monologue or dialogue preceding the entry of the chorus, which presents the tragedy's topic. In *Medea*, The Nurse delivers the prologue.

Protagonist: The main character in the play or story. Medea is the protagonist of *Medea*.

Psychomachia: A battle for the soul. Medea experiences this inner conflict throughout the play.

Rhetoric: The art of discourse that aims to improve the ability of writers or speakers to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in certain situations.

Setting: Where the action of the play takes place (in *Medea*, outside of 'the house of Jason').

Stasimon/stasima: A choral ode where the Chorus comments on/reacts to the preceding episode. In contrast with the *strophe* and *antistrophe*, the Chorus remains stationary during this ode

Stichomythia: Dialogue where characters rapidly exchange single lines, usually to create dramatic tension. Many of the exchanges between Medea and Jason are examples of stichomythia.

Strophe: The portion of an ode sung by the Chorus, sung east to west.

Symbolism: Something or someone representing something else.

Theme: One of the significant ideas that the playwright explores throughout the play. Betrayal is a big theme in *Medea*.