

Two Brazilian Medeas: The Cases of Mata Teu Pai and Medeia Negra

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Abstract : The significance of Euripides' Medea for contemporary literature is noticeable. Even if the bulk of Classical Reception studies does not tend to look carefully and consistently to the literature produced outside the Anglophone world, Brazilian literature offers abundant materials for such studies. Indeed, a certain Classical background can be observed in Brazilian literature at least since 1975 when Gota d'Água [The Final Straw, in English], a play that recreates the story of Medea and sets it in a favela in Rio de Janeiro. Also worthy of notice is Ivo Bender's Trilogia Perversa [Perverse Trilogy, in English], a series of three historical plays set in Southern Brazil and based on Aeschylus' Oresteia and on Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis published in the 1980s. Since then, a number of works directly inspired by the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides have been published, not to mention several adaptations of Homer's two epic poems. This paper proposes a comparative analysis of two such works: Grace Passô's 2017 play Mata teu Pai [Kill your father, in English] and Marcia Lima's 2019 play Medeia Negra [Black Medea, in English] from the perspective of Classical Reception Studies in an intersection with feminist literary criticism. The paper intends to look at the endurance of Euripides' character in contemporary Brazilian literature with a focus on how the character seems to have acquired special relevance to the treatment of pressing issues of the twenty-first century. Whereas Grace Passô's play sets Medea at the center of a group of immigrant women, Marcia Lima has the character enact the dilemmas of incarcerated women in Brazil. The hypothesis that this research aims at testing is that both artists preserve the pathos of Euripides's original character at the same time that they recreate his Medea in concrete circumstances of Brazilian contemporary social reality. At the end, the research aims at stating the significance of the Medea theme to contemporary Brazilian literature.

Keywords : Euripides, Medea, Grace Passô, Marcia Lima, Brazilian literature

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