

Comparative Analysis of Sorrow in Shakespeare's Juliet and Homer's Andromache

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Abstract. The most memorable protagonists in any given piece of Classical Literature are often the characters who face and overcome the greatest psychological trials and obstacles. This article studies the choices of two such characters who both experience extreme and unimaginable sorrow – Homer's Andromache and Shakespeare's Juliet. While one character is content with her role in society, the other tries to break convention in order to be with her love. A deeper psychoanalytical study of their actions and choices, with particular emphasis on the effects of 'sorrow' through the lens of Freud's concepts of *bereavement* and *melancholia*, are analyzed in this article. From love and contentment, both women face trials and tribulations which lead to loss and death. However, both these characters' reactions toward their sorrows are what set them apart from one another; while one woman is idolized as the quintessential pinnacle of womanhood for all generations, the other is immortalized as the rebellious protagonist of a Shakespearean Romantic tragedy.

Key words: Homer, Shakespeare, Iliad, Romeo and Juliet, Freud

Šekspyro Džuljetos ir Homero Andromachės liūdesio lyginamoji analizė

Santrauka. Įsimintiniausi kiekvieno klasikinės literatūros kūrinio veikėjai dažnai yra tie, kurie susiduria su didžiausiais psichologiniais išbandymais bei kliūtimis ir jas įveikia. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamas dviejų tokių personažų, – Homero Andromachės ir Šekspyro Džuljetos – kurios abi patiria didžiulį sielvartą, pasirinkimas. Viena veikėja

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yra susitaikiusi su savo socialiniu vaidmeniu, o kita siekia pasipriešinti socialinėms konvencijoms, kad galėtų būti su savo mylimuoju. Taip pat straipsnyje analizuojamas gilesnis psichoanalitinis jų veiksmų ir pasirinkimo tyrimas, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant „liūdesio“ poveikiui pasitelkiant Froido netekties ir melancholijos sąvokas. Abi moterys patiria išbandymų ir sunkumų, kurie veda į netektį ir mirtį, tačiau abiejų šių veikėjų reakcija į sielvartą jas skiria vieną nuo kitos; viena iki šiol yra dievinama kaip moteriškumo viršūnė, o kita įamžinta kaip maištinga Šekspyro romantinės tragedijos herojė.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Homeras, Šekspyras, Iliada, Romeo ir Džuljeta, Froidas.

Introduction

Andromache and Juliet are classical characters who have reacted very differently when put into similar situations within the framework of their own literatures. From a furious battle in the foreground in both the texts, to the death of their beloved, to their final choice of life or death, both Juliet and Andromache are seen to have very different outcomes by the end of their respective timelines. This can be further illuminated by shedding light on the psychological impact of death and despair on the female characters of classical literature through the analytical lens of Freud's concepts of *bereavement* and *melancholia*. A deeper analysis of certain characteristics, particularly, their choices when faced with grief and reactions to similar plots, are further studied in this article.

Classical Literature is considered to be the cornerstone for a large number of literary devices and techniques. One constant among the works of Literature is that some of the more memorable protagonists of Classical Literature depict an emotion that is relatable to the audience even after decades of their initial creation. They educate the audience about some psychological characteristics that have defined societies, with the idea of fate in Virgil's *Aeneid*, indomitable rage in Homer's *Iliad* and ambition in Milton's *Paradise Lost* but to name a few (Chakraborty et al., 2023, p. 711). Characters in Classical Literature who exhibit this one resonating emotion can often be differentiated from their more modern counterparts only through their individual reactions to similar situations, leading one to a metaphorical and ethical victory and the other to moral and literal doom. It is this one critical choice or action that sets the Classical characters apart from Shakespeare's later renditions. For example, Aeneas accepted his fate as a part of a larger design while Macbeth tried to fight his fate till his dying breath and Achilles was able to calm his rage at the insistence of Priam, while Hamlet saw to the deaths of not only his enemy but also his beloved and his kin in the quest for retribution.

Andromache from Homer's *Iliad* and Juliet from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are no strangers to this concept. At first glance, these two women could not be further apart from each other. However, while Andromache is seen as the ideal woman and wife – beautiful, obedient and filial – during her time, Juliet represents the ideal woman of her time – free spirited, intelligent and beautiful. In much the same way, both the characters from the respective texts were put through life changing events through the progress of the texts. Wars and feuds have put not only their own lives, but also the lives of their families and the ones they love in jeopardy.

As mentioned before, there is a moment in the lives of both these women where they are to make a vital decision for their futures. This research seeks to find:

- (i) the effects of war and violence on the women of classical literature
- (ii) the responses of women when confronted with the loss of their loved ones, even when they were written centuries apart and
- (iii) the cognitive processes that guide women in classical literature to their eventual decisions when facing similar situations

through Freud's interpretation of *bereavement* and *melancholia*. It can be seen that while one character is able to psychologically surmount the trauma of loss through mourning, the other falls drastically into *melancholia* (Freud, 1917, p. 243). An examination of the usage of language and reactions through a psychoanalytical lens is conducted in this study to gain further understanding of the different choices Juliet and Andromache made when put in similar situations in their respective texts.

1. Literature Review

While there has been significant academic exploration of 'sorrow' in literature and the application of psychoanalytical theory to characters' emotions separately, there is a noticeable gap in the analysis of its repercussions on characters of Classical Literature. Further, this study seeks to examine the effects of *bereavement* and *melancholia* on women characters in Classical Literature, specifically to examine how the experiences of two iconic female literary characters – namely Andromache and Juliet – differ or align through a psychoanalytical lens.

According to Basirizadeh et al. (2020, p. 769), "[women] appear only as the object of desire or love", and do not have voices or opinions of their own in Literature. Crim (2014) claims that in the context of Homer's *Iliad*, while some women characters are "equal to men", they are never taken as such within the societies they belong to. Women were also seen to be the "mothers of future soldiers", rather than having any autonomy of their own (Crim, 2014). Helen, one of the more popular characters of *Iliad*, is remembered as the beautiful rebel who caused this great war as she fell in love with and later eloped with Paris. Andromache, on the other hand, is one of the secondary characters from the same text and, although she appears only three times throughout the epic, she is seen as one of the most dutiful, responsible and virtuous women of her time (North, 1977; Taylor, 2021; Crim, 2014; Carney, 1996). It can thus be seen that there is a limited exploration of societal expectations and gender roles influence on the grieving process of female characters in Literature. Indeed, if there is a character who falls outside these norms – such as Homer's Helen or Shakespeare's Juliet – who decide to pursue their ill-fated loves, there are dire consequences.

Further, Freud's depiction of *melancholia* has rendered his subject as a male patient in the lines "He really is as lacking in interest...", "He has a keener eye..." and "He must surely be right...", while the only two mentions of the female gender appear when mentioning 'her' in comparison to 'her husband' (Freud, 1917). Similarly, Andromache's

value and worth are established through the men in her life. She is the daughter-in-law of the King of Troy. She is the wife of Hector, the Prince of Troy, she is the mother of the future King of Troy and thus has royal status and consequent respect deserving of the title (Tuttle, 2021, p. 116). Throughout the verses, Andromache is described as the quintessential woman of contemporary times as she fulfils all her duties as a daughter-in-law, a wife and a mother.

In the text, although she claims that Hector is the only support for her and their young prince, who would be at the mercy of the enemy should Ilium fall (Rowe, 2016, p. 4), the final decision was made by the man who had to protect his brother – by the Prince who had to defend the kingdom's honor, by the *Subject* of the text and the advice of the *Other* are put aside. In this context, Hector is taken as the *Subject* while Andromache is taken as the *Other* through de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (2007, p. 75) where the *Other* merely exists in order to aid the *Subject* and is never to voice their own thoughts or opinions.

There is a stark change in the view of women in the texts of later ages. Shakespeare's heroine of the later era, Juliet, is seen as one of the pioneers of the strong, independent woman of the new age. She is a rebel with her own strength of will and opinions, who fights for her love in a patriarchal society. In a society which viewed men as the *Subject* and women as the *Other* (Beauvoir, 2007, p. 76), Juliet fights for her voice to be heard and her opinion to be respected. Beauvoir's emphasis on the 'secondary' role of women in a patriarchal society is even more evident in the Shakespearean text when Juliet's father forces her to marry a man of his choosing as she has reached the marriageable age. Here, Beauvoir implores her kin to stand up against and voice their opposition to this patriarchal viewpoint and social notion where the voices of intelligent, individual, free-thinking beings are not even heard. In Basirizadeh's (2020) opinion, "if women really want a status, they should deconstruct the structures of the masculine society and present their own definition of femineity". One can thus find that there is an insufficient exploration of how sorrow shapes the character development and trajectories of Andromache and Juliet, as it is the male characters who determine the paths that the women are to take. Andromache is honor-bound to let her husband ride to his death while Juliet is forced toward marrying a man she does not love.

While Andromache had more wisdom and experience in the area of facing Achilles in battle, her words fell on deaf ears as Hector was confident he would be able to protect his family from the fate that Andromache foretold. In this respect, Shakespeare's Juliet was a character ahead of her time. In *Romeo and Juliet*, she is shown to be intelligent, powerful, headstrong and willful to a fault (Das, 2012; Culpeper, 2009). The Renaissance was the era which was particularly known to introduce this notion of women taking charge of their own lives rather than accepting all the rules and restrictions set upon them by the men around them (Nimavat, 2017, p. 147). It is these different notions of freedom between Andromache and Juliet which contribute to their reactions and decisions when put into similar situations. While one chose to live on for duty, the other chose to end the suffering of being the *Other* in the story of their own life.

Additionally, there is insufficient study on the psychological impact of grief, including potential trauma and possible coping mechanisms employed by Andromache and Juliet. Freud details the importance of coping through mourning as it “impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live”, the lack of which could lead to *melancholia*, *hysteria* or even *mania* (Freud, 1917, p. 257). Here, in the context of this article, the ego is Andromache and Juliet while the Object is used to refer to Hector and Romeo respectively. Further, even if one is able to come out of *melancholia* relatively unchanged, *hysteria* and *mania* are at the extreme ends of the scale – while “[the object-cathexis] manifests its influence” in *hysteria*, *mania* is the “regression of the libido to narcissism” – from which there is no return (Freud, 1917, p. 257). Whether the subject is a sample patient in Freud’s research or if the character has a secondary role like Andromache or if she the protagonist of the story like Juliet, trauma, sorrow and grief are but a consequent collateral when surrounded by combat and warfare. It is the decisions, choices and viewpoints made as a result of these trials and tribulations that becomes vital to their individual coping mechanisms.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted through a psychoanalytical lens, using secondary data from previously existing literature by scholars in the same field. Psychoanalysis was introduced by Freud as a means of understanding the subconscious and unconscious mind. Although he is hesitant of the approach calling it not “entirely satisfactory”, Freud claims that the psychoanalytic method does indeed present solutions (Freud, 1917, p. 253). This clinical approach was used to distinguish and find a correlation between different mental ailments of his time, and was sometimes known as ‘depth psychology’ (Simanke, 2011, p. 258). Here, Foucault interpreted this theory as a way of understanding the human mind, and its reactions to certain emotional and external stimuli. Indeed, Derrida (1994) uses the terms ‘psychiatry’ and ‘psychoanalysis’ interchangeably in his works. Foucault believed in the power of words and psychoanalysis as the “purest version” of demonstrating power using words as the medium (Forrester, 2017, p. 217). Gearhart (1997, p. 460-462) goes on to contemplate the direct relation of “pleasure” with “power” where Foucault draws a direct relation of attaining “pleasure” through having “power” or “authority”. It can thus be deduced that “powerlessness” leads to “sorrow” or “grief”, as depicted in this study.

The correlation between Freud’s conceptualization of *bereavement* and *melancholia* and the portrayal of sorrow in the female characters of Classical Literature are also studied in this article. The first precondition of *melancholia* is the “loss of the object”. This refers to the loss of not only a loved person, but could also be “one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on” (Freud, 1917, p. 243). Concurrently, it can be argued that the greatest losses are suffered during war and, as such, it becomes pertinent to study the psychological effects of war and violence on the women of Classical Literature.

Freud’s second precondition stems from an ambivalence of emotions toward an object. In other words, coexistence of contradictory feelings or attitudes towards an object or

person and how individuals experiencing grief may have ambivalent feelings towards the deceased. They may simultaneously harbor feelings of love, anger, guilt, and resentment towards the lost loved one. The person may thus choose from an array of responses when confronted with the loss of their loved ones. This choice is also what sets Andromache and Juliet apart from one another, as later discussed in this article.

The final precondition of *melancholia* is the “regression of the libido into the ego” (Freud, 1917, p. 257). That is, when the libido of an individual is halted in the process of its acquisition due to loss or death, the ego is not able to come to terms with this sudden cessation. It is only through the proper process of mourning that the individual would be able to overcome the oncoming of *melancholia*. Indeed, Freud opines that “melancholia ... passes off after a certain time has elapsed without leaving traces of any gross changes” (1917, p. 252). On the other hand, the successful regression of the libido into the ego would lead to *mania*, where “the ego must not have got over the loss of the object” (Freud, 1917, p. 255). It then becomes vital to study the cognitive processes that guide women in Classical Literature through their mourning, or lack thereof, to appreciate the difference in their eventual decisions when facing similar situations.

While there has been significant academic exploration of ‘sorrow’ in literature and the application of psychoanalytical theory to characters’ emotions, there is a noticeable gap in comparative studies that specifically examine how the experiences of two iconic female literary characters – namely Andromache and Juliet – differ or align within the framework of psychoanalytical theory. As can be gathered from above, some of these gaps in study are:

- (i) insufficient exploration of how sorrow shapes the character development and trajectories of Andromache and Juliet when effected by violence
- (ii) limited exploration of societal expectations and gender roles influence on the grieving process and *bereavement* of Andromache and Juliet and
- (iii) insufficient research on the psychological impact of grief, including potential trauma, possible coping mechanisms and decisions when influenced by *melancholia*.

The perception of sorrow and grief has evolved over time and so has its implications for literary analysis. This study aims to bridge this gap by delving into the distinct psychoanalytical dimensions of the grief processes of both Andromache and Juliet, potentially shedding new light on the understanding of sorrow in literature and on the human psyche. This study will involve an in-depth analysis of the characters’ responses to grief in terms of Freud’s definition of *bereavement* and *melancholia* to explore how their cultural and contextual differences influence their psychological reactions to loss (Freud, 1917). By addressing these research gaps, this study will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the representation of sorrow in Classical Literature and shed light on the unique experiences of Andromache and Juliet in their respective cultural and literary contexts.

Freud believed that the “psycho-analytic method has succeeded in arriving at a solution and effecting a therapeutic improvement” (Freud, 1917, p. 253). A psychoanalytic approach is also used in this article to analyse the particular characteristics and choices made by the characters in similar settings and situations in both the texts (Kelly, 2020,

p. 100). Indeed, psychoanalysis also interprets and analyses “investigations of meaning... through discourse and narrative analysis”, to the point of becoming a methodological tool (Frosh *et al.*, 2016). However, the individual viewpoints, the consequent decisions and the choices made as a result of those decisions are all pivotal to the subsequent physical actions undertaken by the characters in both the epic and the play. A psychoanalytical examination would help in delving deeper into the character traits and personalities of these characters to show why they chose to undertake the actions that they did. This approach is used to analyse fictional characters in terms of “their psychological reality” (Hossain, 2017, p. 42). While Frattaroli (1987, p. 411) addresses the issue of the legitimacy of using psychoanalysis to decipher the human condition, he concludes by claiming that this is, in fact, not a naïve or misguided notion. In his work, Frattaroli analyses previous scholars who claim that the psychoanalytical theory has “fallen into disrepute”, especially for Shakespearean characters, as these characters were written with a particular era in mind, and would not help in deciphering decisions in terms of later decades. On the other hand, it is the duty of the psychoanalyst to keep these ideas in mind when making a critical analysis of a character written in a text, no matter what era the author is from or even the year that the scholar is from. Indeed, if anything, the concrete characteristics and personality traits demonstrated in a piece of literature becomes a reflection of the era itself, as well as the culture and society of that geographical location of the time, thereby adding to the wealth of information provided by the one text.

The psychoanalytical approach is also important when considering the fact that literature is a medium of conveying the thought process, rather than focusing on the physicality of the characters. That is, literature is focused primarily on the dialogue of characters, both internal and external (Cefalu, 2013, p. 286). However, while Foucault was ambivalent in his opinion of the Freudian Psychoanalytical Criticism Approach, he claims that adding “existential phenomenology” would better explain “certain dimensions of the human experience” (Kelly, 2020, p. 98). In other words, the characters in a text have their own “unconscious internal states that motivate [their] overt actions” (Solod, 2017). They have their own ideologies, aims, beliefs and truths. Subsequently, even if it becomes difficult to assume some other being's intentions and truths, it then becomes imperative to decipher the meaning behind the physical actions made by them. The characters' actions and reactions to certain stimuli present a point of reference or a touchstone for the reader who may not have ever been in a similar situation before.

Much like Freud's own claims, this article would also like to “drop all claim to general validity” of the findings and results. That being said, with “the means of investigation at our disposal to-day”, this article distinguishes itself by reflecting upon the importance of understanding the difference between the psychological implications of terms such as *bereavement* and *melancholia* and how they are different from *mourning* and *mania* (Freud, 1917, p. 243). While there is a larger focus on *bereavement* and *melancholia*, this research would like to also illumine the importance of the placement of perception of the self and the ego.

Therefore, a critical psychoanalytical study of these characters – Andromache and Juliet – would help better understand the effects of sorrow and grief in women who are surrounded by war. With reference to Andromache and Juliet in these settings, both *Iliad* and *Romeo and Juliet* also demonstrate the effects of violence and subjugation on all those involved. Whether the character has a secondary role like Andromache or is the protagonist in the story like Juliet, sorrow and grief is but a consequence of combat and warfare. It is the decisions, choices and viewpoints made as a result of these trials and tribulations that becomes vital to their individual coping mechanisms.

3.1. Effects of Violence

This section deals with the psychological effects of war and violence on the women of classical literature, particularly how sorrow shapes the character development and trajectories of Andromache and Juliet. Although Andromache is one of the secondary characters in the Homeric epic, *Iliad*, her portrayal is significant in highlighting the role of women in and the human cost of war. As the wife of Hector, one of the greatest Trojan warriors, Andromache's character is primarily defined by her role as a wife and mother. She is portrayed as a loving and devoted wife who deeply cares for her husband, his welfare and her entire family. Her love for Hector is further demonstrated in her grief and devastation after his death, which leaves her a widow and single mother. Her intelligence and insight can also be seen in the following extract, when Andromache warns Hector of the consequences of his actions and the potential harm that his death could bring to their family.

*“Thy own great courage will cut short thy days,
My noble Hector! neither pitiest thou
Thy helpless infant, or my hapless self,
Whose widowhood is near; for thou wilt fall”* (Homer, 2019, 6.499-502)

Andromache speaks from experience of her past and her words are a stark reminder of the devastating impact that war can have on individuals and communities. Andromache knows of Achilles' invincibility on the battlefield and is sure of the fate that awaits Hector, should he face Achilles at the Scaean Gates. As a mother, Andromache's character is also defined by her concern for her young son, Astyanax. Her own position in society is first defined by her husband, the Prince of Troy and then by her son, were he to grow up to be the Prince as well. She worries about his future and the fate that awaits him after the fall of Troy, as she knows firsthand of the consequences of war.

*“When Cilicia's city, Thebes
The populous, was by Achilles sack'd.
He slew my father;
...
My seven brothers, glory of our house,
All in one day descended to the shades;
For brave Achilles,”* (Homer, 2019, 6.508-517)

Through the above lines, Andromache also reminds Hector that, although her mother's life had been spared, her own Father and all her brothers were also killed by the 'swift-footed' Achilles. She warns Hector of Achilles' battle prowess and implores Hector to reconsider his stance. Her trauma of having lost most of her family is evident with the usage of phrases like 'slew my father', 'glory of our house' and 'descended to the shades', referring to their untimely deaths. As a daughter, she has already had to mourn the loss of her family once.

Here, Rowe (2014, p. 4) claims that it was only due to his desire for *kleos*, or 'fame' that Hector repeatedly went out to battle and finally went out to meet Achilles in the duel to death which resulted in his eventual demise. Andromache counselled him against his quest for *kleos* as both she and their young son depend completely on Hector's status as a Prince to survive, and by facing Achilles, Hector would be sealing all their fates to doom. Should the city of Troy fall, they would be the first to be attacked as the heirs to the throne of the great city. As Andromache begins to understand that Hector is honor-bound to fight Achilles, she has already begun the psychological process of *bereavement*.

"I in thee
Find parents, brothers, all that I have lost.
...
But guard this turret, lest of me thou make
...
By search and observation, in that part
Each Ajax with Idomeneus of Crete,
The sons of Atreus, and the valiant son
Of Tydeus, have now thrice assail'd the town." (Homer, 2019, 6.524-535)

In the above lines, Andromache tries to convince Hector that there are no victors in battle and it would be more prudent to increase the defenses to the vulnerabilities of the wall surrounding the city. She demonstrates her intelligence when she points out that a particular section of the wall has been attacked on no less than three separate occasions. She also has more experience of having seen Achilles in battle, and suggests a more defensive approach rather than an offensive one. However, the final decisions are all made by the men around her who are more sure of their own choices, thereby belittling her virtues at every turn. The psychological impact of this repeated subjugation can be seen upon the death of Hector when Andromache's wails could be heard from the walls of Ilium. Although she has begun her process of *bereavement* as Hector leaving for battle is reminiscent of her father and brothers striding to their deaths so many years prior, one could argue that this gave the opportunity to Andromache to begin her process of mourning, and not devolve into *melancholia* or *mania*.

Similarly, Juliet is also seen to be a woman of many virtues. She is the protagonist and one of the central characters in Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*. She is depicted as a complex and multi-dimensional character who was one of the pioneers of women with the fortitude to speak her own mind. As mentioned before, she is also a character before her time as she demonstrates a strong will, firm opinions and intelligence while her peers

were more docile and subservient. However, the young and innocent Juliet is thrown into a world of violence and hatred by the feud between her family and the Montagues. The Capulets and the Montagues have been at odds with each other for some time before the start of the play as they each want to gain more power by currying the favor of the King of Italy and hold his attention. By navigating through this situation throughout the play, Juliet undergoes a transformation as she faces the challenges and obstacles that are put in front of her, as she falls irrevocably in love with Romeo, as can be seen in the following lines:

*“My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.”* (Shakespeare, 1993, 2.2.133-135)

At the start of the play, Juliet is portrayed as a dutiful daughter who is obedient to her parents' wishes. However, as she falls in love with Romeo, a Montague, she has to defend her love at every stage. She thus becomes more independent and assertive, defying her family and society to be with him. As can be seen in the above lines, Juliet's love for Romeo is intense and passionate, and she is willing to risk everything to be with him. She is deeply committed to their relationship, and her unwavering loyalty to Romeo is a testament to the strength of her character as can be seen in the following lines:

*“Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo, and, when I shall die,
...
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,”* (Shakespeare, 1993, 3.2.20-26)

However, Juliet is not without her flaws. Her impulsive nature leads her to firstly fall in love with the first man who woos her and then she proceeds to make hasty decisions, such as agreeing to marry Romeo after knowing him for only a short time. She has just begun to taste freedom and is convinced that her love for Romeo will lead to her independence and salvation. This impulsiveness ultimately leads to tragic consequences, as her decision to fake her own death ultimately leads to not only the deaths of both herself and Romeo, but also becomes an event traumatic enough for all Montagues and Capulets to cease fire from both sides and forsake their feud.

War affects the women characters of Classical Literature differently. Andromache uses her traumatic past experience to aid and advice Hector. However, her words fall on deaf ears as her husband makes the final decision to face the invulnerable Achilles on the battlefield. Andromache is certain of her family's defeat when she says “my hapless self, whose widowhood is near; for thou wilt fall” and has begun her mourning from before the actual battle itself.

Freud's concepts of *bereavement* and *melancholia* provide a useful framework for understanding Andromache's reactions to her sorrow in Homer's *Iliad*. *Bereavement*, as defined by Freud, represents the profound sense of loss experienced after the death of a beloved. In Andromache's case, the loss of her husband, Hector, undoubtedly plunges her

into a state of *bereavement*. She is depicted mourning Hector's death with intense grief, expressing her sorrow through lamentations and rituals of mourning, which aligns with Freud's notion of *bereavement* as a natural response to loss.

In Juliet's case, the loss of Romeo also plunges her into a state of *bereavement*. Her initial reaction to Romeo's banishment is one of shock and despair, as she grapples with the devastating realization that she may never see him again. This aligns with Freud's notion of *bereavement* as a natural response to loss, characterized by intense grief and sorrow. Additionally, her fierce devotion to Romeo, her courage in the face of adversity and her creative intelligence in the hopes of eking out a future for herself and her beloved make her a powerful and memorable character. Her sorrow of having to part from Romeo gives her the incentive and motivation to devise the plan to run away from her own home and to take the drug to slow her heart. In this way, it can be seen that while Andromache uses her past experience to know of the fatal collateral of war and thus steels herself to that eventuality, Juliet's tragic fate serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of impulsive decisions and the destructive nature of power, hate and violence.

3.2. Bereavement and Death

According to Freud's idea of *bereavement*, sorrow makes the world appear to have lost all beauty and, if the individual finds no reason to hold on, will lead to *melancholia* (Freud, 1917, p. 243). In other words, *bereavement* is the direct repercussion of feeling immense loss. As discussed above, when Andromache and Juliet lose all hope of seeing their beloved again, they both feel a sense of *bereavement* in all their consequent actions. However, unlike *melancholia*, the feeling of *bereavement* does not stop one from intelligible daily functions, and as such, the women are able to make decisions for themselves.

Sorrow and grief are pervasive themes throughout Homer's epic poem, *Iliad*, and is particularly significant in the character of Andromache. As the wife of Hector, the Prince and the greatest Trojan warrior, Andromache's grief serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating impact of war and violence.

“My hero! thou hast fallen in prime of life,
Me leaving here desolate, and the fruit
...
Faithful protector of her spotless wives,
And all their little ones.” (Homer, 2019, 21.911-919)

Andromache's grief is first portrayed in Book 22, when she learns of her husband's death in battle. Indeed, she was away from the battlefield and was working on her loom in her own chamber, as was expected of a lady of her stature in her time and she got to learn of it from the sounds of Hector's mother's wails from the wall of Troy. She feels her “heart [leap] to her mouth” and her “knees are numbed” as she gasps for air. According to Freud (1917), *bereavement* is another form of *mourning* and, as such, from this point on, Andromache is depicted as merely one of the prime mourners of Ilium (Rowe, 2014, p. 4) as this loud expressive wailing and grieving was the way to mourn in ancient Greece.

Her initial reaction is one of shock and disbelief, but this quickly gives way to deep sadness and despair as she realizes the full extent of her loss. She was found to be “wailing” as she “spake among the women of Troy” when she claims “woe is me” and “me thou leavest in bitter grief”. Her lamentations are some of the most emotional and impactful in the poem, as she mourns not just for her husband but for the future that has been taken from her and her son and from Troy. Her story also serves as a warning against the dangers of pride and honor-bound duty, as Hector’s death is ultimately the result of his inability and refusal to back down from a battle that he knows he cannot win.

*“But thee, my child!
Either thy fate shall with thy mother send
...
Seizing, shall hurl thee from a turret-top
To a sad death, avenging brother, son,
Or father by the hands of Hector slain;”* (Homer, 2019, 21.921-928)

Andromache initially experiences *bereavement* as her grief takes on its characteristics when she grapples with the harsh realities of her situation. She is not only devastated by Hector’s death but also at facing the daunting prospect of life as a widow and single mother in a society ravaged by war as can be seen in the above lines. This realization of her altered identity and uncertain future may contribute to feelings of despair, self-doubt, and a sense of unworthiness, which would lead to Freud’s concept of *melancholia*. However, Andromache is able to stop herself from falling into the clutches of *melancholia* as she does not have any “delusional expectation of punishment” (Freud, 1917, p. 244).

On the other hand, as Juliet confronts the harsh realities of Romeo’s banishment and the prospect of life without him, her grief begins to deepen into *melancholia*. She experiences feelings of guilt and self-blame, questioning her role in the tragic events that have unfolded. Juliet’s decision to feign her own death can also be interpreted as a manifestation of *mania*, as she becomes increasingly disconnected from reality and desperate to escape her pain.

Similarly, Juliet’s loss of Romeo is a pivotal moment in Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and is a powerful example of the devastating impact of loss on love. When Romeo is banished from Verona after killing Tybalt, Juliet is left alone and struggling to come to terms with the depth of her love and the impossibility of their relationship. Although Romeo has not yet died, the separation to her feels like the death of their love, making her feel the intense pang of *bereavement*. The primary difference between Andromache and Juliet thus becomes in their acceptance of their situation – where one woman begins the rational mourning process and accepts her destiny, Juliet is unable to accept her future without Romeo and begins to lose sight of reason.

*“Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.
O churl, drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips,
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative.”* (Shakespeare, 1993, 5.3.162-166)

The above lines clearly demonstrate Juliet's desperation after having found Romeo dead due to poison – when she finds no remnant of the poison in the vial, she hopes that there will be enough poison on his lips to complete the deed. As mentioned before, this is also a typical trait of *melancholia* where the individual “culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment” as the loss “demands that all libido shall be withdrawn” leading to an “impoverishment of [the individual's] ego on a grand scale” (Freud, 1917, p. 244). The loss of Romeo is particularly devastating for Juliet, as he is not only her lover but also her confidant and friend. Romeo had become an integral part of Juliet's life, and the prospect of living without him becomes unbearable to her. Moreover, the loss of Romeo highlights the powerlessness of the lovers in the face of social expectations and norms.

This section shows the very different responses of the women of classical literature when facing the loss of their loved ones. While one woman accepts the reality of her situation, and begins to mourn after her initial reaction of *bereavement*, the other no longer holds on to reason as she begins her descent into *melancholia* instead. Homeric society expected women to grieve, wail and mourn immediately after hearing of the loss of a beloved. This expression of sorrow made sure that the mourners were completely aware of the new situation they found themselves in. Juliet on the other had kept her hope of being with Romeo alive until the very end. Upon Romeo's banishment, her feeling of loss was so great that she suggested going against the norm of society as she faked her own death and began to lose her sense of reason, thereby delving deeper into *melancholia*.

3.3. Melancholia and Fatal Decisions

Freud (1917, p. 243) defines excessive grief as *bereavement* which appears after the loss of a beloved. *Melancholia*, on the other hand, is when one feels themselves unworthy of love or life. Simply existing seems to be painful as they fall further into a vortex of self-loathing and depression. And, as literature is primarily focused on the internal and external dialogues of characters, the characters' words demonstrate the direct impact that the death of their respective loved ones have on those characters (Cefalu, 2013, p. 286).

At the precipice of death, both the women are faced with a decision that would forever change their lives. Once their protector, confidant and beloved have perished, both the women react differently to the situations put in front of them. It is this reaction that sets the two women apart from one another. Andromache's choice to continue living in the *Iliad* is a testament to her resilience and strength in the face of overwhelming loss and grief. After the death of her husband, Hector, Andromache is left to raise their son, Astyanax, on her own, with no protection or support from her family or community. Although she knows that her son “will suffer ills full many” and of the bleakness and doom in their future, she is resolute about living on in the faintest hope of survival, clearly showing that she does not fall into *melancholia*. She has faced extreme loss when her own family was killed by Achilles, and knows the fate awaiting both herself and her son once Hector has died when she claims the following lines:

*"My hero! thou hast fallen in prime of life,
Me leaving here desolate, and the fruit
Of our ill-fated loves, a helpless child,
Whom grown to manhood I despair to see."* (Homer, 2019, 24.911-914)

Despite the immense pain and suffering that she experiences, Andromache chooses to keep living and fighting for her son's future. With her previous trauma of losing her family to Achilles' blade, and again her husband, there was a chance that she could have dived deeper into *melancholia*, as, if the 'mourner' has only themselves "to blame for the loss of the loved object", they would fall further into *mania* (Freud, 1917, p. 251). But she is absolved of this fate as she has done all in her power to stop Hector from going into battle. Additionally, in order for one to fall into *mania*, "the ego must have got over the loss of the object". It is only through mourning that the ego is able to declare the object as completely dead thereby "offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live" (Freud, 1917, p. 257). Her decision to live is also driven by a deep sense of duty and love for her son, as well as a recognition of the importance of his future in maintaining the legacy of her husband and his people. As a witness to a devastating battle before, in the following lines, it is evident that Andromache knows the outcome of the defeated Hector's corpse on the other side of the Trojan wall:

*"But now by the beaked ships
far from thy parents shall writhing worms devour thee,
when the dogs have had their fill, as thou liest a naked corpse;"* (Homer, 2019, 22.507-510)

Andromache's resilience is particularly significant in the context of the *Iliad*, which is a story of war and conflict. While unchecked *bereavement* would lead her to *melancholia*, Andromache is able to properly mourn the loss of her husband, country and title in a way through which she is able to come to terms with the loss of her 'object', Hector. According to Freud, "mourning impels the ego to give up the object ... and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live" (1917, p. 257). Her decision to keep living and raising her son in the midst of this violence is a powerful rejection of the idea that war and death are the only possible outcomes of human conflict.

Andromache's initial expressions of grief and mourning align with *bereavement*, as she engages in customary mourning rituals and openly expresses her sorrow. This becomes an imperative part of the healing process as when the "mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (Freud, 1917, p. 245). In so doing, even as the reality of her situation sets in and she confronts the challenges of widowhood and single parenthood, Andromache is able to face them logically without letting grief take over her mental faculties. Andromache's decision is a reflection of her strength as a woman in a patriarchal society. As a widow and single mother, she faces immense challenges and obstacles, but she refuses to be defined by her circumstances or to give up in the face of adversity. Her determination to continue living and fighting for her son's future is a powerful example of female agency and autonomy in a society that often seeks to limit women's power and influence. Andromache's choice to go on in Homer's *Iliad* is a testa-

ment to her resilience, strength, and determination in the face of overwhelming loss and grief. Though she bereaves the loss of her husband, she does not fall into *melancholia*. Her story serves as a powerful reminder of the human capacity for resilience and hope in the midst of even the most challenging circumstances. She knows that although the future is bleak, she must remain strong for her young son.

On the other hand, when faced with a similar situation where her beloved has died, Juliet's decision is the opposite of Andromache. Juliet's expressions of grief and despair align first with *bereavement*, as she mourns the loss of her beloved and openly expresses her sorrow. However, as she grapples with the consequences of Romeo's banishment and the societal pressures that threaten to separate them forever, Juliet's grief deepens into *melancholia*. She struggles with feelings of loss, worthlessness and hopelessness, as she contemplates a future without Romeo and questions the meaning of life itself. This comes also from an overwhelming understanding of both *whom* and *what* has been lost. Freud (1917, p. 246) continues that when the ego becomes "worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; [the subject] reproaches [themselves]". Overcome with sorrow, Juliet's decision to kill herself in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragic end to a story of young love thwarted by circumstances beyond the lovers' control. Juliet's decision to take her own life is driven by a combination of factors, including her deep love for Romeo, her despair at their separation, and her fear of being forced into a marriage with Paris, a man introduced to her by her father whom she does not love. She claims to her father that she would rather die than marry a man she does not love, as she is deeply in love with Romeo. She thus exclaims to her father in the following lines:

*"Delay this marriage for a month, a week,
Or if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies."* (Shakespeare, 1993, 3.5.199-201)

Throughout the play, Juliet demonstrates a remarkable strength of character, as she defies the expectations of her family and society to pursue her love for Romeo. She voices her loathe for the man selected for her by her father – a diversion from the standard of her era – and is confident that she is in love with Romeo. With her initial separation from Romeo, Juliet can be seen to mourn his loss in the true form of Freudian *bereavement*. However, when she finds the lifeless body of her beloved, she sees no further point in living, a clear sign of *melancholia* where the subject overcomes "the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life" (Freud, 1917, p. 246). Therefore, her final decision to take her own life is a reflection of the overwhelming despair that she feels at the prospect of living without him, which can be seen in the following lines:

*"O happy dagger,
This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die."* (Shakespeare, 1993, 5.3.168-169)

This extreme trauma that Juliet feels "culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" as she does not have even a moment to mourn, as opposed to her Homeric counterpart. This sudden removal of the "loved object" proceeds to "demand that all

libido shall be withdrawn” (Freud, 1917, p. 244). This also leads the subject to remove themselves from reality itself as this ambivalence is particularly intense in nature.

Indeed, it is studied that there is a certain enjoyment in ‘self-tormenting’ in *melancholia* (Freud, 1917, p. 251), because of which Juliet calls the blade a “happy dagger”. Thus, in the above lines, she plunges the dagger into herself, calling her vassal a “sheath” for the blade, to rust there for eternity in her blood. Her hopelessness in the face of such unsurmountable adversity marks her as different from her counterpart, Andromache. Where the woman of Troy was determined to live on with the fond memories of her dearly departed husband, Juliet was incapable of accepting the loss of her beloved. The thought of living alone, surrounded by hate and violence was something that she could not welcome.

Andromache’s resilience in the face of sorrow helped her steer away from *melancholia*. While she was traumatized by her husband’s death upon the battlefield, she had begun to mourn and ‘bereave’ for him as she was experienced in the potential outcomes of war. This helped her in keeping her sense of reason and logic as she held on to hope for the sake of her son as a coping mechanism. Juliet, on the other hand, was young and unaccustomed to war and violence. As such, the sudden vision of her dead lover traumatized her into taking a fatal decision. As she lost sight of reason, a clear sign of *melancholia*, she immediately decided to take the plunge and take her own life. Her coping mechanism became an escape out of this reality by committing suicide beside her beloved because there was simply no other way out of her grief.

Conclusion

The most memorable protagonists in any given piece of Classical Literature are often the characters who face and overcome the greatest psychological trials and obstacles. This article studies the choices of two such characters who both experience extreme and unimaginable sorrow – Homer’s Andromache and Shakespeare’s Juliet. While one character is content with her role in society, the other tries to break convention in order to be with her love. From love and contentment, both women face trials and tribulations which lead to loss and death. However, both these characters’ reactions toward their sorrows are what sets them apart from one another.

According to Freud’s conceptualization of *bereavement*, sorrow has the power to distort one’s perception of the world, stripping it of all beauty and leading to a state of *melancholia*, if the individual fails to find a compelling reason to persevere (Freud, 1917). In other words, Freud (1917) delineates excessive grief as *bereavement*, precipitated by the loss of a beloved. *Melancholia*, conversely, manifests when individuals perceive themselves as undeserving of love or life. Merely existing becomes an ordeal as they spiral further into a vortex of self-loathing and despondency. In essence, *bereavement* is the immediate consequence of experiencing profound loss. When confronted with the irrevocable absence of their beloved, both Andromache and Juliet are plunged into a profound sense of *bereavement*, profoundly shaping their subsequent actions. However, it is important to note that, unlike *melancholia*, *bereavement* does not incapacitate one’s

ability to engage in rational daily activities, allowing these women to retain agency and autonomy in decision-making processes.

Through this qualitative study, it was found that war and violence have a direct emotional and psychological effect on the lives of all. The women of Classical Literature, particularly Andromache and Juliet, show that sorrow can shape character development and the trajectory of one's life. Andromache uses her past experiences to advice, understand and accept the possible outcomes of war. Juliet, who has no prior experience in the matter makes wrong decisions which ultimately costs the lives of both Romeo and herself. This discourse also highlights the starkly contrasting responses exhibited by the female protagonists of Classical Literature when confronted with the loss of their loved ones. While one woman acknowledges the grim reality of her circumstances and embarks on the journey of mourning subsequent to her initial experience of *bereavement*, the other succumbs to a descent into *melancholia*. In the society depicted by Homer, it was expected for women to immediately express their grief through lamentation, wailing, and mourning upon learning of the loss of a beloved. This outward expression of sorrow served as a societal mechanism to ensure that mourners were fully cognizant of the new reality thrust upon them. Conversely, Juliet clung to the hope of reuniting with Romeo until the very end. Upon Romeo's banishment, her sense of loss was so profound that she entertained the notion of defying societal norms, ultimately resorting to the drastic measure of faking her own death. This act of defiance against societal conventions and the subsequent erosion of her rational faculties plunged her deeper into the abyss of *melancholia*.

It can thus be seen that denial and vengeance do not serve as proper substitutes to sorrow or mourning and ultimately lead to a more precipitous depression and defeat. It is only through mourning and acceptance that one can overcome the overwhelming feelings of grief and loss. With reference to Andromache and Juliet in these settings, both *Iliad* and *Romeo and Juliet* also demonstrate the effects of violence and subjugation on all those involved. Whether the character has a secondary role like Andromache or is the protagonist of the story like Juliet, sorrow and grief are but a consequent collateral when surrounded by combat and warfare. It is the decisions, choices and viewpoints created as a result of these trials and tribulations that become vital to their individual coping mechanisms.

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