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Medea
Dossier

While trying to create a matrix for *Medea*, I went through the play again and pulled out words and quotes that intrigued me and created a picture of the play from my perspective, in my head. I drew words such as anguish, despair, obsession, and distraught from the text and thus had the driving factor to create my matrix. “Dark red light, seeping through a world creating anguish and despair, making movements over an obsessive soul,” had become the description that I referred back to while searching for other inspiration.

I want the audience to feel the darkness that sets in and controls Medea’s world, and for them to understand the feeling of obsession that holds her body. I picture a dark red light, seeping into her brain and the world as well, creating the despair and anguish that she feels. A quotation that I found interesting from page 139 of the text is, “Unhappy thoughts and youth never go together,” which intrigued me because it seems in the play that this is the exact opposite of this. I wanted that to be exposed through the direction of this play, and for the audience to feel the despair and pain that Medea was feeling. Even though Jason is considered the protagonist in the play, I wanted the audience to have a better understanding of why Medea did what she had done, instead of just looking at her as a crazy woman. An important part of doing this was researching a method in which to get the actors into their characters. In researching this, it became clear to me that I had to do the same thing. “You relax in order to show that you have control of yourself. Then you concentrate to have control of the imaginary objects you wish to

create” (Cohen 4) sparked in me that as a director I needed to control my thoughts as well. I needed to make sure that my vision was clear so that it would be clear for others as well. As a director I must make sure that the audience can also understand the time setting of the play, “When choosing the repertory, the director should be able to understand life’s social and psychological phenomena” (Moore 157) meaning that for the audience to understand the play, I must understand it as well.

In my head, I had an image of sticky blood forcing it’s way from underneath a door, after Medea has slain her children. I knew immediately what this picture reminded me of. One of my favorite artists, Anish Kapoor, does a lot of work with blood red, sticky wax. In one piece, he shoots the wax out of a canon that clumps into the corner of a wall and then seeps out from the bottom of the pile. As the wax spreads from the corner, it looks like seeping blood, much similar to that in the play. Kapoor himself explains his red wax pieces, “This enormous red mass reminiscent of compacted blood evokes an almost apocalyptic image,” (Kapoor) which is exactly what the red blood seeping from underneath a door would remind me of. This is one of my main focuses of spectacle in the play because it is the point in which Jason and the women understand what Medea has done, and in a large sense shows that Medea has come to her end and followed through with the ideas that she pondered over in her mind.

I chose to portray Medea as a 1950’s housewife, set in a southern town, because I had a clear picture in my head of an obsessive southern housewife going crazy. In the beginning of the play, Medea is caught off guard by the idea that her husband Jason is leaving her for a younger woman. She has a hard time dealing with this shock. In the 1950’s southern housewives were put-together mothers and wives who kept the house running with smiles on their faces, serving

their husbands dinner at the same time every night; it was commonplace for the women's job to run the household. Also, to these women, their children were their lives. It is easy to understand how this lifestyle would shift after the wife found out her husband was leaving her for a younger woman, especially if it would mean that they would be losing their children. In the book *Beloved* written by Toni Morrison, the mother Sethe tries to kill all of her children because she wants to put them somewhere where they would be safe. "I stopped him, I took and put my babies where they'd be safe," (Morrison 164). It is easy to understand that this is the same way that Medea would feel, trying to continue her mothering but putting her babies "somewhere safe" if she would not be around. This research proving that other mothers would feel a similar way to Medea make Medea a more relatable character.

The 1950's were a time full of change. Rock n' Roll became popular in America, letting people feel free as they began to let loose and have fun. The Civil Rights movement also occurred in the late 1950's which set a tone of almost distress in the south as people in the south were not comfortable with this movement. This distress, and unrest, creates the perfect scene for a housewife gone mad. This creates the perfect setting for Medea's change in character. This interaction with the setting will slowly reveal more and more of Medea's character. "Strong emotions and fierce inner conflicts must have external expression in space, in time, and in movement" (158 Moore) pushed me to really show the audience the extent that Medea went through because of her emotions.