

Femininity, Fatality, and Fastening: The Roles of Gender and Physical Metaphor in Euripides' *Hecuba*

In Euripides' *Hecuba*, Hecuba and her daughter Polyxena are aware of their respective fates. Hecuba states this repeatedly throughout the story, describing herself as πάντα δυστυχῶ (“entirely unlucky,” 428), though she resists her fate. Polyxena, on the other hand, is directly made aware of her fate and accepts it with open arms.

On my poster, I argue that the entanglement of Hecuba's fate with her children, particularly with her daughter Polyxena, means that while she is aware that she will die childless, she feels she may be able to prevent the fate of her daughter Polyxena, creating a logical fallacy. I conclude that the difference in the fates of the two lies in their positionality within womanhood—one being a daughter, the other a mother. Furthermore I will show how the role of physical metaphor is essential to these differences in reaction to fate, with Hecuba and Polyxena being each “sieved” by fate in different ways.

My poster is comprised of five sections: two sections describing the characters' interactions with fate (one with Polyxena discussing her sacrifice and the other Hecuba discussing her actions to prevent fate), one comparing and contrasting these reactions, one discussing the involvement of physical metaphor, and finally a conclusion. I wrote this paper with the intention of discovering how Polyxena and Hecuba interact differently with fate in the text, and my methodology is entirely philological.

Bibliography

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