

**Dark Ladies, Bad Girls, Demon Queens:
Female Power and Seduction from Greek
Tragedy to Pop Culture ¹**

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The visual and performing arts are today a vital area of research, in which classical studies can develop, gain social support and encounter wider audiences, especially among young people. Classics are considered less and less to be hierarchical and alien to younger generations, a development aided by new teaching modes and the study of adaptations in theatre, cinema, TV series, cartoons and comics, illustrations, photography and so on.²

A good sample of these new perspectives and interactions was presented in this volume, which combines different scholars with a wide variety of interests: mine is Ancient Drama, so I will try to connect the general theme and some of the papers delivered at the conference to a few questions I would like to focus on. They are mainly related to the images of Seduction and Power: where do they come from? Did the dramatists create them or did they receive them from other sources? And what about modern performances of Greek dramas, how do these images come to the stage nowadays? In order to answer these questions, I will draw on my study and my practical experience in adaptations and modern performances of classical dramas: I have worked and am still working on several classical productions, liaising with directors, actors, and set and light designers.³ When we read texts and set them on the stage, when someone creates a dress or designs a set, I always try to understand which images come to their minds and why, and which images or symbols are selected and finally included in the theatre production.

In my experience, some images are widespread and based on stereotypes, recurring more frequently than others; some are rare and bizarre, obscure and unexpected. They may not be 'faithful' to models, nor have direct connections to the ancient text, but rather depend on modern interpretations represented by other media. In addition, successful theatre performances may influence other media in turn and create new images. In this wide field of study, I would like to focus on some specific examples: first of all, those images – classical characters, situations, names, functions, and symbols – which in my opinion transcend time and space, disappearing and re-emerging after many years or centuries. My work-in-progress aims at finding out where these images come from, where authors find them, how they survive until today, when and why are they used and cited.

My research is part of a forthcoming project, DigITAL, which involves a group of scholars of the IULM University (Milan) specialising in the Minoan and Mycenaean Mediterranean, Mario Negri and Erika Notti, as well as a group of classical scholars from the Università Statale (Milan), Andrea Capra and Maddalena Giovannelli. From our larger project and from our common research fields, I chose a sample, fitting the theme of this conference.

A Sea of Images

These colleagues and I study classical images in their wider context, both in time and space: from Greece to the Middle East and from the Age of Bronze to Late Antiquity. We see the Mediterranean as a melting pot of images, themes and symbols. In our studies we do not only consider literary texts, but other types of documents as well, such as the 'visual heritage' of the ancient world. In this perspective my individual research field – Greek theatre – represents a crossroads between cultures: ancient playwrights, in particular, created images, characters, or plots, by their use of 'older' materials stemming from a range of sources. They

combined these to create something new, the Attic drama, which in turn proliferated around the Mediterranean. This process can be described with a poetic image, which is consistent with the Imagines project: in the Temple Valley of Agrigento (Sicily) there is a small garden called 'Colymbetra' where the Arabs, centuries ago, created a system of watering, which was recently restored and opened to the public. Rainwater and underground springs are collected in deposits and channelled into tiny canals. The water runs down the slopes and is distributed all over the ground, where different plants and trees grow. Branches, leaves, seeds and flowers are in turn carried off by the water and distributed throughout the grounds. Like those materials, images run like rivers from different areas to the Mediterranean Sea. From Greece, through the medium of theatre, they are carried and spread all over the world.

Some of these images can be used as 'markers' in comparing written sources and visual culture. Given the conference theme, Seduction and Power, we focus on some specific features from the common ground of studies of our team (from Minoan Crete to classical Athens). We track the cults of goddesses, female monsters, demons and animals who share symbols of motherhood, fertility, and nature (they are often surrounded by beasts, but they may also look like animals themselves). In particular the so-called Great Mother (singular or plural) has the power to give life and death, which scares and attracts at the same time; she is frequently depicted with prominent breasts and belly, but she may also be represented either as a young and beautiful maiden, or an old hag. She holds a prominent role in many rites of passage, as Erika Notti has recently demonstrated.⁴

Frequently, the feminine features listed above, ranging from attributes to powers, may be found in ancient monsters: they are mostly female and may share similar faces, animals, weapons, symbols, prerogatives, or skills; they all have the essential power to give birth and death, and are thus connected to blood, immortality, and destiny. Creatures like Medusa and the Gorgons share some of these features, as do goddesses like Artemis or demons like Helen

(who was originally an ancient goddess, connected to vegetation).⁵ In my paper, as in others of this volume, women hold a significant position within the theme of Seduction and Power, ranging from the female characters of the Odyssey⁶ to historic queens or other female characters, such as Cleopatra⁷, Agrippina⁸, and Theodora⁹, whose real lives were often compared by writers of their own times and later authors to fiction and drama. However, I am not going to discuss historic women or their representation, but rather those characters, which were conveyed to the Athenian stage and from there on transmitted, resulting in long-term effects on the arts, on cultures and on costumes.

It is important to remember that Attic drama had a specific code, highly symbolic rather than realistic. We know that the playwrights, actors, and the members of the chorus were men, and so were the majority of the audience: if women were in theatre, they were not among the authorities and privileged members. A theatre audience mirrors society, with Athenian women holding very little power in real life, but on stage the situation is reversed: in Greek theatre, women are the main subjects of seduction and power, which they exercise mostly on men. By ‘men’ or ‘women’ I mean not just the characters, but also the actors in their masks, who actually have the power to capture the audience. The first actor, in particular – the only one who wins a price – may exercise a double type of seductive power: first of all, the seduction of his words and actions, and secondly the specific power of his character. This is not necessarily connected to physical or military strength, which is traditionally on the side of men.

Women have other ways to conquer and seduce, through sex, words, persuasion, and trickery. Clytemnestra, for instance, uses in the Oresteia all these means, as we will soon see. But there are examples in comedy too: in Aristophanes’ Assembly Women, Praxagora and her friends take over power through their speech and vote.¹⁰ Similarly, persuasion (in addition to the sex strike) is the tool used by women in order to stop the war in Lysistrata. A

recent performance of this comedy (Sicily, 2010), stressed the women's seductive power not only in the (failed) sexual encounter between Myrrhine and her husband, but also through the words of the leading character, a young and sexy actress wearing a red gala dress and sophisticated jewels.¹¹ These women exercise their seduction, and therefore their power, on other characters and on the audience. Others use the same weapons in order to defend themselves or to attack in turn: even when 'power' implies violence, seduction may be a way to reach it, as I will demonstrate below.

A Galaxy of Symbols

I first approached these themes some years ago when I was studying dreams in Greek literature.¹² In literary dreams, from epic poems to tragedy, the first relevant features are the gender and status of the dreamer. In the Iliad only men dream, while in the Odyssey and in Attic tragedy only women dream, the majority of whom are either queens or their daughters. Their dreams normally contain or imply acts of violence, and in each tragedy they may be considered as a 'mise en abyme' of the entire plot. Many literary dreams, moreover, contain symbolic images of animals (such as the serpent in the Oresteia) or objects (such as the sceptre and the tree in Sophokles' Elektra). I focused on these signs and images, on their relationship with the dreamer, and on their functions within the plot. I found parallels between ancient models and modern texts, especially in the case of those female figures who seem to be particularly involved with seduction and power: for instance between the sleeping Penelope of the Odyssey and Albertine, the wife in Schnitzler's Traumnovelle (1926)¹³, or between Clytemnestra's dream and Lady Macbeth's last appearance on stage in Shakespeare's tragedy (act 5, scene 1).

On the basis of these I have looked for signs of seduction and power in other female characters, who all share some archaic features connected to the symbolic domains of life and

death. I am not interested in psychological qualities, but rather in images which may be considered as an ‘archetype’ when associated to roles, situations, actions and functions, objects, dresses, jewels, animals, and any other details that may add something to the picture. When I study each archetype, I proceed backwards (from my specific research field, performances of ancient dramas, to ancient Greek texts), but also onwards, in order to seek connections to modern texts and other media (according to the spirit of the Imagines project). My search is not a mere ‘triviality game’; on the contrary, it is a challenge to contributors and readers to find examples of these images in the visual and performing arts: theatre, opera, cinema, design, arts, architecture, painting, sculptures, photography, TV, comics, pop and rock music, posters, erotic art, burlesque and any other media of the so-called Pop Culture.

From this huge pool of images, I chose some examples from Attic tragedy, which I consider particularly relevant to our common theme and connected to the subject of other papers: but of course there are other cases in Attic tragedy and in ancient comedy, where power comes through seduction, or seduction is power. My three chosen archetypes – the so-called ‘dark lady’, ‘bad girl’, and ‘demon queen’ – are not just abstractions, since they literally live on the stage, with the body and voice of evil women, killers, and demons. Their attitudes and behaviour are determined by many factors, but they mostly depend on their relationships with men (such as husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers).

Clytemnestra and the Erinyes

The first example is Clytemnestra in Aeschylus’ Oresteia. In the first play, Agamemnon, the king of Argos returns home from the Trojan War, after which his wife Clytemnestra kills him and his prisoner of war, Cassandra. In the second play, the Libation Bearers, the queen has reigned with her lover Aegisthus for several years, when her son Orestes comes back to Argos seeking revenge and kills his mother and her lover. The dying Clytemnestra evokes the

Erinyes, the female demons of revenge: in the third drama, Eumenides, these monsters, impelled by the ghost of the dead queen, hunt Orestes on his way to Delphi and then to Athens; there he finds a helper in Athena, goes on trial for his mother's murder, is acquitted and finally returns to Argos.

Clytemnestra is the only character who has a role in each play of the trilogy, and she has many faces. First of all, she is a queen. In the prologue of Agamemnon, before she appears, the sentinel and the chorus speak about her authority with fear. When she comes out of the royal palace, the old men bow to her with reverence: from now on, her power is clearly stressed by all characters, by her words, by her voice and by her entire appearance throughout the play. In theatrical terms, all this can be represented on stage by modern directors: in a well-known German version of the Oresteia, directed by Peter Stein (Berlin, Schaubühne, 1980), she has neither sceptre nor crown. But she wears a shiny gold jacket, which clearly evokes her royal power: gold is a recurrent colour of queens' costumes.¹⁴

The second distinctive feature of Clytemnestra in the Oresteia is to be a wife. This is of course a role model she shares with other characters, from Penelope in the Odyssey to famous tragic queens like Xerxes' mother in Aeschylus' Persians. But the difference between her and other wives is clear: when Agamemnon comes home, she warmly welcomes him, seduces him with gentle words, and persuades him to walk onto a red carpet (this colour too is very important). The Athenian audience already knows that Clytemnestra has many good reasons to hate her husband whom she betrayed during his absence and that she plans to kill him with the help of her lover Aegisthus. For these characteristics, she may be considered an ancestor of the so-called 'dark lady', who will have a long life in theatre, cinema and other media.

Such a popular character has many variations in reception, of course, but since the beginning we may distinguish, simplifying, two variations: first, the unfaithful wife who plans to have her husband killed by her lover; second, the woman killer – like Clytemnestra –

who needs no man to kill her husband and does it all by herself.¹⁵ She slaughters Agamemnon and his lover Cassandra with a significant and iconic weapon: an axe. The double axe itself is a Minoan symbol connected to the power of Life and Death.¹⁶ She is not just a killer, she may be compared to the goddess of Death; when she comes out of the palace after the killing, she refers to herself as a demon: she is Wrath, the Pursuer of accursed Atreus. She is covered in blood and rejoices: this is the most self-evident reason why, in most versions of the Oresteia, her costume is red, or has at least some red parts (in the 1981 performance directed by Peter Hall, translated by Tony Harrison, she wears one red glove on her right hand). The colour stands for blood, here, and previously for seduction: no wonder that most actresses on stage are dressed in red well before the killing, e.g. in the ‘red carpet’ scene, when they play the faithful wife who welcomes the husband in a very seductive and provocative way.¹⁷

So far, in the Agamemnon, Clytemnestra combines in herself many roles (a queen, a wife, a killer, a demon). Moreover, she is a mother. But she fears the revenge of her son Orestes, who comes to kill her in the second drama of Aeschylus’ trilogy (the Libation Bearers). Here, when the chorus tells Orestes about Clytemnestra’s nightmare, in which a serpent sucks her breast (a symbol of wicked motherhood), he identifies himself with the serpent. Later, when the mother faces the son, she asks for her axe and tries to defend herself. In the central scene of the entire trilogy, motherhood is visually represented through the iconic symbol of the breast: the mother refers to it to her son in order to prevent him from killing her. The power of this image is so strong that in most productions the actress points at her breast or shows it naked to the audience.

When Orestes is about to kill his mother, she calls in defence to another female presence deeply connected to her figure: the Erinyes or Furies. These goddesses are known and worshipped in the Mediterranean with various functions since the 1st millennium BCE:

they appear in singular and plural form, and personify in our case the curses of victims.¹⁸ Clytemnestra and her Avengers share many features: the first is of course blood. The blood of Agamemnon and Cassandra covers their killer in the Agamemnon; the mother's own blood shed by her son evokes the Erinyes in the second drama; finally, the female monsters forming the chorus of the Eumenides follow the trail of blood: the dead mother appears as a ghost while they are asleep in Delphi and wakes them up. They will follow Orestes like blood hounds, smelling his blood and trying to drink it. For these features, which they share with animals (and later with vampires), the Furies become a successful model in further reception: they may be associated with many functions, more or less connected to their ancient power of Life and Death (avengers or punishers, serial killers or monsters); they may also appear as beautiful and dangerous women, with a stronger accent on seduction. In this case they may wear a red, sexy dress, while they normally appear in black, after Aeschylus' description, as they are associated to Death.¹⁹

In reception, many female characters share the same functions (variously associated to law and justice, revenge and punishment, life and death). Apart from revenge, the trail of blood associated to Clytemnestra and the Furies may lead to other characters who punish or kill people (not necessarily parents' killers, or villains). We may just cite here the female vampires whose common distinctive features are sex, seduction and power, appearing in The Hunger by Tony Scott (1983), in Interview with the Vampire (the book by Anne Rice 1976, and the film by Neil Jordan, 1994), but also in the more recent Twilight saga or in TV series like True Blood or The Gates.

Medea

So far I have analysed the archetypes of Clytemnestra and the Erinyes who share many features connected to our theme of seduction and power. I visualise their action in a scheme

along two bloodlines, depending on the relationship between the subjects, based on the model of a family tree: the first line can be visualised as horizontal, as it involves a couple – a wife kills her husband (and his lover, incidentally) – while the second is vertical as two different generations are involved (the mother is killed by her son and sends her curses, the Erinyes, to kill him in revenge).

In another archetype, Medea, I also find these two bloodlines connected to seduction and power: she is a foreign princess, daughter of a king, who met a stranger, fell in love with him, and followed him into exile. She is a good wife, faithful and true, and yet, her husband betrays her, leaving her to marry a younger princess. But, unlike Clytemnestra, she does not kill him. In Euripides' tragedy, she kills the new bride (horizontal bloodline), and eventually her own children (vertical bloodline). Medea shares with Clytemnestra the power of persuasion, which is in some modern performances enriched with sexual seduction: for instance, in the Italian adaptation of Medea directed by Fabio Sonzogno (Milan, Out Off, 2008), she seduces three powerful men. In order to gain one more day for her revenge, she seduces the king Kreon (whose very name means 'Power' in Greek, but in Milan he is played by an old and trembling man in a wheelchair); then she seduces her husband Jason, in order to send a poisoned gift to his new bride. Finally, she seduces the king of Athens, Aegeus, and receives shelter in her flight. The actress who plays Medea in the 2008 performance is young, beautiful, and sexy. Her words, voice and body are her weapons. She wears a red dress, again, but it is open at the front, showing her belly, which stands for her uterus: this is her symbol of motherhood, of the birth and death of her children, and it is also the icon chosen for the poster of the Out Off production. While Clytemnestra on stage often shows her breast to her son and is covered in blood, in this performance the actress kills her children by lying on the ground, in a sort of inverted birth, with labour and delivery.

The 'Medea archetype' thus combines the seduction of men, aggression against a younger rival, and violence towards children; similar to our earlier cases, its reception is renewed and enriched by further elements as it travels through legends and folk and fairy tales, down to modern times.²⁰

Antigone

The last female character I briefly discuss is Sophocles' Antigone: she is younger than the archetypes cited above, she is not married and she is not bound to marry and have children. Like Medea, she defines herself in opposition to another king, Kreon, whose very name means 'power'. She stands alone against him. She is apparently weaker than he, as her sister Ismene claims, but in fact her power on stage is overwhelming. She strongly refuses affection, and yet she is loved by the most desirable man in town, the son of king Kreon, prince Haemon, who is seduced in modern versions by what we call her 'personality' (stubbornness included). She is often represented on stage as less beautiful than her sister, but more seductive in words and action. In Sophocles, she beats Kreon's arguments and gradually conquers Ismene with her ideas (in some modern adaptations, and consequently in some productions, this seduction is depicted as incestuous, as one may expect in Oedipus' family).

Antigone's first feature, the power of ideas and the ability to express them, is the most 'heroic' aspect that inspired many cases in further reception and in history: real women followed her example and chose to disobey authority or a law they felt to be unjust. Some of them had their brothers killed, some shared her tragic destiny and sacrificed themselves, from Sophie Scholl in Nazi Germany to Benazir Buttho in Pakistan.

But beside these features, there are others, which qualify Antigone as 'bad girl' rather than as heroine. She is not only a rebel. She fights alone. She does not accept the support of

her sister, of the chorus or of any other character, and she never embraces her fiancé on stage. In theatrical terms, her seduction is both in her solitude and in her rebellion. A third ingredient, which will play an even greater role in further reception, is the fascination for death. In Sophocles' tragedy Antigone is buried alive in a cave underground.²¹ There she hangs herself, and her suicide is part of her seduction of ancient and modern audiences.

For the reasons mentioned, Antigone became an icon and a symbol for many 'bad girls' in recent times, especially since 1967, when the Living Theatre staged Brecht's Antigone starring Judith Malina as a manifesto of their group and of their entire generation. Since the late sixties the drama was adapted and staged more and more frequently, along with other selected Greek tragedies, but the 'bad girl' archetype played an even larger role in the sexual revolution and in pop culture. At the music festivals of Monterey and Woodstock, women with such features performed along the biggest stars of rock: Janis Joplin, for instance, was a rebellious, excessive and outrageous girl from Texas who cried her love and pain, yelled and screamed like no one before, and of course died too young. Decades later many other girl singers and all-women groups appeared, such as 'Antigone rising'²², they were all captivated to some extent by what I call the 'young Antigone' complex.²³ Hopefully, most modern 'Antigones' will not die young, nor have her instinct for self-destruction, from suicide to anorexia to the pathological refusal of sex. Summing up, regardless of these deviances, Antigone proved to be as seductive and powerful as the other tragic characters discussed above and is as role model that is particularly successful among young girls. I may say in conclusion 'Good girls go to Heaven, bad girls go to tragedy, tragic women go everywhere'.

Despite these last points, however, my study on female archetypes is not meant to be either gender-oriented or 'feminist'. As every approach to ancient drama and its modern performances, mine too is inevitably influenced by its context, just as each age 'projects' its own needs and thoughts onto these dramas. The gender naturally matters and our life choices

and conditions necessarily change our perception of antiquity. We should be conscious of that when we study ancient texts in their specific content and context and their receptions in modern ages.

I started by choosing what I call ‘fossil’ traces, which in my opinion may be included in the archaic background of the tragic characters I study. In Greek drama, any ‘woman’ may stand for many things, especially for what we call the irrational, the dark side of mankind. Some characters may be considered as archetypes, as each different combination of features catalyses feelings, desires, passions, and thoughts that are shared by many. For these reasons, playwrights and directors often use ancient female characters to talk about contemporary issues. Similarly, minorities – women included – employ them to justify the fight for their own rights. I may add, personally, that Italian women – artists and audiences – still use these archetypes in order to fight for equal opportunities. Many other examples of similar cases are brought up and studied, by women as well as men, in the Imagines project and at its conferences: I believe this is another sign of the growing role of women and of their increasing importance in universities. I find all this very encouraging, both as a woman and as a scholar.

¹ I thank Silke Knippschild, Marta García, Pepa Castillo, Irene Berti and all members of the Imagines project for their invitation: I am proud to be part of such a project, a unique opportunity for intercultural and multi-disciplinary studies across cultures, time and space.

² In recent times, scholars and audiences have dedicated increasingly more attention to adaptations of the Classics in theatre, opera, movies, and comics. See for example the volume published by Imagines project – Castillo, Knippschild, García (eds.), 2008 and Berti, García Morcillo (eds.), 2008. In addition, the Internet features numerous videos and publications as

well as teachers' and students' activities in Classics and related field. As for comics, ancient myths and classical history inspired world-famous series like Eric Shanower's Age of Bronze (see also Shanower, this volume), Neil Gaiman's The Sandman, Eddie Campbell's Bacchus, or more recently George O'Connor's Olympians (olympiansrule.com), Dufaux and Delaby's Murena, Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's My name is Nero, and Mimei Sakamoto's The Roman Empire. For comics see also Lindner, this volume. For a general survey and bibliography see Kovacs and Marshall (eds.), 2011.

³ Similarly Llewellyn-Jones, this volume.

⁴ See Notti 2012 and related bibliographical references, in particular Neumann 1955; see also Notti 2007.

⁵ See Lindsay 1974, West 1975, Clader 1976 and Edmunds 2007.

⁶ See Winkler, this volume.

⁷ See Pina Polo and Garcia, this volume.

⁸ See McHugh, this volume.

⁹ See Carlà, this volume.

¹⁰ See also Capra and Giovannelli, this volume.

¹¹ Treu 2010. On the symbolism and use of red as colour see also Seymour, this volume.

¹² Treu 2006.

¹³ The novel which inspired Kubrick's film Eyes wide shut (1999).

¹⁴ See also Seymour, this volume.

¹⁵ Both types of 'dark ladies' find many examples in reality and in Pop-Culture: an unfaithful wife and her husband kill each other in Orson Welles' The lady from Shanghai (1947) (ironically, the leading actress Rita Hayworth was actually the director's wife at that time), while in Henry Hathaway's Niagara (1953) Marilyn Monroe tries to have her husband killed by her lover, but the two adulterers are in their turn killed. Similarly, two historical women

who were under trial for murder escaped death in 1924 and inspired the story of Chicago (a musical since 1926, and a film since 1928): see http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/03/0321_030321_oscars_chicago.html and <http://owenlib.blogspot.com/2011/03/shared-reads-girls-of-murder-city-fame.html>. In the modern version of the film (2002) they feel betrayed and kill in revenge: Velma personally shoots her unfaithful man and his lover (who is, moreover, her own sister, i.e. her 'double'), while the adulterous wife Roxie punishes her lover who promised her fame and deceived her.

¹⁶ On the Minoan Mother and the double axe see Evans 1921-1935; Neumann 1955, Notti 2009, in particular § 2.3.1-2.4 and Notti 2010. On the Axe, the Snake Goddess and other images related to Clytemnestra and their use by Aeschylus, see Beltrametti 1997.

¹⁷ Significantly, Marilyn Monroe in Niagara (see above, note 15) wears a sexy red dress, which made her famous and is still sold in replicas. See for instance <http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/marilyn-monroe-early-career12.htm>: 'Of all the stunning outfits Marilyn wore in her films, none are as startling in their impact as the red dress she wore in Niagara' and "Rose consistently wears clothes that are variations of black and red -- two colours associated with women who are alluring, cunning, and powerful". For photos and replicas of Marilyn's red dress see <http://www.bigbeautifulbarbarabrown.com/id2.html>.

¹⁸ See Negri 2009.

¹⁹ According to their dominant function, 'they are old hags dressed in black rags, and young women in red robes' (Potter 2009: 225), even if the second colour might evoke bloodstains rather than sexual appeal. Potter analyses many symbols, which alternately recur in reception (from ancient times to the TV series Xena: Warrior Princess and Charmed) such as serpents, hounds, blood shed from eyes and fire (the queen invented the system of fire beacons which opens the Agamemnon, and at the end of the Oresteia the female demons will leave the stage

with torches). On some recent appearances of the Furies in comics see also Marshall, The Furies, Wonder Woman and Dream: Mythmaking in DC Comics, in Kovacs and Marshall (eds.), 2011: 89-101. I may add the examples of two Italian comic series: in Erinni, written by Ade Capone and published by Liberty Edizioni, an attractive woman, professor of Greek literature, turns at night into sexual predator and avenger, bearing the name of 'Erinni'. Another example in Italian comics, connected to our theme, is the main character of Lilith (written and drawn by Luca Enoch, published by Sergio Bonelli Editore): she has superpowers and travels in time, accompanied by a black dog and disguised as a girl, in order to seduce men before she kills them with her claws. Originally, Lilith is a female demon of the ancient Near Eastern mythology (see Brill 1981) although in a Hebraic tradition Adam's first wife bears this name too (see Patai 1990 and related bibliography; see also the wide bibliography at lilit.abroadplanet.com/Links.php). The first episode of Lilith is significantly set by Enoch during the Trojan War (see http://www.sergiobonellieditore.it/auto/cpers_index?pers=lilith).

²⁰ A modern audience, for instance, could find such features in some Disney female villains, imbued with seduction and power (even when sex is rather subtle to accommodate the younger audience): the jealous stepmother (alias Queen Grimilde) in Snow White, and the witch Maleficent in Sleeping Beauty who are both set to neutralise a younger and beautiful rival. The mix of tyrannical power, violence, and a weird seductiveness characterises other female villains with a sophisticated and yet sinister look, such as Cruella de Vil (101 Dalmatians) and Madame Medusa (The Rescuers). They both try to appear seductive to their victims and to their male partners in crime, while they actually cheat and use them, and they both exercise their power on men and animals: Cruella wants to kidnap and kill the dogs for their pelts, and Medusa in the original novel (by Margret Sharp) has two bloodhounds named

Tyrant and Torment, while in the Disney film she keeps two alligators on a leash (with the ‘classical’ names Brutus and Nero).

²¹ See Zambrano 1967 and 1983. The cave is, significantly, a symbolic place which hosted cults of female demons and of the Mother Goddess since the Minoan Age. See Notti 2012 and related bibliographical references.

²² An all-female rock band which named itself after Sophocles’ character, see antigonerising.com.

²³ See Treu 2007.