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Passion Over Reason

Emotion is an essential key characteristic in Human Nature as it is a commonly shared trait. However, each individual person expressions these emotions in a different way, some intensely, some moderately, and some little to none at all. These feelings, these emotions are also different for each individual, as we each have different things that we are passionate about, different things that we each care about or that gets each of us going or grinds our gears. These passionate feelings can be powerful enough to warp reality. People lose sense of what is real and what is not when under the influence of feelings and emotion. Euripides shows us this with his play *Medea*. Through *Medea’s* tragic tale, we see a clear example of how passion is more powerful than reason.

The story starts off emotional. Medea is already filled with mixed feelings of anger, hate and confusion. We learn of her background and the awful deeds she did, sacrificing much for Jason and for love. Medea is an extremely emotional character, madly in love with her husband, Jason, she is decimated when Jason decides to leave Medea for King Creon’s daughter. But she is strong, and swears revenge. She schemes a revenge plot in which she becomes obsessed.

Sorceress or not, Medea is a Human Being, meaning her biggest flaw is emotion. The revenge plot drives her mad with anger. She begins to rant, questioning society and gender roles as well. Her passion is shown in her rant “for I would gladly take my stand in battle array three times o’er than once give birth” (Euripides 21) as she is challenging the ‘norm’, which in the time when the play was written, was never heard of. Medea was not using logic or reason in this speech.

Medea’s use of passion over reason doesn’t stop at a feministic rant. Her entire revenge plot to kill Creon’ daughter, Creon and her own children is the largest example Euripides left for us in his play. Medea actually can be quoted agreeing to kill her own children, “for that will stab my husband to the heart” (Euripides 31), which is a statement no sane mother would ever make. It has never been logical or reasonable to plot the death of your own children, and the simple fact that Medea would kill her own innocent children just to hurt her ex-husband is a huge example of Medea’s fiery passion for revenge burning over the smooth surface of logic and reason.

Thinking logically, there are many other ways that Medea could have addressed her problem that did not result in the tragic deaths of innocent men, women, and children. Medea has no self-governance, she gets fired up over an idea or goal and will stop at nothing to reach that goal. Humans are not perfect, our ability to feel has caused much pain and suffering throughout years of history. However, self-control, or self-governance keeps us from being barbaric and keeps us in check. I believe that self-governance is extremely effective when one’s passion overwhelms one’s reason. The ability to control feeling prevents crazy real-life stories like the play of *Medea* from appearing on FOX news. I know this because self-governance is installed into us from a young age. It is the simple act of not taking an extra cookie from the cookie jar at age 3 to not pulling the fire alarm in High School because your forgot to write your paper, all the way to not stabbing someone because the rear ended your car. I use it all the time when my passion for sleeping begs me to skip my 8:00 am class for an extra hour of sleep.

Medea’s passion is obvious, she even acknowledges it before she completes the murder of her children, as she lets her passion crush her reasonable thoughts, “At Last I understand the awful deed I am to do; but passion, that cause the direst woes to mortal an hath triumphed o’er my sober thoughts” (Euripides 36). Here, before her dirty deed, Medea realized what she is about to do, and realized what emotion and passion do to humans. Her passion is too powerful however to let this realization bring her to reason and she commits to her plan. Feelings, emotions, and passion are all much more powerful than logic, or reason. We see this in Euripides *Medea*, we see this throughout history, and we see this today. One can only hope that the trait of self-governance does not die off, as it keeps us bound to reason.

Works Cited

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