

# Quest for the lost M/Other: Medea Re-Constructed in Marina Carr's *By The Bog Of Cats...* (1998)

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## Abstract

Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), an appropriation of the myth of Medea, re-presents the predicament of Hester Swane, who like Medea, is an outsider, a dispossessed woman living on the margins of society, who, at the age of seven, was abandoned by her mother, and now is struggling to establish her identity by looking for connection with the lost m/other. Carr shifts the focus from stereotypical female wickedness dealt with by the "malestream" playwrights to representation of mothers and maternal relations. This essay, therefore, in alignment with French feminist theory, dismantles the negative image of Medea by representing the wicked woman/monster/witch image on the stage as a psychological and social construct, as well as a masculine one. This re-reading will situate the play as one of the representatives of a new phase of contemporary Irish drama that is, content-wise, free from the nationalist discourse of the masculine Irish dramatic tradition, and is more universal, more humane, and more appealing to a non-Irish audience.

**Key Words:** *Contemporary Irish drama, French feminist theory, the Bog of Cats, myth of Medea.*

In her recent work, presentation of womescapes from the rural Ireland of the 1990s has established Marina Carr as a distinguished female voice of the younger generation of the contemporary Irish playwrights. With her universal themes and messages, Carr has already managed to appeal to a mainstream audience not only in Ireland, but in many European countries and the United States. Christopher Murray identifies Carr as

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an “avant garde” playwright in the contemporary Irish theatre (235). Anthony Roche points out Beckett’s influence on her expressionist and experimental technique as well as on her language particularly in her early work (287-88). Mary Trotter locates Carr’s drama somewhere between the opposite poles of “late twentieth century realism” and “Yeatsian fascination with the transcendent, liminality, spirituality, myth, and the occult” (168). Melissa Shira traces the fingerprints of Synge, Yeats, and Ibsen, in addition to the Greek tradition in her drama (257-68). What is striking in the views of these critics is the consensus that Marina Carr’s drama is the locus of intersection of the conventional and the contemporary, past and present, realist and mythical. Carr takes the benefit of the conventional Irish “family memory play” (Trotter 165) but shifts the focus from the tradition of the patrilineal relationships which has dominated the Irish stage for too long, to matrilineal relationships. In the very male-centered drama of Ireland, Carr takes the risk of dramatizing the women’s experience in a rural setting divorced from Irish nationalism and national identity definitions. Instead of presenting women as the embodiment of the nation or the land, Carr depicts authentic, autonomous, complex beings in their own right. What is more, she takes the risk of deconstructing traditional concepts of motherhood as a female role by presenting the conflict between the role of mother and the role of lover (O’Dwyer 243).

*By the Bog of Cats...* was first performed in the Abbey Theatre in 1998. Its plot is an appropriation of the myth of Medea, but Carr re-sets it in a rural Irish setting, the Midlands of the late 1990s. However, a survey of printed books and articles shows that critical readings of the play, instead of foregrounding Carr as a feminist writer, have mostly been confined within the socio-political, cultural, or post-colonial context of Ireland. Bruce Stewart, for example, in his short article entitled “ ‘A Fatal Excess’ at the Heart of Irish Atavism” sees the protagonist of the play as:

a proxy for the political violence upon which the Irish state was founded and which is now in process of being jettisoned as we move from rurally-based Catholic nationalism towards civic ways of feeling more appropriate to the cosmopolitan attainments of the Celtic Tiger. (1)

Also Vic Merriman, in his article “Decolonisation Postponed: The Theatre of Tiger Trash”, deals with the post-colonial implications of the play. Clare Wallace, on the other hand, in her article entitled “Tragic Destiny and Abjection in Marina Carr’s *The Mai*, *Portia Coughlan* and *By the Bog of Cats...*” concentrates on Carr’s re-shaping of classical tragedy and tragic concept. Although this short survey of critical works on the play points to a strong interest in socio-political and postcolonial readings, the present essay, focusing initially on psychoanalytic feminist theory, foregrounds Carr as a feminist writer, and discusses *By the Bog of Cats...* in relation to conceptions of the pre-

Oedipal/ Imaginary/ Semiotic versus the Symbolic. In other words, this essay will claim that Carr's text is an imaginary/ semiotic text (in the Kristevan sense) in which the logo/phallo-centric symbolic order is denied and rejected by the protagonist. It is assumed that with such an emphasis on the predicament of a female protagonist who is encoded with otherness and who is trying to complete her identity construction through the image of a lost mother, this re-reading will situate the play as one of the representatives of a new phase of contemporary Irish drama that is, content-wise, free from the nationalist discourse of the masculine Irish dramatic tradition, and is more universal, more humane, and more appealing to a non-Irish audience.

Carr is not the only Irish dramatist who reappropriates the Greek classics. As Anthony Roche points out, Irish drama has recently been haunted by the re-workings of the Greek classics. The reason for this, again, is explained by critics around the Irish Question and within the postcolonial discourse. Eamonn Jordan, for example, interprets this recent tendency as "an attempt to interrogate the present by appropriation" (xvii). Marianne McDonald maintains that classics can be used both "to further the cause of imperialism" and "to provide a literature of protest", and "the Irish are now redefining themselves in the terms provided by the Greek dramatists" (16). McDonald continues within the postcolonial context:

Ireland becomes England's Trojan women; its Medea exploited by Jason; its Antigone, who in the face of insufferable odds, does not falter, but retains a sense of justice. (17)

Marina Carr, however, resorts to the advantages of a mythical structure for her feminist ends in two ways: technically, a mythical structure gives Carr the freedom to keep away from the "prison of realism" (Case 124). Thematically, Carr uses Medea's story to historicise the woman's struggle for constructing her identity and reaching a subject position in a culture structured by male-centered values. In the patriarchal drama of Western culture, Medea has often been associated with the characteristics of the wicked woman, the monster, the savage, the hysteric, the mad, or the witch, precisely because she has been constructed by the anxieties of the male psyche. Her uncontrollable anger, hatred, and desire for revenge as well as her supernatural power have been gendered and rejected by the patriarchal order, as they are not compatible with the requirements for womanhood and motherhood. In other words, Medea, in Marianne Hirsch's terms, "step[s] out of a culturally circumscribed role which commands mothers to be caring and nurturing to others, even at the expense of themselves" (170). Carr's play challenges the social construction of identity with a powerful account of a mother-daughter bond. Carr shifts the focus of the original myth from stereotypical feminine sexual jealousy and female wickedness dealt with by the

'malestream' playwrights to the deeper layers of the feminine unconscious as well as construction of feminine subjectivity and identity, symbiotically connected with a lost m/other. In other words, Carr rewrites the myth of Medea from a woman's perspective this time.

There are many theorists who pointed out the significance of infant-mother relationships in the infant's process of identity construction. According to Freud, for example, the Oedipal crisis is the primary stage in the infant's process of identity construction as well as maturation. Susan Sellers explains the process: From now on, the infant leaves the "anarchic, self-absorbed, pleasure-seeking", and mother-centered state and starts to be a "socialised, gendered adult individual [who is] able to perceive him or herself in relation to others, and behave in accordance with those laws which structure the society in which he or she must live" (Sellers 43). Juliet Mitchell, in her *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, challenges all previous critics who have announced Freud as an "arch-misogynist" (qtd. in Belsey 5) by defending Freudian psychoanalysis: "the initial object of desire for little girls as well as little boys is the mother" (5). Also Jane Gallop reminds us that

In psychoanalytic theory the mother is the subject's first other, the other in opposition to which the self constitutes itself. Or rather [...] the mother is the site of something which is both other and not quite other, of the other as self and the self as other. (317)

Lacan, on the other hand, claims that it is language that constructs the identity and subjectivity of the individual. The entry into language is also the moment when the child's pre-Oedipal connection with the mother is severely broken and when the child experiences the first separation and pain. The pre-Oedipal phase in the Lacanian system is called the Imaginary, whereas the entry into language represents the entry into an order and is therefore called the Law of the Father and the loss of the mother, and hence termed the Symbolic Order. Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics* maintains that

The Imaginary corresponds to the pre-Oedipal period when the child believes itself to be a part of the mother, and perceives no separation between itself and the world. In the Imaginary there is no difference and no absence, only identity and presence. The Oedipal crisis represents the entry into the Symbolic Order [...] In the Oedipal crisis the father splits up the dyadic unity between mother and child and forbids the child further access to the mother [...] and from now on the desire for the mother or the imaginary unity with her must be repressed. (97)

Julia Kristeva is the theorist who replaces the pre-Oedipal/Imaginary with the Semiotic, which is the preverbal and the space of the unconscious. In this phase, the child has no separate identity, the mother and the child live in perfect harmony and

unity, and the child feels deeply secure and is protected from all the dangers of the world (Kristeva 95). In the Kristevan sense, while the pre-Oedipal or the Imaginary is replaced by the Semiotic, the Symbolic remains the same as it “refers to the establishment of sign and syntax, paternal function, grammatical and social constraints, symbolic law ... [and] the speaking subject is engendered as belonging to both the semiotic ... and the symbolic ...” (qtd. in Aston 52). As Paul Allen Miller maintains, “The Symbolic ... is the world of rules and codes. It includes language and all other shared semiotic systems” (5). However, in the Kristevan theorization, there is a dialectic interaction between the Symbolic and the Semiotic (=intertextuality), and in order to construct healthy social identities all women must accept the values of the Symbolic (Morris 146, 151). Pam Morris analyzes Kristeva’s views and reminds us that

By rejecting the symbolic order which sustains social identity a woman leaves herself unprotected and open to the full force of unconscious desire, of which the most powerful is always the death drive. A desire to return to the mother can become a desire for loss of identity, for a dissolution of self in m/other – for death. (148)

Also Helen Cixous, in her writing, praises the pre-Oedipal/Imaginary/Semiotic, and as Susan Sellers points out, Cixous believes that “women in particular ... carry from the relation with the mother the memory of an other love, which functions as a nourishing and vital force capable of overcoming the father’s law of castration” (Sellers 58). Sellers adds that this “m/other love is kept alive as a voice” (58) and “the pre-symbolic rhythms of the relation to the mother, as well as the rhythms and music of the mother’s voice, permeate women’s language” (118). In the context of feminine literature, Cixous reiterates that to be able to write her self, the woman writer needs to be re-located in the pre-Oedipal/the Imaginary space “in which all difference has been abolished” (Cixous and Clement 93)

*By the Bog of Cats...* represents the predicament of Hester Swane, who, like Medea, an outsider, an itinerant, living in a caravan on the bog, was abandoned by her mother. Big Josie Swane abandoned her child Hester when she was seven, and the child is now struggling to establish her identity by desperately looking for connection with her lost m/other. In fact, the use of ellipsis in the title welcomes and invites the audience to something incomplete, perhaps to a journey that is still in process. This incomplete mother-daughter relationship is crucial for a reading of the play because it is this abandonment by the mother that causes a split in the adult Hester’s identity, and it is this abandonment again that is aggravated by her husband’s abandonment and brings about such catastrophe in the end. However, unlike the original myth, Hester, in Carr’s play, kills her brother not to help her lover, but to save the mother for herself; she kills her

daughter not to revenge the common-law husband (Carthage Kilbride) who has abandoned her for a young, wealthy bride (Caroline Cassidy), but in order to spare her daughter the pain of endless waiting for an image who will never come back.

In Irish dramatic tradition, depending on the country's historical past, the woman, if not eliminated from the stage, has always been idealized by male playwrights either as a religious figure like Virgin Mary or as an epitome of the nation or the land (the Mother Ireland), like Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan, and therefore, represented as a loving, caring, self-sacrificing, pure and faithful lover/wife and mother. However, Marina Carr's representation of women in the play presents a critique of the female stereotypes deployed by the canonical Irish male playwrights. For example, the Cat Woman, who wears a cat fur, eats mice and drinks milk, is a grotesque parody or a caricature of the old, wise, idealized Mother Ireland figure on the stage. Also Hester's absent mother Josie Swane, signifies not only Hester's mother but the mother image in general, that has been eliminated in the father-centered Irish dramatic tradition. Furthermore, Carr's representation of the woman in Hester's angry, violent and obsessive personality subverts the traditional female roles as the mother and wife as well as the definition of femininity on the Irish stage. Hester lacks the feminine virtues such as mothering and housewifing. She spends most of her time wandering around the Bog of Cats awaiting her lost mother. In other words, Hester rejects her traditional role as a mother and wife and she demands a place in the society as an individual in her own right. When she is deprived of that, she, like Medea, gets angry and violent, and causes destruction. In traditional cultural terms, anger is not accepted as a feminine virtue, but in feminist terms, as Marianne Hirsch states, "to be angry is to claim a place, to assert a right to expression and to discourse, a right to intelligibility" (169). In other words, like Medea, Hester wants to reach a subject position, but the Symbolic restricts the free movement of the female desire and never lets her reach it. Here, female subject-formation is represented by Carr through the mother-daughter plot, which is another challenge to the Irish dramatic tradition. Hester gets angry because she is betrayed and humiliated by her common-law husband, and now her very female desire to live as she wishes, that is, with her daughter, and on the Bog is jeopardised. In the meantime, Marina Carr's representation of poor rural women who have no access to new social, cultural, and educational treasures of the newly rich, post-nationalist, postcolonial and postmodern Ireland of the 1990s challenges the representation of women in contemporary Irish drama. With such women characters as Hester, the Cat Woman, Monica, and Josie Swane, Carr suggests that in today's Ireland of economic boom and political stability, there are still some rural or working class women who live in poverty and are pressured by the Symbolic and, therefore, deprived from the participation to the public life.

When the play opens, the gothic atmosphere of the setting, a mysterious bog with its grotesque characters such as the Catwoman, The Ghost Fancier, and the Ghost of Joseph Swane, welcomes the audience to a mythic realm:

Dawn. On the Bog of Cats. A bleak white landscape of ice and snow...  
Hester Swane trails the corpse of a black swan after her, leaving a trail of  
blood in the snow. The Ghost Fancier stands there watching her. (*BBC*, I,  
ii, 265)

We are introduced to Hester Swane, a woman of forty, when she is busy with burying the dead body of her dear black swan. This opening presents Hester in a very close relationship with the setting, the Bog. In fact, the bog is the whole setting, the realm where the boundaries of the living and the dead, the human and nonhuman, the natural and the unnatural, the real and the mythical, the rational and the irrational merge into one another. It is a place where uncertainty is ubiquitous. Everything seems to be possible in the mischievousness of “this auld bog, always shiftin’ and changin’ and coddin’ the eye” (267). It is muddy. It consists of both water and earth. It both shelters and at the same time threatens the living; it is the life giver and the life taker. Hester kills her brother and Xavier Cassidy kills his son in the bog. It is amorphous, soft and wet, dark and closed. It is the “dark continent”, a feminine force, the woman, the mother, the womb to which Hester longs to return. Adrienne Rich, in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood As Experience and Institution*, having defined the word mud as “earth, slime, the matter of which the planet is composed, the dust or clay of which ‘man’ is built” (108) points to the closeness of the words mother and mud in many languages. Also Helen Cixous relates water with “the feminine element par excellence: the closure of the mythical world contains and reflects the comforting security of the mother’s womb” (Moi 115), the space in which “speaking subject is free to move from one subject position to another, or to merge oceanically with the world” (115). However, the Bog matches best with Kristeva’s cave metaphor for the womb. In Elaine Aston’s terms it is an amorphous “chora” or cave,

a term meaning ‘receptacle’, which she borrowed from Plato, who describes it as ‘an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible. (qtd. in Aston 52)

However, Hester is forced by her common-law husband, Carthage, to leave the Bog where she was born, has lived, and is planning to live until her mother comes back. [“I watched her walk away from me across the Bog of Cats. And across the Bog of Cats I’ll watch her return” (297)]. Hester is strongly attached to and identifies herself with the Bog:

HESTER. I know every barrow and rivulet and bog hole of its nine square mile.  
I know where the best bog rosemary grows and the sweetest wild bog rue.  
I could lead yeas around the Bog of Cats in me sleep. (*BBOC*, Act II, p.314)

M.K. Martinovich rightly interprets the meaning of the Bog to Hester as “a source of spiritual fulfilment” (121), as “she belongs to and feels at home in this world” (121) because it is her only connection with her mother, for whom she has been waiting for thirty-three years. In other words, the Bog is “characterized by loss and longing, yet it also represents her only site of connection and survival”? (Cerquoni 183).

This is what connects this liminal space, the Bog, with the Lacanian pre-Oedipal/Imaginary space in which there is “symbiotic unity” (Moi 99) with the mother before the Father’s Law/Symbolic Order split it apart. In Lacanian theory, “all human culture and all life in society is dominated by the Symbolic Order.... The subject ... may not like this order of things, but it has no choice: to remain in the Imaginary is equivalent to becoming psychotic and incapable of living in human society” (98). Carr presents Hester as a female other, a motherless bastard, an outcast who refuses to take her place in the Symbolic Order, who rejects the prohibition of the Father’s Law and hence lives outside the social order. She is a split character who lives on the borders of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, in other words, of the unconscious desire for the mother’s womb and the present social reality, or of the past and the present.

Because she is seeking to complete the construction of her self, her identity, Hester wants to remain connected with the pre-Oedipal mother of the Imaginary.

HESTER: Ah, how can I lave the Bog of Cats, everythin’  
I’m connected to is here. I’d rather die. (I, *iii*, p.273)

Preoccupied with her mother’s memories, in longing for her, she spends most of her time around the bog, and after everybody sleeps she roams in the bog late at nights and comes back at dawn.

HESTER: No, she’s alive. I can smell her. She’s comin’ towards me. I know  
it. Why doesn’t she come and be done with it! (Act III, p.318)

Christopher Murray states that “the battle is for wholeness, for identity. But identity is now no simple matter but can even be a fiction” (qtd. in Shira, *Stitching the Words* 3). Also in Kristeva, identity is constructed on the intertextuality between the Semiotic and the Symbolic, and this is, in fact, where Hester fails.

Hester sings the songs of her mother and never lets anybody else sing those songs. “By the Bog of Cats” is a sorrowful love song of abandonment and loss, and she



believes it was written by her mother specially for her. She hears her mother singing and her voice coming over the Bog. Reading with Cixous, this m/other love is kept alive as a voice: “the song, the first music of the voice of love, which every woman keeps alive” (93) comes from the unconscious, from the past, from the Imaginary, which is now lost. “The Voice sings from a time before law, before the Symbolic took one’s breath away and reappropriated it into language under its authority of separation. The deepest, the oldest, the loveliest Visitation” (93). It is the Voice of the Mother. No matter how Hester’s mother, Big Josie, is literally absent from the stage, her voice is always there on the Bog. In fact, her exclusion from the stage articulates the exclusion of a different, passionate, aware, and an independent woman/mother from the symbolic order. Although we do not see Big Josie Swane on the stage, we construct her by fragmented memories of Hester and other characters, and in this way, Big Josie’s identity turns into a fiction. To the Catwoman, Josie Swane “was the greatest song stitcher ever to have passed through this place” (275); but to Xavier Cassidy, she would “go off for days with anywan who’d buy her a drink” (294). However, Hester never perceives her as a fault, a lack, an absence, but as “plenitude and fruitful” (Humm 80).

In the meantime, Carthage, once young and poor, then infatuated with Hester’s love, now, mature and rich with the land and money of the Cassidyes, is trying to take Hester’s house and then to get rid of her for ever, and he even wants to take away their only daughter, Josie, from her. Hester protests of all this: “The truth is you want to eradicate me, make out I never existed” (*BBOC*, Act II, p.315). Hester is deprived of everything she loves, is used, exploited, insulted and marginalised as a witch, or a whore, and is perceived as nothing as an absence, a fault; but like Kristeva’s “split subject”, who flirts with both the Semiotic and the Symbolic, Hester speaks:

HESTER: Carthage Kilbride is mine for always or until I say he is no longer mine. I’m the one who chooses and discards, not him, and certainly not of yees. And I’m not runnin’ with me tail between me legs just because certain people wants me out of their way. (*BBOC*, I, i, p.269)

This is Hester’s reaction, her challenge to the Symbolic which has denied her voice and identity. This is an explosion, an outburst. Reading with Cixous:

Voice-cry. Agony – ‘the spoken’ word exploded, blown to bits by suffering and anger, demolishing discourse: this is how she has always been heard before, ever since the time when masculine society began to push her offstage, expulsing her, plundering her. Ever since Medea, ever since Electra (Cixous 94).

The Symbolic, which was first challenged with her appearance in the wedding of Carthage and Caroline, and then with her massacre of the animals, and the setting the

farm on fire, is challenged once again. She wears her bridal costume and raids the wedding. In fact, the wedding scene is a direct attack on all traditional institutions of the Symbolic Order: Church, state, family, and marriage are all parodied and presented by Carr as “false icons” (Cerquoni 186). We see a priest who “has his snuff on hand, pyjamas showing from under his shirt and trousers” (*BBOC*, Act II, p. 306), three women in their wedding dress and veil, one of whom is the mother-in-law, Mrs. Kilbride, who says: “How was I supposed to know the bride’d be wearin’ white as well”. Finally, language is attacked in the Freudian slips of the characters, one of whom belongs to Mrs. Kilbride again:

MRS.KILBRIDE: And that if Carthage will be as good a son to Caroline as he’s been a husband to me then she’ll have no complaints. (*BBOC*, Act II, p.311)

However, turned down and forced to leave the Bog by Carthage, insulted by Mrs Kilbride, and abused by Xavier Cassidy, Hester, who is now helpless, and also hopeless about her mother’s coming back, massacres the animals in Carthage’s farm and commits arson. Against this background of violence on the one hand, hopelessness on the other, she chooses suicide in order to remain connected with the Bog, the m/other, the womb, and in death she becomes one again with her lost m/other. When she goes “into a death dance” with The Ghost Fancier “with the fishing knife, which ends plunged into [her] heart”, she whispers : “Mam – Mam – “ (*BBC*, Act III, p.341) and she dies. Her heart lies there “on top of her chest like some dark feathered bird” (*BBC*, Act III, p.341). This is another scene in which the natural and the mythic melt into each other. Bernadette Bourke states that Hester’s death represents a “renewal in a return to the great nurturing womb of nature, giver of life, death and continuity” (139).

However, she takes her daughter, Josie, with her, but not to be revenged on Carthage, rather to save her daughter from a lifelong waiting for a mother who will never come back, because she knows this is even worse than death. Death becomes a shelter for the mother and the daughter, a place where they can be free from the Law of the Father, from patriarchy. The Symbolic, which has been fragmented before by her verbal outburst, her raid, her massacre of the animals, and her burning the farm, is fragmented for the last time by her killing Josie and herself.

HESTER. It’s alright, I’ll take ya with me, I won’t have ya as I was, waitin’ a lifetime for somewan to return, because they don’t, Josie, they don’t. It’s alright. Close your eyes. (*Josie closes her eyes*). Are they closed tight?

JOSIE. Yeah.  
*Hester cuts Josie's throat in one savage movement.*  
*(softly) Mam – Mam – (And Josie dies in Hester's arms).*  
HESTER. *(whispers) It's because ya wanted to come, Josie.*  
*Begins to wail, a terrible animal wail. (339)*

As Bernadette Bourke rightly states, “Carr has subverted the very notion of violence itself, by couching it in gentle, protective, motherly terms” (141). Marina Carr, in an interview with Melissa Shira, indicates that Hester’s final act comes as much out of love as of hatred (Shira, *Stitching the Words* 1).

Carr subverts many traditions of classical Greek and Irish drama. By presenting a mother figure like Big Josie Swane, she subverts the common masculine notion of motherhood which is supposed to be asexual, selfless, and sacred. By presenting a female character like Hester, who is “locked into a symbiotic relation” (Kahane 336, 337) and hence lives on the margins of society, and finally finds a shelter in death at the end, Carr subverts even the feminist notion of presenting a strong, speaking female subject. Moreover, the psychoanalytic feminist framework enables us to look at Carr’s play from another perspective in which Carr deconstructs the patriarchal forms of representation of women on the Irish stage. The play takes up the story of Medea, a female prototype, silenced by the Law/Symbolic, but re-presents it in the form of Hester’s search for identity and subjectivity through a lost mother. In other words, it holds a mirror up to the female unconscious and allows women’s voices to be heard. In Marianne Hirsch’s terms, it reflects how mothers and daughters speak to and for each other, and in this way, how “oedipal frameworks are modified” (8) and the mother-daughter plots “do not remain unspeakable” (8). Finally, a feminist re-reading of this text holds a mirror up to a new phase of Irish drama today, which is not heroic, not father-based, not nationalist, but humanist and universal.

I find the argument stated but not adequately argued. The conclusion, and the introduction, to the article states that Carrs version is more humanist and universal. It is I think difficult to sustain given the argument of the author in the article. I think it would help to elaborate on the representation of woman/women in the play.

In terms of formatting’ as I have indicated in the text , there are a number of inconsistencies , and some references are either missing or given via others(Kristeva as quoted etc). There should be more keywords. Moreover, since it is a play that the paper reads, references to the play should be in that format. (Act scene etc) If otherwise, it needs to be stated.

The article in general is based on considerable research and aims to present a new (challenging) reading which I like but I still think that the argument needs to be strengthened.

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