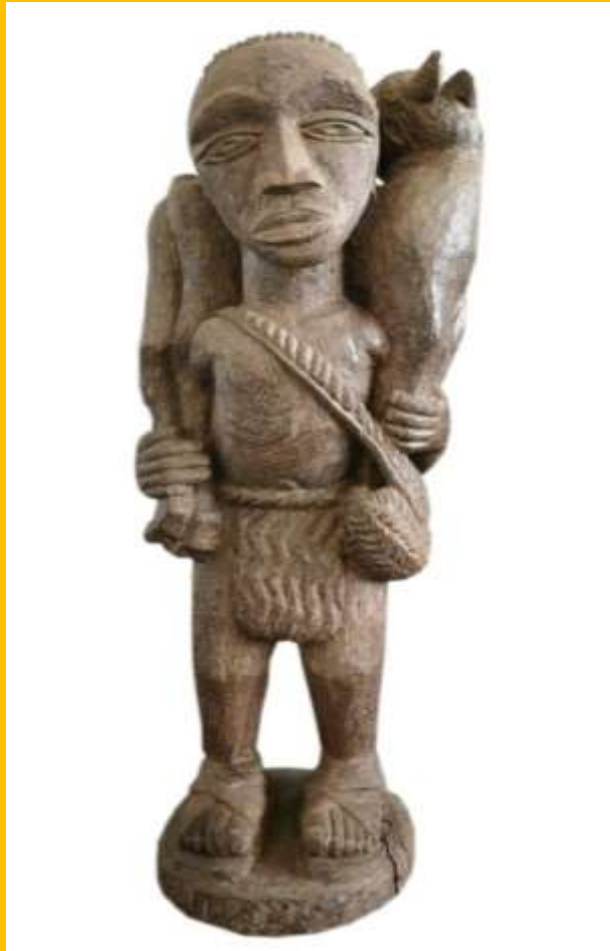


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Couverture : Figure de chasseur bantou de l'Afrique centrale. Statuette collectée par le Laboratoire d'Anthropologie et d'Histoire (actuelle Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines de l'Université Marien Ngouabi), entre les années 1975 et 1980. Dans les langues kongo de cette sous-région, le bon chasseur est justement appelé « *NTELA* ». Par métonymie, ce nom symbolise l'homme constamment animé par la quête des savoirs et des connaissances ; un scientifique qui cherche, qui trouve et qui partage ses trouvailles avec les autres au moyen de la publication.

Les opinions exprimées dans les différents textes publiés ici sont celles de leurs auteurs. Elles n'engagent nullement la Revue *NTELA*

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SOMMAIRE

Le mot de la rédaction 13

Articles

I. SOCIOLOGIE-ANTHROPOLOGIE-PSYCHOLOGIE

Modernité et rapports sociaux de genre dans les ménages musulmans de la commune de Cocody-Abidjan : une analyse à partir de la structure sociale des dépenses

Vasséko KARAMOKO, Martine GBOUGNON, Fanta BAKAYOKO 17

Violences conjugales faites aux femmes dans le premier arrondissement de la ville de Parakou au nord Bénin

Soulé EL-HADJ IMOROU, Bignon T. Clarisse TAMA 39

Les pesanteurs sociales du déficit de participation des femmes au programme de don de sang à Yopougon SICOGI (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

Kando Amédée SOUMAHORO 55

Côte d'Ivoire : la réconciliation nationale à l'épreuve de l'ethnicité politique

Koffi Parfait N'GORAN, Gninnan Hervé COULIBALY, Nanfouhoro Paul-Kevin OUATTARA 79

Le rapport à l'épargne chez les cacaoculteurs de l'entreprise coopérative des agriculteurs modernes de Méagui (ECAMOM) à la microfinance ADVANS : aux pratiques de digitalisation à l'exclusion bancaire

Hubert Kouassi KOUADIO 103

Regards croisés des acteurs des médias sur la communication de crise dans le contexte de COVID-19 au Mali

Ismaila FAMANTA, Abdourahmane COULIBALY 121

Utilisation du gaz butane comme carburant par les conducteurs de taxis de la ville de Yamoussoukro en Côte d'Ivoire <i>Bah Isaac KOUAKOU</i>	147
Les enjeux sanitaires et environnementaux liés à l'usage des pesticides dans l'agriculture périurbaine à Korhogo (Côte d'Ivoire) <i>Yao Claude AKOUÉ</i>	169
Le <i>Tchologo</i> , rite initiatique senoufo du peuple niarafolo de la localité de Ferkessédougou (Nord de la Côte d'Ivoire) <i>Lacina YEO</i>	191
Désinstitutionnalisation et orientation scolaire et professionnelle des personnes porteuses du handicap au Togo <i>Ati-Mola TCHASSAMA</i>	207

II. SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION-COMMUNICATION

Le paradigme de la communication engageante dans la lutte contre la COVID-19 en Côte d'Ivoire <i>Oumar SORO NANGAHOULO, Prosper SIKAKOUAMÉ</i>	223
Études des rendements scolaires des auditeurs des cours du soir aux examens d'État au secondaire dans la commune de Yopougon <i>Kouéiwon Gaspard INANAN</i>	245

III. LITTÉRATURE-SCIENCES DU LANGAGE-ANGLAIS

La tradition : le potentiel facteur concurrentiel à l'éducation de la jeune fille <i>Marie-Pauline SÉKA CHIAYÉ</i>	263
<i>Vents solaires</i> de Serge Eugène Ghoma Boubanga : une poésie de l'indicible <i>Ourbano MBOU-MAKITA</i>	275
Premises and Images of War in African Poetry <i>Anicet Odilon MATONGO NKOUKA, Louis Marain MOKOKO AKONGO, Jean-Marie SOUNGOUA</i>	289
Creative Writing as a Reader-Response Process in African Literature <i>Hodabalou ANATE</i>	305

Towards Objectives Achievement in Bediako Asare's <i>Rebel</i> Kangnivi KODJOVI	321
Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: An Intertextual Reading of <i>Helen</i> and <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Biava Kodjo KLOUTSE, Casimir Comlan SOEDE	337
Slave Narrative Writing: The Expression of Black American Dispossession and Mnemonic Repossession Serge Lazare OUEDRAOGO, André KABORÉ	353
Intra-Racial Conflict in Suzan-Lori Parks's <i>Topdog/Underdog</i> Yao Katamatou KOUMA	371
Social perception of media in a conflicting environment in wole soyinka's <i>you must set forth at dawn</i> Fougnigué Madou YEO	387
Brevity for Posterity: George Washington's Second Inaugural Address and its Influence on the American History Moïse KONATÉ	403

LE MOT DE LA RÉDACTION

Les membres du Comité de rédaction de la revue *Ntela* sont heureux de publier ce second volume du troisième numéro. C'est un honneur et un réel plaisir pour eux de publier – dans le dessein de les diffuser et de les vulgariser – les résultats des recherches de plusieurs enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs originaires du Burkina Faso, du Cameroun, du Congo, de la Côte d'Ivoire, du Gabon, du Mali et du Togo. De la sorte, ils contribuent à la promotion de la recherche en Afrique, aux côtés des esprits illuminés, soucieux d'apporter des réponses aux problèmes auxquels sont confrontées leurs sociétés, par la recherche et la production scientifiques.

Les textes publiés dans ce volume confirment l'option interdisciplinaire choisie par *Ntela*. Ils viennent de disciplines scientifiques aussi diverses que la sociologie, l'anthropologie, la psychologie, la littérature, les sciences du langage. Pour éviter une dispersion susceptible de brouiller leur structuration interne, ces textes ont été regroupés autour de trois sections. La première, liée de la sociologie, à l'anthropologie et à la psychologie, compte dix articles. Les textes relevant des sciences de l'éducation et des sciences de la communication forment la deuxième section. Quant à la troisième section, elle compte dix articles, issus de la Littérature et des Sciences du langage.

Rendez-vous est pris pour le quatrième numéro de la Revue *Ntela* à paraître en décembre 2022. En attendant, nous espérons que les lecteurs s'imprégneront de la substance des articles de ce volume et tireront un meilleur profit des richesses savantes qu'ils portent en eux.

La rédaction

III. SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION-COMMUNICATION

Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: An Intertextual Reading of *Helen* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Biava Kodjo KLOUTSE*

Casimir Comlan SOEDE**

Abstract

One of the main practices during the Renaissance was the revisitation and the translation of major Greek and Roman works. In Britain, many scholars got involved into the business and brought by so doing new perspectives to the British literature. While some just limited themselves to the translation of major classical works others took inspiration from the ancient works and wrote their own such as Marlowe and Shakespeare. This article draws together under the light of intertextuality approach two dramatis personae of Euripides and Shakespeare works namely Helen in Euripides' *Helen* and Shakespeare's Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in order to understand the similarities between both works. This study helps to grasp Shakespeare's stand point on Euripides depiction of Helen.

Keywords

Love, lovers, passion, revisitation, supernatural.

Résumé

La Renaissance est marquée par le retour aux sources. Ainsi, tandis que certains beaux esprits de l'époque s'attelaient à la traduction des œuvres classiques Grecques et Romaines d'autres s'inspiraient de ces œuvres antiques pour écrire les leurs à l'instar de Marlowe et de Shakespeare. Cet article se propose de rapprocher les personnages d'Euripide et de Shakespeare dans leurs œuvres respectives *Helen* et *A Midsummer Night's Dream* tout en se penchant particulièrement sur les personnages d'Helen et d'Helena dans les deux œuvres dans une perspective d'intertextualité afin de comprendre les raisons profondes de Shakespeare relatives à sa réécriture du personnage de Helen dans *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Mots-clés

Amour, courtisans, passion, réécriture, surnaturel.

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Introduction

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main” J. Donne holds in (G.H. Muller 2000, p.361). This statement by the English Preacher and Poet has revolutionised the conception of the whole. It paves the way to apprehend the interaction and the complexity of a piece of a work woven through a salad of knowledge kept as a whole by human’s mind. This assertion puts emphasis on the ambiguity of the perception of the whole rendering thus the whole to be a composition of particles which may be distinctive at a glance or through close observations and/or advanced analysis.

Despite the fact that both dramatists are not contemporaries, they are such notorious for their praiseworthy plays which have become references of drama in their respective nations. Euripides is one of the shortlisted dramatists highly admired by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as a referential playwright. R.M. Hutchins wrote,

Aristotle, in spite of strictures, calls Euripides ‘The most tragic’ of the poets and Euripides is more often quoted by him and by Plato than are Aeschylus and Sophocles (...) He is said to have been a pupil of Anaxagoras and a close friend of Protagoras, and we are told that Socrates never went to the theatre unless there was a play by Euripides, when he would walk as far as the Peiraeus to see it. R.M. Hutchins (1982, p.199).

As for Shakespeare, the English Poet and dramatist, there is need to raise the fact that even after four centuries, his works are still relevant. They are referred to as vehicle of the English culture throughout the world. G.B. Harrison (1968, p.2), declares, “no household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the *Holy Bible* and *The Works of William Shakespeare*.”

Despite all the differences that can be mentioned between Euripides and Shakespeare, there are evidences of some influences of Euripides’ tragedy *Helen* over Shakespeare’s comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. These evidences are traceable in regard to Shakespeare’s persona Helena whose lot in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* seems to be Helen revisited. The paper aims at finding Euripides influences on Shakespeare through similarities in the depiction of characters and settings. The study helps to grasp why

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

Shakespeare revisits the lot of Helen, the protagonist of Euripides' *Helen* through Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the light of the intertextuality approach which holds that:

There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text. The concept of intertextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structure. Rejecting the New Critical principle of textual autonomy, the theory of intertextuality insists that a text cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole, and so, that it does not function as a closed system" (M. J. M. Alfaro, 1996, p. 268).

In this angle, the current article is divided into three sections. The first section discusses both dramatists and their inspirations. As for the second section, it deals with the relevance of Euripides' influence over Shakespeare while the third section elaborates on Shakespeare's revisitation of Helen's lot in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

1. The Dramatists and their Inspirations

Euripides and Shakespeare are two famous playwrights who revolutionised their eras through their praiseworthy works which survive throughout ages. This section bends upon each of the named authors from a biographical perception.

1.1. Euripides: the Greek Dramatist

Euripides is one of the Greek's greatest dramatists beside Sophocles and Aristophanes. He took the lead in tragedy and won many prizes during famous tragedy contests in his life time and became an intimate friend to Socrates who admired his talent and took him as a fellow philosopher. In addition, Euripides got his tragedies praised by Socrates followers such as, Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle, the author of *Poetics* (335 BC) which set formally the rules of literature in general was said to have a special admiration for Euripides and according to R.M. Hutchins (1982, p.199), Aristotle praised Euripides beyond his fellow dramatists: "Aristotle, in spite of specific strictures, calls Euripides 'the most tragic' of the poets, and Euripides is more often quoted by him and by Plato than are Aeschylus and Sophocles".

R. M. Hutchins (1982, p.199), highlighted the fact that, Euripides has gained to be addressed as “the philosopher of the stage” in allusion to the issues dealt in his plays. The tragedies of Euripides are mainly built around themes that carry along teachings and highly sophisticated reflexions upon the life and values. He has been the first Greek writer to put Helen on the stage.

His closeness with Socrates, a contemporary and friend has really influenced his perception of life. He was honoured to be referred to as the “Philosopher of the stage”. He authored about ninety works amongst which only twenty have gone throughout centuries to the readership. His Persona Helen has resounded so high in the history and has thus inspired writers throughout the world and especially in England within Marlowe’s and Shakespeare’s works. While Christopher Marlowe has made his protagonist have her moved from Hades just to satisfy his desire, and, that of his fellow scholars in order to admire the celestial beauty of the lady whose superlative beauty caused fiery wars (*Doctor Faustus* V, i, 90-105); William Shakespeare has rather represented Helen otherwise in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

It takes to raise the fact that, Euripides took his inspiration from his nation’s mythology wherein Helen was believed to be the divine daughter of Zeus and Leda. The divine Helen was of a so splendid beauty that the accounts of her beauty reached the ears of world heroes. Everybody that mention Helen in discussions, put emphasis on her fabulous beauty. These accounts have sharpened rulers and heroes’ pride to possess Helen at every cost. Gaining the heart of Helen and marrying her was a trophy for which, big people were candidates. Rulers engage in this process with their armies rendering Helen a tragic lady.

In the likeness of his *Helen*’s fame, Euripides’ fame has moved along his dramatic works as to be read and enjoyed even in our contemporary time with taste and passion.

1.2. Shakespeare: a Renaissance Dramatist.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is an English man of stage. He wrote many plays and gained fame therein. He is referred to as one of the symbols of the English Culture. G.B. Harrison said,

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

no household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the *Holy Bible* and of *The Works of William Shakespeare*. It is not always thought necessary that these books should be read in mature years, but they must be present as symbols of Religion and Culture (G. B. Harrison, 1966, p.1).

His works are highly praised and translated into many languages all over the world. Shakespeare is reputed to be the most prolific playwright of the history of the English literature. RD Trivedi, (2009, p.107) declares that,

so far we have considered Shakespeare as a dramatist. But there is more to Shakespeare than the dramatist. His plays are not only great drama, they are also great literature. Shakespeare was the greatest poet not only of his age but of all time. No other dramatist has been also a great poet. That is why Shakespeare is, outside the Bible, the most often quoted of all writers.

He wrote about thirty seven plays made up of tragedies, histories and comedies. He also wrote poems, romances and sonnets. Shakespeare is known to have taken much from his predecessors such as the Greek playwrights. This inclination of Shakespeare finds its reason in the very quest for references in literature and art during the Renaissance. A great deal of emphasis was made on ancient productions mainly those from Greece and Italy.

Shakespeare's penchant to Greek letters has been firstly seen in *Othello* even though it is believed that Shakespeare has taken a lot from Euripides' *Hecuba* in his *Othello*, this assertion does not hold the concern of some scholars who hold that, Shakespeare due to his less mastering of the Greek could not afford reading Greek works. He was simply interested in classical mythology and history, and while his plays share some structural and thematic features with their Greek predecessors, Shakespeare classical drama was Roman and not Greek.

Within this battle of ideas, there is irrefutable evidence of Shakespeare's interest in classical mythology and history which leaves to argue that, he has been an open-minded writer. Even if Shakespeare's classical drama was Roman and not Greek, one draws another evidence that Roman works were profoundly shaped by the Greek canon. In this vein, J.J. Pollitt, puts,

Many of the works that came to Rome were among the masterpieces of Greek art, and it was inevitable that as time went by, the Romans would begin not only to examine their artistic subtleties and differences but also to assess what their value was, if any, to Roman society. (J.J. Pollitt, 1978, p.155).

Subsequently, this can be held as a signal that Shakespeare has been in contact with Greek's works amongst which Euripides' *Helen* can be presumably mentioned.

In addition, T. Bulfinch (1979, p.127) reveals Shakespeare's mastering Greek mythology. He puts,

The queen of the Amazons whom Theseus espoused is by some called Hippolyta. That is the name she bears in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," – the subject of which is the festivities attending the nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta. (..) Theseus is a semi-historical personage. It is recorded of him that he united the several tribes by whom the territory of Attica was the possessed into one state, of which Athens was capital. (T. Bulfinch, 1979, p.127).

These discoveries upon Shakespeare give sufficient reason to dig out the relevance of the influence of Greek works on Shakespeare's works such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

2. The Resounding Mythic Helen

The Hellenic mythology is full of mysteries and unsolved enigmas upon beauty, passion, honour and even war. Helen stands as one of the most paradoxical persona introduced to the world of stage by Euripides. This section considers Euripides' depiction of Helen and the clues of Shakespeare's interest in Euripides's Helen.

2.1. Helen in Euripides' Helen

The tragedy is built around the challenge of marrying the super beautiful Helen of Sparta daughter of Zeus and Leda (R.E.Bell, 1991, p.223). In the context of Euripides, Helen has become a precious trophy that proud men, Generals and Kings were interested in. They invested everything possible even lives in fierce wars to possess Helen. This leaves to presume the macabre aspect of Helen who can be compared to a blood-thirsty divinity that gives her favours after

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

series of human sacrifices. This assumption clears the sombre motive of kings and heads of armies to wage suicidal wars with the only target to have Helen for wife.

This sombre representation of Helen gives way to elaborate upon the tragic aspect of her beauty which seems to be valued than the prestige of territory expeditions which established the fame of Alexander the Great (D. Birch, 2009, p.48) and Julius Gaius Caesar (D. Birch, 2009, p.183). In Greece where honour is valued beyond love and beauty, it is surprising to see how corrupted noble men have been in waging wars for beauty and love which in fact, were supposed to be less priced according to the Greeks' values. In the same vein, it takes to put that honour in the context of *Helen*, is simply hidden by love and pride.

The real motive in the fight for Helen hand, finds its reason in the quest for heroism; which is in fact, common to pride, a far low attitude as compared to honour which is a celebrated virtue. Hence, it can be assume that the warfare around Helen connotes beyond her sublime beauty, her status as a strategic lady for her suitors as to cause such a tragedy. Indeed, Helen was alternatively involved in four marriages in her lifetime with Greek's most valiant heroes of her generation. She was even gratified a fifth marriage after her death as a deserved wife to Achilles. Bell puts,

writers even follow her afterworld, where they had her marry Achilles, making him her fifth husband, following Theseus, Menelaus, Paris, and Deiphobus. From there she was even said to have blinded the poet Stesichorus for writing unflattering things about her; she restored his vision when he recanted and composed a poem in her praise. (R.E.Bell, 1991, p.228).

The eagerness of Helen's suitors to marry her even after death, leaves to deduce the highness of her charm and her invulnerable and unalterable charming beauty that defies time and space. This biography about the life of Helen leave listeners sad towards the consideration of beauty to wonder how tragic beauty could be?

2.2. Shakespeare's Contact with Helen

As a Renaissance dramatist, Shakespeare and his fellow writers such as Marlowe could not do without knowing the Greek mythology. For the Greek and the Latin were the idioms of scholars and by ricochet

the civilisations taught even at school. A step of their lives which introduced them to Hellenic art and to Euripides' tragedies.

During the Renaissance, writers and thinkers in Britain coupled their works with translated works such as George Chapman (1559-1634) who translated classics like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This is an illustrative corroboration of the influence of ancient civilisations on Shakespeare's contemporaries. In the light of this, one can assume boldly that, their first contact with *Helen* might be at Grammar school.

Discussing external influences on Shakespeare's plots R. D. Trivedi, (2008, p.108) posits that, "there is really no mystery if we remember the fact that Shakespeare simply borrowed his plots and thus saved himself the bother of inventing them"

The question of detecting the influence of an author over another is closed to that of intertextuality in literature for it consists in finding out some clues related to the style, the plot, the setting, and even the characters reused by a writer in a work published after the work of a first writer. Generally, an influenced writer may not be aware of interferences in his works. For interferences work just as modes. They conquer people's taste and show up in their habits without their knowledge. As for Shakespeare, the fact of his being a younger dramatist compared to Euripides, leaves to argue at the first sight that there are chances to have Euripides marks within that of Shakespeare as there are clues of Greek traditional practices and rituals in Euripides plays. In the same vein, M.J.M Alfaro (1996, p. 268) posits that, "a text cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole..." It always carries some influences from previous texts and is mostly comprehensive in the light of external references.

In fact, the mythic persona of Helen who according to Bell is depicted in the Greek mythology as,

the most inspired character in all literature, ancient or modern. A whole war was fought over her (...) Helen, the face that launched a thousand ships, was a tantalizing enigma from the very first (...) Every red-blooded male in Greece who had heard of the gorgeous Helen dreamed of possessing her (R.E. Bell 1991, p. 223-224).

Has been a so resounding protagonist as to influence many plots in the world's literature.

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

Helen, appeared firstly on stage in the tragedy of Euripides in 412 BC, the name of the protagonist was given as the title of the tragedy to raise curiosity around the play. Beyond the perfection of the play, *Helen* also represents the warfare state of the Ancient Greece. Especially the passionate and ambitious wars like that of the suitors of Helen which caused the destruction of many kingdoms and a great deal of hecatomb.

According to E.W. Latimer (2011, p. 1), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* takes its origin from Chaucer's tales which he wrote during the late fourteenth century. Relatively to the incentive to Shakespeare's inspiration for the comedy understudy, she puts, "The "Midsummer Night's Dream" was first printed in 1598. It seems to have been an object of care to Shakespeare, (...) Theseus and Hippolyta had their origin in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale". Still in the quest for the intertextuality within Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the American edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* published in 1998, discloses the Athenian influence on the comedy of Shakespeare in its introduction affirming that,

Many believe that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is Shakespeare's finest comedy, revealing his fertile imagination at its best. (...) the play centres around romantic relationships leading to marriage (...) The play draws its strength, however, not from the conventional story of young people hoping to find true love, but from the rich contrasts in the Athens of Shakespeare's imagination. (W. Shakespeare, 1998, p.XV.).

The above statement sets the Hellenic influence on Shakespeare and highlights Shakespeare knowledge of history.

3. Shakespeare's Version of *Helen*

This section discusses not only the signs that confirm Euripides' influence on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* but also the critical observation of Shakespeare on Euripides tragedy.

3.1. Shakespeare upon the Form

Comedy is always built around a plot that ends up in a peaceful denouement. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare has against all expectation made a new approach to the plot. First, he has

chosen to turn the tragedy of Euripides into a comedy wherein Theseus married Hippolyta but did not have any affection for Helena while in Euripides' tragedy, written in the image of the Greek mythology, Helen is the star that seduced the pride and ego of kings and princes.

As far as the representation of his historical *dramatis personae* are concerned, Shakespeare has chosen to revisit their titles and relationships as formerly presented in Euripides' tragedy. Shakespeare's liberty of action can be traced to the fact that accounts over Euripides *personae* vary from a historical book to another. In fact, Theseus is said to have married either Hippolyta or Antiope (R.E. Bell, 1991, 246). Both Antiope and Hippolyta, here, are said to be sisters (R.E. Bell, 1991, p.51). As for Egeus, Shakespeare made of him a simple noble unable to manage his family affairs while according to the Greek mythology, Egeus is the heroic father of Theseus king of Athens. To achieve his end, he has even latinised the names of female characters turning Helen into Helena and Hippolyte into Hippolyta.

The presence of such *personae* of the Greek mythology clears up the way to affirm that Shakespeare knows of the Greek Mythology and especially Euripides' *Helen*. As for the divine beauty of Helen, he cannot be ignorant of it. As much he was a friend of Christopher Marlowe who made his Protagonist Faustus call the divine and beautiful Helen from the home of the deads to admire her legendary beauty.

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
And burnt the topeless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena. *Doctor Faustus*,
V, i, 99-106.

In fact, this attempt of Christopher Marlowe to stage the visit of Faustus in the Hades to admire Helen cannot be taken only as an expression of the belief in the immortality of the soul or the superpower Faustus was endowed by the Devil, but also how the legendary beauty of Helen was echoing during the Renaissance and

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

how it drew curiosity. Christopher Marlowe is a scholar from Cambridge. He read great Greek dramatists works such as that of Euripides and showed special interest to the Greek mythology.

Unlike Marlowe, Shakespeare is pleased to hide under his not being a scholar to express his disagreement with the work of Euripides. It can be observed that according to him, there is so much exaggeration about the beauty of Helen. These exaggeration instead of glorifying Helen's beauty have rather infested the charm of Helen and made it horrible and amoral by causing such irrational catastrophes.

3.2. Shakespeare on the Content

In his comedy, Shakespeare dims the charm of Helena in staging a persona of Helena begging love despite her charm and passion towards Demetrius her beloved who does not even consider her. This behaviour of Demetrius is explained by the fact that he is driven by the charm of Hermia who is in spite in love with Lysander.

Shakespeare has not put Helena at the centre of the play and would rather ridicule her to make her woo instead of being wooed. This artistic representation of Helena in this comedy, is Shakespeare's way to give a common appearance and beauty to Euripides' Helen. By so doing he would like to reason the beauty of Helen in a more human dimension contrarily to Euripides that divinises the beauty of his protagonist Helen.

Shakespeare did not put many ladies in the play to make the choice difficult but he has just put on stage two ladies and two gentlemen to simplify his choice but still both without any tangible reason prefer Hermia to Helena.

In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, instead of Helena being the cause of the fire and the war of Troy and the ruin of Phrygia, she is rather a despised lady in quest for love. In Euripides' she is ruptured for her beauty many a time. But here it is Hermia who is ruptured by her lover. In fact, there is a paradox between both personae Helena and Helen. While Euripides (1982, p.298), made Helen declare: "I was set up as a prize for all the chivalry of Hellas", in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, ii, 212-213, Shakespeare made Demetrius declare his rejection to Helena. He said: "Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit, for I am sick when I do look on you".

In the light of this deduction it is evident that, Shakespeare has clearly understood Euripides' *Helen*; whence Shakespeare's comedy,

A Midsummer Night's Dream cannot then be seen as Shakespeare's failure to get the Greek playwright for the simple reason that he has not being a university scholar like Christopher Marlowe. In the context of influences on plots, Mamadou Kandji (1997), has raised the fact that popular folktales have highly influenced writers throughout ages. He points that the direct environment of writers, made up of informal teachings impact writers works. He affirms,

l'influence que les ethnotextes, c'est-à-dire l'oralité, les ballades, les contes, les récits populaires, ont pu avoir sur les écrivains considérés et partant sur leurs œuvres, n'a pu être qu'indirecte. Ces faits de culture existent à l'état diffus dans le voisinage immédiat du futur auteur. Et à mesure qu'il grandit, à mesure que ses activités sensorielles s'éveillent, il accroche celles-là mêmes qui se prêtent le plus à son goût et à sa sensibilité (M. Kandji, 1997, p.10).

Following Dean Kandji's affirmation, it can be inferred that even if Shakespeare is denied university scholarship upon Euripides, he cannot be denied his knowing the tragedy of Euripides through the accounts of his fellow countrymen and writers. In this vein, J. D. Cox et als. (1997, p.223), shed light upon Shakespeare secrets related to his dramatic production especially the early works that result in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* saying, "Shakespeare plays (...) instead weave together language, characters, and incidents from a variety of books. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (...) is crafted from at least a dozen identifiable printed books, plus several works that Shakespeare had to have seen in manuscripts".

Despite his being not a university scholar, there are valuable reasons that permit to posit that *A Midsummer Night Dream* stands as Shakespeare's unhidden disagreement on the exaggeration of Euripides upon the beauty and the attractiveness which are just physical shapes that do not stand before time's dynamism. For time reduces former beauties into undesirable shapes.

In this perspective, Shakespeare would like Euripides to value virtue in the light of the gorgeous and virtuous Penelope as highlighted in R. E. Bell (1991, p.348) that resisted suitors until the return of Ulysses in revisiting Euripides' Helen to turn her physical beauty into true love and morality in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. T. Bulfinch (1979, p. 150) argues that: "Penelope is another of those

B. K. Kloutse, C. C. Soede : Euripides' Influence on Shakespeare: and...

mythic heroines whose beauties were rather those of character and conduct than of person.”

This freedom of expression of Shakespeare which cannot be sanctioned by scholars in respect of certain arbitrary canons has turned his works to be praised by his contemporaries who were more interested in matters related to their daily experiences. R. D. Trivedi (1976, p.108-109), puts that: “as regards his lack of university education, it proved an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Being a graduate of the streets, he was thrown upon his own resources without being by bookish knowledge.”

Conclusion

The main purpose of the current paper has been to discover the influence of Euripides' *Helen* over Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Throughout the paper, it has been found that the beautiful tragedy of Euripides has not only influenced but has also sharpened Shakespeare's critical perception of Euripides' tragedy to inspire his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

By turning the lot of Helen into that of Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare has been able to relocate the plot of the play and acclimatise it whence he has been able to rewrite swiftly dodging people attention in rendering beauty at the service of peace. Through his comedy, Shakespeare has also been able to give back the honour of knowledge and discernment to the Ancient Greece that is reputed for its Science and Philosophy.

To Shakespeare, it is unbelievable that a so reputed country which is known to have nurtured great thinkers and celebrated reason over passion and love to fall so down to cause such a horrible catastrophe because of the beauty of a lady as depicted in the persona Helen. All this chaos leaves to say that Helen has been able to turn minds from reason to put in front love instead of honour and science.

This scenario is an insult to the wit of the famous and respected Ancient Greeks which he tries to restore in his comedy. In the light of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Peace should prevail over of war and reason should have the upper hand over passion. For, R. D. Trivedi (1976, p.108) holds, that Shakespeare's originality takes from his revisitation skill. He puts, “His originality consisted not in inventing plots but in turning the base metal of his borrowings into gold, in building ships out of matchsticks.” *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

stands as Shakespeare's critical revisitation in a deconstructive trend of Euripides' *Helen*.

Euripides' *Helen* has been revisited on many aspects in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Firstly, he has domesticated the play of Euripides by playing on the names of his historical characters. He also plays on their roles and positions but the most exciting aspect of this domestication stand on the fact that he has introduced the fantastic within the Comedy by staging fairies alongside men in the trace of English ballads (M. Kandji, 1997, p.19). Shakespeare has secondly been able to reveal his critical talent through the revisitation of the Euripides *Helen* as a self-trained writer in the saying of (J. D. Cox et als., 1997, p.223), "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (...) is crafted from at least a dozen identifiable printed books, plus several works that Shakespeare had to have seen in manuscripts".

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Les textes publiés dans ce volume confirment l'option interdisciplinaire choisie par *Ntela*. Ils viennent de disciplines scientifiques aussi diverses que la sociologie, l'anthropologie, la psychologie, la littérature, les sciences du langage. Pour éviter une dispersion susceptible de brouiller leur structuration interne, ces textes ont été regroupés autour de trois sections. La première, liée de la sociologie, à l'anthropologie et à la psychologie, compte dix articles. Les textes relevant des sciences de l'éducation et des sciences de la communication forment la deuxième section. Quant à la troisième section, elle compte dix articles, issus de la Littérature et des Sciences du langage.

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