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THEA 250

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### Response to *Medea* and *Mojada*

Reading *Medea* first, I got a sense of an ancient world—a place of beauty and tradition going back centuries—which was being torn apart by suspicion, greed, and jealousy.

Subsequently, after reading *Mojada*, I came to understand why these characters would be willing to destroy something so rich and beautiful. *Mojada* examines the background of the characters in a way that *Medea* glosses over in passing—all the scenes in which *Mojada's* Medea speaks about their strife in crossing the border suggests a history of violence, of desolation, and of hopelessness which carries forward into their present state. After seeing from where she has come and what she sacrificed for Jason and this new life, it becomes far more apparent why she'd be willing to destroy so many lives in the way that she does.

Additionally, *Mojada* presents a new view on how the Greeks view Medea, and how that informs her choices. Medea is an immigrant, a fact which is somewhat lost in her chummy relationship with the Chorus who represent the women of Corinth. However, in *Mojada* it is made very clear that Medea is an outsider who illegally entered this country and is allowed to remain there only so long as the goodwill of powerful people remains on her side. Furthermore, Medea is homesick, and longs to return to her homeland and her people, a people from which

she is forever closed off. All of these facts together create a picture of someone far more desperate, lonely, and disillusioned than the classical queen we see in *Medea*. We tend to associate royalty with power, and therefore lose sight of the fact that Medea is wholly backed into a corner from which she feels there is only one escape. The view of Medea as an immigrant, drowning in a world which denies her humanity, makes this image far clearer and informs my understanding of her character.

Since I chose to read *Medea* first, I already had that story in my mind when I embarked on *Mojada*. I therefore lost the chance to read *Mojada* with a blank slate from a point of ignorance, making it trickier to say which ideas were informed by *Medea* and which were native to *Mojada*. However, one point which *Medea* definitely helped to inform is the prevalence of magic in the world of the play, as evidenced by the rituals performed by Medea and Tita. In classical plays such as *Medea*, magic is accepted as a part of their life back then, as opposed to our life now in which science and technology have replaced those older beliefs. However, in the world of *Mojada* magic exists, it is tied to their traditions from Mexico, and it is a force malleable to the characters. Reading *Medea*, in which Medea actually manipulates magic and flies away in a winged chariot, lends more credence to the power of the rituals seen in *Mojada*. Additionally, Medea is directly descended from Helios, who gave her said winged chariot, indicating that she herself is intrinsically linked to their power and that by turning from her Jason is likewise renouncing their traditions, a fact also suggested by the horror of the Chorus when they find out what he has done. This reflects on Jason in *Mojada*—not only is he rejecting Medea, but he is rejecting their whole way of life and system of beliefs from Mexico. In Mexico, Jason and Medea were practically married, but he betrays their relationship and brings his soul

over to the New York way, while Medea is still grounded in their original values, the old gods as it were. These old gods still have power, but with only Medea to enact their will she has no power to build something new—all she can do is destroy what she views as anathema to everything she believes in.