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Deconstructing Medea Myth: Giwi Margwelashvili's "Medea of Colchis in Kolkhoz" and Christa Wolf's "Medea. Vocies"

The myth of Medea, the youngest daughter of the King Aeëtes of Colchis, has been interpreted and reinterpreted in the world literature numerous times. It finds variant representations in the works of Euripides, Sophocles, Pierre Corneille, Franz Grillparzer, Akaki Tsereteli, Otar Chiladze and others.

Giwi Margwelashvili (1927-2020) and Christa Wolf (1929-2011) describe the society under totalitarian regimes through the deconstruction of the Medea Myth. However, myth is filtered through their own personal experiences and sensibilities.

Why should the monumental statue of Medea read Christa Wolf's "Medea. Voices"? – asks Giwi Margwelashvili in his surreal "Medea of Colchis in Kolkhoz". "Medea. Voices", Christa Wolf's best-known novel, was written after the author had worked as an informant for Stasi. In this autobiographical novel the tragedy of Medea is used as a background for representing two totalitarian systems and their consequences, the painful reality of the "divided heaven", ordeal and alienation in the united Germany. Christa Wolf's Medea is a refugee in Corinth, unable to return to Colchis just as the author herself, frustrated with socialist Germany, is unable to return there but she fails to find a long-awaited homeland even in united Germany.

In Giwi Margwelashvili's autobiographical text Colchis has become Kolkhoz where the main protagonists are the statue of Medea, the vacuum cleaner Polyp Polymath, the irreal reader "Me" and Vakushi who is the author's double. It is the latter who orders Polyp Polymath to hand over Christa Wolf's novel to Medea. Both texts are variant representations of the trauma caused by the immigration and alienation. By deconstructing Medea myth, they emphasize the devaluation of values. In order to establish new values, it is necessary to return to the book and not leave the author entrapped "between two covers".