

# ***Stereotyping the Feminine in Greek Mythology: The Embodiment of Women's Social Roles in Canonical Narrative***

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**Abstract:** In this paper, we categorize famous female figures in Greek mythology based on three primary social identities: daughter, innamorata, and mother. Although these identities are meant to reflect most women's life trajectories, they appear as independent characteristics in Greek mythology. Consequently, the portrayal of female characters is often one-dimensional and shallow, lacking the entire growth curve that male characters receive in heroic epics. Moreover, female characters are often relegated to supporting roles, mirroring women's subservient positions in patriarchal societies.

**Keywords:** Stereotyping, Social role, Greek mythology, feminist perspective, stigmatization

## **1. Introduction**

Greek mythology is renowned for its enthralling narratives and vibrant characterizations, where gods and heroes exhibit emotions and desires akin to humans. Nonetheless, these tales also harbor gender stereotypes, particularly against female characters, which might have originated from the limited understanding of women in ancient Greece and their social status at the time [1]. However, our goal is not to criticize history's backwardness. Instead, we aim to explore how some of these stereotypes persist in contemporary society, as they remain interwoven with women's social roles. By delving into Greek mythology through a feminist lens, we can unravel the patriarchal definitions of women behind these female identities and contemplate their justness.

However, not all female characters conform to stereotypes [2]. Even those that fit their social identities precisely are usually flawed. Such negative cases provide fertile ground for feminist ideas. Yet, this feminism is still entangled with patriarchal ideas since these characters are typically punished or negatively evaluated for deviating from gender norms. Their fates and impressions signify a counter-stereotype, implying that the audience should not emulate these deviant women. However, feminist criticism allows us to analyze these stories with a broader perspective, freeing us from moral discipline's shackles and enabling us to view female roles through an enlightened lens.

## 2. Inamorata

To begin exploring the definition of "inamorata," it is necessary to establish its scope. As a gender-specific term, "inamorata" is comparable to "women" in traditional usage. Feminist thinkers, such as Monique Wittig, argue that the notion of "women" as a group is a construct and that the accepted definition of "women" is actually about "men" [3]. In other words, women and men are seen as binary oppositions. Similarly, "inamorata" is paired with a specific partner, describing women in intimate relationships, including wives, lovers, mistresses, fiancées, and girlfriends.

However, in examining the counterparts of this inamorata in Greek mythology, we find that while "paramour" can refer to either gender, the image of the inamorata in an intimate relationship is typically a male paramour. This highlights an essential cognitive error and a limitation of ancient thought present in Greek mythology: close relationships based on heterosexuality were dominant. Feminist theorists argue that heterosexuality is part of the patriarchal society's definition of women and that "heterosexual" is a construct based on the fictional notion of "women." Criticizing the antiquated culture or history is not the aim here. Instead, the construction of Greek mythology by the ancient Greeks reflects their own stereotypes of women as inamorata. The Greeks fabricated an idealized image of the inamorata that became an archetype for defining women. Furthermore, the inamorata only exists as an object revolving around the paramour/male subject in many instances. The inamorata and paramour are not objects and subjects of each other; one dominates the other, similar to the patriarchal or matriarchal rule that feminist society critiques. This position of power leads to one-sided discourse and subjective definitions of inamorata that form the stereotypes discussed below.

Like other stereotypes of women, these depictions of the inamorata have been transmitted to modern society as an ideal standard. Even when people analyze absurd mythological plots based on contemporary values, they often unconsciously apply ancient standards to criticize old errors. Feminist thinkers reinterpret these so-called stereotypes in a new light.

### 2.1. Aphrodite

A concrete example to discuss the concocted ideal inamorata image is Aphrodite, the goddess of love, beauty, and sexuality [4]. According to the understanding of the word "inamorata," the basis of inamorata came from a specific form of love. As the goddess of love, Aphrodite will obviously become the best carrier for the ancient Greeks to describe love. Aphrodite, the most beautiful goddess, is said to have white porcelain-like skin, blond hair, blue eyes, a plump body, and perfect facial features [4]. It is not difficult to see from this description that the image construction of Aphrodite represents the dreamboat for most men because the group that determines whether women are beautiful or not is men. At least in ancient Greece, no one would ask about women's aesthetic opinions, and no old Greek woman could ensure that their aesthetic abilities were not affected by male stereotypes.

In short, Aphrodite appears in the story as the end of aesthetics for countless men. She is more like a treasure or a benchmark than a choice. She is the object of contention or the property of a confident man among the gods, while among male humans who cannot possess her, she becomes a standard by which other women are judged. Beauty was and remains the most valuable feature for women, as it is synonymous with the ideal inamorata.

Aphrodite's power as the goddess of sexuality and love also connects love and sexuality. In Greek mythology, love and sexuality were often intertwined, as seen in Aphrodite's story of infidelity with Ares, where the onlooker male gods, including Apollo, Hermes, and Poseidon, were tempted by her nakedness and willing to devote their love to her [4].

On the one hand, Aphrodite's story reflects a vicious suspicion of women with outstanding appearance; beautiful women are always restless. This type of accusation against women ignores the fact that the role played by a man in an affair is as immoral as that of an unfaithful woman. On the other hand, while modern people accuse those gods of fornication, they are still trapped in stereotypes about the identity of inamorata. They demanded that Inamorata should not only be beautiful but also loyal. As a result, the unfaithful Aphrodite is not suitable to be a long-term inamorata of daily life.

If we deconstruct the definition of inamorata using feminist logic, Aphrodite's story offers another interpretation. As a typical relationship, inamorata should not be a shackle to people. Aphrodite's wandering represents a bold attempt to pursue true love and rebel against arranged marriages. However, Aphrodite's rebellion against the concepts of "men" and "heterosexuality" shows that she still falls victim to stereotypes.

## 2.2. Hera

Beauty and loyalty alone are not the only desirable traits in an inamorata in popular perception. Some men marry women who are not conventionally beautiful because the advantages they bring to the relationship outweigh the shortcomings of their appearance. Women currently are judged properly. They are attached to men, and to continue the relationship with inamorata, they are required to allow men to "use" their "functions" by maintaining their subordinate status. This unequal relationship is highlighted in feminist theory, which includes the objectification and oppression of women. There are also relevant examples in Greek mythology, such as Hera.

Hera is often seen as a counterexample as she appears to be a wife who will fight for her rights. This seems to be a tiny triumph of feminist thought in Greek mythology. However, this perception is false and contradictory. Despite being the queen of the gods, Hera derives some of her power from her husband, Zeus, the king of the gods [5]. Even her title "Queen of the Gods" is derived from Zeus' title of "King of the Gods." Hera is not a female "king of the gods" but rather "queen of Zeus" or "wife of the king of the gods." Hera's position in terms of power is thus inferior to Zeus, and she did not become his inamorata because she could rule the gods but because she became his inamorata. Additionally, although some stories suggest that Zeus respected Hera and listened to her decisions, it is also said that whenever they had conflicts, Zeus would silence her.

It is evident that Hera is not as powerful as one might expect [5]. This weak position is apparent in her actions to maintain her marital relationship with Zeus. According to the stories, Hera was once a gentle girl, but she became suspicious and jealous due to Zeus's numerous extramarital affairs. Most of the stories associated with her describe how she tortured and punished Zeus's lovers [6]. Hera emphasized her status as Zeus' officially recognized wife to such an extent that her role as a mother had few mythological records.

Considering Hera's unquestionable beauty and faithfulness to their marriage, Zeus's infidelity is perplexing. When a king professed his love to Hera, she rebuffed him and informed him. The king who offended the goddess was then punished by an angry Zeus. Hera was not only an excellent wife, but there must have been a mutually recognized intimate relationship between Zeus and Hera; otherwise, Zeus wouldn't have been enraged when someone fell in love with her.

While Zeus's actions are wrong from a modern point of view, criticizing Zeus does not mean that Hera's behavior is acceptable. Hera is often described as "jealous" and is the subject of ridicule and pity. This is because Hera violates a crucial requirement as an inamorata, which is subordination. In a patriarchal society, women are expected to be subordinate to men. Hera's aggressive interference with her husband is thus not in line with this stereotype, and people in modern society criticize both Zeus's and Hera's actions.

Hera doesn't only target those weak mistresses without punishing the mastermind, Zeus. She once conspired with other gods to overthrow Zeus [2]. As a woman who dared to rebel against the symbol

of patriarchal rule, Hera faced defeat and painful punishment. Since then, she has not attempted anything similar. Instead of being a feminist symbol, Hera is a woman whose sense of self is distorted by patriarchal ideas. She relies on men to prove her status and oppresses other women who threaten her to strengthen her position. Hera remained subordinate to Zeus and showed an ironically strong personality that prevented her from representing feminist ideas and gaining favor from the oppressors of a patriarchal society [2].

### 2.3. Penelope

The stereotypes surrounding inamorata are beauty, loyalty, and subordination, which were depicted in the myths of ancient Greece to convey their imagination. Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, is a classic and ideal image of an inamorata. She had the beauty to attract many suitors, but her steadfast loyalty helped her wait for her husband for twenty years [7]. Penelope's story became a benchmark for disciplining women of all eras, even though her entire life revolved around her husband. She ignored her father's request to stay with her parents to marry Odysseus, and even though she raised their son alone, the child only seemed to exist to prove the depth of her relationship with Odysseus. Penelope's absolute subordination is a clear representation of the oppression of women.

While Penelope is considered an ideal inamorata, feminists have criticized her portrayal as a one-dimensional character [8]. Her existence is solely to complement her heroic husband, which is a manifestation of the oppression of women. She lacks her own personality and self-awareness, and her character is wholly derived from the construction of others. It is not fair for any person to altogether exist for someone else. Even though Odysseus is equally loyal to marriage, he is still an irresponsible husband and father who ignored his family for over two decades.

Feminists have sought to rewrite Penelope's story to give her a life of her own, not just a collection of stereotypes [8]. Greek mythology's requirements for inamorata, which are beauty, loyalty, and subordination, reveal the superiority of a subject over an object. Inamorata is a derivative of the feigned definition of "women" in society, full of false lies and dualistic concepts perpetuating inequality. To end the debate about the meaning of these words, feminists suggest deconstructing and discarding such fabricated and polluted words and using new expressions to define genuine human relationships and interactions [9]. This includes reformulating the exchange's nature and the selected parties' scope to the interaction.

### 3. Mother

The second category of women in Greek mythology is that of mothers. However, unlike the inamorata, a mother's identity is not self-consistent and unique. It is instead defined by two interdependent identities: her partner and child. In Greek mythology, mothers are usually portrayed as part of a family unit, along with their husband or lover and their children. They are often depicted as passive, receiving, and assisting male behavior.

The characteristics of a mother's image are defined by two identities that shape her role. The image of a gentle and loving mother merely represents motherhood. The natural connection between a mother's identity and the protection of her offspring is a fundamental feature highlighted in Greek mythology. In fairy tales, mothers are initially portrayed as silent, passive characters, but they become fierce protectors when their children's lives or interests are threatened. The mother's natural and profound love for her child consistently motivates her behavior, rooted in her instinct to protect her offspring. In plots related to children, mothers are strong, resolute, courageous, and dutiful.

Despite their strength, mothers are vulnerable as women. When their children are hurt, they often lack the power to prevent or speak out against injustice. They can only hide in the background and harbor hatred towards the perpetrator. Consequently, the actions taken by mothers are often

revengeful, aimed at making the perpetrators pay for their wrongdoing. However, unlike male revenge, mothers' efforts often take an indirect route or rely on the help of others, as they lack the power to achieve their goals directly. The existence of male partners in their stories often plays a decisive role in their revenge, highlighting the second main characteristic of the mother's image: subordination. Despite their motivation to protect their children, mothers often rely on men to carry out their revenge actions, with little consideration given to their beliefs and desires.

The complexity of the mother's image arises from the interplay between maternity and subordination. Mothers possess a solid ability to nurture life, providing love and protection for their children. However, they are always seen as the other within the family unit. After fulfilling their reproductive duties, their value remains minimal, and they are forever subservient to their partners and children. Their maternal nature is strong, yet their personal power is weak. They are respected and ignored, reduced to their role as mothers, and stripped of their individuality. Society expects them to fulfill their maternal obligations without granting them autonomy or recognition beyond their identity as mothers.

### 3.1. Gaia

Gaia embodies motherhood in Greek mythology, and as the earth goddess, she is revered as the "mother god." She is considered the earliest god with gender in Greek mythology and is said to possess strong fertility since only a mother can conceive. Gaia gave birth to the celestial god Uranus and later bore six men and six women, who became known as the Titans, with Uranus.

Despite being conceived by Gaia, Uranus had grown into an influential and patriarchal figure, "the master of the world," who looked down upon Gaia's giant sons, including Cronus, Briareus, and Gus, for their "extraordinary courage, amazing beauty, and tall stature." Upon their arrival, Uranus imprisoned them underground, leading Gaia to plan revenge against her abusive child. She conspired with her son Cronus, the most terrifying of all her children, and despised his lustful father. In the end, Cronus defeated and castrated Uranus.

Gaia's motivation was to protect her son, reflecting her motherly instincts. However, although she was the planner, she did not execute or benefit from the revenge plan. Instead, she relied on Cronus' power to achieve her goal, and the battle's outcome helped men. Cronus became the ruler of the world and gained divine power. He was later overthrown by his youngest son Zeus, who fulfilled Gaia's prophecy and established a new theocracy.

This similar plot confirms that behind Gaia's behavior of protecting her offspring lies a blood feud between father and son, which serves as a way of changing power within the patriarchal system. Gaia prophesied that the son born after Zeus' daughter would overthrow Zeus' rule. Zeus swallowed his pregnant mistress Medes to consolidate his dominance, but Gaia launched a counterattack with the giants in Hell. Despite her maternal nature, she was ultimately defeated by Zeus, and her final revolt as a mother god was suppressed. Her maternal radiance burned to the extreme, and she fell before a stable patriarchal rule.

Throughout the process, Gaia, as a typical mother figure, was excluded. Her body served as a container for offspring and love, but she was isolated from the power system, and her desires were not expressed.

### 3.2. Clytemnestra

Unlike Gaia, Clytemnestra's personal desires are relatively specific, but they still appear trivial in the story's development. Clytemnestra was married to Tantalus, with whom she had a son. During the Trojan War, Agamemnon's leader of the patriarchal Mycenaean and Greece, killed Tantalus, his newborn son, and Clytemnestra to avenge his father, Atreus. He later married Clytemnestra, and to

ensure the smooth sailing of the Greek fleet to Troy, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis to please her, despite Clytemnestra's objections. During the sacrificial process, Clytemnestra was not allowed to accompany her daughter, which deepened her hatred and determination to avenge Agamemnon.

While Agamemnon was on his expedition abroad, Clytemnestra cohabited with Tantalus's brother Aegisthus. After Agamemnon's return from the Trojan War, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus conspired to kill him at a banquet. Although the murder of her husband, who held power, expressed her motherhood and maternal love, her subordination in a patriarchal society remained evident. Clytemnestra had pleaded with Agamemnon to spare their daughter, but he remained indifferent, symbolizing the absolute authority of fatherhood. In addition, Clytemnestra employed a circuitous approach to revenge, relying on the power of their male lover Aegisthus to achieve her goals, highlighting Clytemnestra's lack of absolute power.

Clytemnestra has always been under the control of men, and Aegisthus is the real mastermind behind the murder of Agamemnon. In "Agamemnon," the elder stated, "Aegisthus, I don't admire people for gloating. Didn't you admit that you intended to kill this person and that this massacre was planned by you?" Later, in "The Mourner," Clytemnestra stated, "At the same time, we will report this matter to the head of the family..." The head of the family referred to Aegisthus, who took control after killing Agamemnon.

From Aegisthus's perspective, he was only avenging his father and brother by blood and became the primary beneficiary of this revenge. Just as Agamemnon killed Tantalus and took Clytemnestra for himself, Aegisthus also took Clytemnestra for himself after Agamemnon's death. In the patriarchal power shift, Clytemnestra was isolated and commodified.

Clytemnestra's motives for revenge were complex. In addition to avenging her daughter, she sought revenge for her past husband and feared the exposure of her adultery with Aegisthus. She was aware of the consequences of Agamemnon discovering her infidelity, so she took the initiative to act. This was a forced action under the influence of patriarchy.

Finally, Clytemnestra was killed by her and Agamemnon's son, Orestes. He could not accept that his mother collaborated with her lover to kill his idol, his father, Agamemnon. His father's death threatened him, and he had to kill his mother and lover to maintain the supreme authority of patriarchy. According to local law, "If a person is assassinated, his son must take revenge on the person who killed him without ceasing to do so." He was then aided by the divine revelation of Apollo.

After Orestes murdered his mother, he was relentlessly pursued by the Vengeance Goddess. Clytemnestra's soul called upon them to exact revenge, but Apollo rebuked them and ordered their departure. They had to argue, 'This is our assigned job to follow the person who killed his mother.' Here, the Vengeance Goddess represents the mother's interests, but they are considered inferior beings. Orestes' supporters and opponents voted in the court, and Athena's deciding vote acquitted him. In "The Blessed Spirit," Athena's reasoning was, "I do not condone the act of killing this woman. Although married, she murdered her husband, the head of the family..."

In ancient Greece, men held a superior status over women, and husbands held a higher level over wives. The Greeks believed in blood vengeance, which should have made Orestes' matricide an unforgivable crime. The concept of kinship is emphasized here, but people's belief in patriarchy overrode it. If Orestes had killed his father, he would undoubtedly have been punished, but killing his mother allowed him amnesty, reinforcing the low status of mothers in a patriarchal society. Here, the subordination of the mother is evident.

#### 4. Daughters

Ancient Greece was a patriarchal society, and the Greek mythology created under this system was heavily influenced by the prevailing patriarchal beliefs and values. Greek mythology's social setting

and background reflect the patriarchy of Ancient Greece, where men were the dominant gender and held all the power and authority. The supreme ruler of the Greek gods, Zeus, was seen as the ultimate symbol of patriarchy. He wielded immense power and controlled everything from the land, sky, to humans' natural life and fate. This divine right ideology reinforced the authority and dignity of patriarchy [10].

The mainstream of thoughts and beliefs in Ancient Greece was dictated by men, and women in Greek mythology were confined to the social roles set for them by men. Despite their own aspirations for freedom, women had to play the subservient roles assigned to them by men. This society's most marginalized and oppressed were children, particularly daughters. Sons could often become the leaders of a family, even overtaking their fathers in terms of power and status. However, daughters were deemed inferior and disposable, with their fathers often sacrificing their interests or honor. They were expected to comply with their fathers' wishes and maintain their virginity. Though they were often portrayed as beautiful and needing protection, their fathers did not cherish them.

#### 4.1. Athena

The goddess Athena is a prominent example of how women were depicted in Greek mythology. She was a powerful goddess, still bound by her father's will and tasked with carrying out his wishes. For instance, she helped Zeus maintain his authority over the other gods by persuading them not to interfere in the Trojan War. She also aided Greek heroes, such as Achilles and Odysseus, by inspiring, fighting, and protecting them from harm [11].

Athena's birth is also significant in depicting women in Greek mythology. According to the Homeric Hymn XXIX [12], Athena was born fully armed from her father Zeus's head. Her birth signifies that she is only owned by her father, with no participation from her mother. In patriarchal societies, the test for daughters is whether they can accept and approve of their fathers' advantage and superiority and tacitly approve of all oppression and unfairness in culture [13]. Athena chose her father and accepted gender inequality willingly, even though she is the goddess of justice.

Athena's upbringing is also essential, as no female character is present during her development, and the female characters are removed from her growth. Thus, she had to choose between her mother and father. Athena passed the test perfectly during the trial of Orestes killing his mother, where the gods and goddesses had a debate. The goddesses representing matriarchal society, such as the Furies, believed that Orestes was guilty because he killed his mother, who had blood ties with him. In contrast, the gods and goddesses representing patriarchal society, such as Apollo, believed that Orestes was not guilty. Apollo used Athena's example of being born only from her father and not related to her mother to support his argument that mothers are unnecessary and that the relationship between a father and son is more vital than between a mother and son. Athena is persuaded by Apollo's argument as there is no role of the mother in her development process, and she believes that men have a higher value than women. Athena rebels against matriarchal society in this trial altogether. This trial is not just about one person but also a subversion and challenge of the patriarchy towards the matriarchy.

Athena also places great importance on her virginity. Once, she was seen by a young man Tiresias while taking a bath in the forest, and she gouged out his eyes. Athena is a "perfect daughter" who is a man in a woman's body. Her concepts and values are all from men, yet she still maintains the virginity of her womanly body.

#### 4.2. Iphigenia

Another example that helps to understand the patriarchal society is the story of Iphigenia, Agamemnon's eldest and favorite daughter. Iphigenia's story takes place before Agamemnon's army sets sail for Troy. Agamemnon had offended the goddess Artemis by killing one of her sacred stags,

which resulted in her stopping the winds and preventing the army's ships from sailing. To appease Artemis, Agamemnon decided to sacrifice his daughter to the goddess. He lied to his wife Clytemnestra and Iphigenia, telling them that she would marry Achilles, the hero of the Greeks, to lure them to Aulis. He revealed his true intention there and prepared to kill Iphigenia on the altar.

Although Iphigenia initially resisted, she eventually agreed to die for her father's glory and her country's cause. She wanted to die honorably as a good daughter, but her decision was not entirely hers. The pressure and expectations of society played a significant role in her ultimate sacrifice. The army wanted to sail to fight and win honor for themselves and their country. Agamemnon wanted to show his ability to lead and solve problems. King Menelaus, who started the war, wanted his wife Helen to return. The Greek people wanted them to defend the glory of Greece. However, there was no direct relationship between Iphigenia and the war. She was not beneficial to the war effort, yet society still pushed her to accomplish their goal.

Iphigenia's story illustrates how daughters in ancient Greek society had limited agency and how their lives were often defined by the whims of their fathers and the expectations of society. Despite being born into a wealthy family with high social status, she had no power or agency to shape her own fate. When her father made a mistake, she had to sacrifice herself to make up for it. Her father had given her a happy life, but when he needed her to die, she had to yield to his demands, regardless of her own will. A daughter's will was not considered in such a society, just as no one cared whether Iphigenia wanted to sacrifice herself when they decided to let her die. This condition is similar to that of domestic animals. The host feeds and raises these livestock, and then they are killed or sold when the host needs to eat them or earn money. If the livestock has a good appearance, it only adds another angle for the hosts to flaunt or to be able to sell them at a higher price. No one will consider whether the domestic animals want to survive or die or to escape their fate of being killed and pursue freedom. This story shows that a patriarchal society is systemic and cannot be changed by individual opinion.

### 4.3. Daphne

Daphne is an example of a female character in Greek mythology that is not a perfect daughter but represents most women in a patriarchal society. She is the beautiful daughter of Peneus, a river god. One day, Cupid, the god of love, avenged Apollo, the god of light, for mocking his skills with the bow and arrow. Cupid shoots Apollo with a golden arrow, making him fall madly in love with Daphne. Cupid also shoots Daphne with a leaden arrow, making her hate and fear Apollo. Apollo chased Daphne through the woods, but she did not want to be caught by him and lose her virginity. She prayed to her father to help her escape. Her dad Peneus then transformed her into a laurel tree. Then Apollo said he would honor laurel as his sacred plant and wore it all day. She escaped from Apollo's embrace, maintained her virginity perfectly and permanently, and lost her human form and identity.

Daphne's transformation into a laurel tree can be seen as a tragic event, as she was forced to give up her human form and identity. It was not a decision she made willingly but rather one imposed upon her by the patriarchal forces around her. Her father, Peneus, did not respect her opinion and saw her only as a possession he could control and manipulate. He transformed her into a tree without even considering her feelings or desires.

Daphne's transformation also symbolizes her powerlessness in the face of male dominance. Apollo and Cupid, two male gods, were the ones who instigated the events that led to her transformation. Cupid's revenge on Apollo for mocking his skills as a bowman ultimately led to Daphne becoming a victim of their feud. Apollo's pursuit of Daphne was not a romantic gesture but rather an expression of his desire to possess her. Her transformation into a tree allowed him to claim victory over her, as he wore a wreath made from her leaves to symbolize his conquest.

In addition to being objectified and silenced by the male characters in the story, Daphne's transformation also highlights the restrictions placed on women's agency and autonomy in a

patriarchal society. Daphne's choice to remain chaste and maintain her virginity was not respected or valued, as the patriarchal values of the time placed a premium on male sexual conquest and control over women's bodies. Her transformation into a tree represents the extreme lengths a woman must go to maintain her autonomy and independence in a patriarchal society.

Overall, Daphne's story is tragic, as she was victimized by the patriarchal forces around her and forced to give up her human identity and agency. Despite her strength and determination in resisting Apollo's advances, she ultimately succumbed to the power dynamics in the story. Her transformation into a tree symbolizes the oppression and silencing of women's voices and desires in a patriarchal society. It signifies how women in Greek mythology were not allowed agency over their bodies and lives [14].

In conclusion, the role of women in Greek mythology reveals the patriarchal society's influence, which limits women's agency and defines their worth based on their relationship with men. As seen in Iphigenia's story, women were often seen as objects to be used and discarded when no longer needed. Although some women in Greek mythology, such as Athena, were portrayed as powerful, their power and agency were still limited by gender. Daphne's story further illustrates the oppressive nature of the patriarchal society in which women were objectified and not allowed agency over their bodies and lives.

## 5. Conclusion

When categorizing women in Greek mythology based on their social roles, it is evident that there are similarities between the stereotypes placed on them. The images of mother, innamorata, and daughter rarely appear in the same female character, as the flatness of the female figure does not require any personal development. However, this does not mean there is no common ground between the three types of stereotypes. As objects of different roles, they are judged similarly by subjects corresponding to other male social parts. These judgments, as initial stereotypes, have gradually evolved into a potential demand for women, which continues to exist in modern society.

Initially, women are expected to demonstrate their worth based on the values that men demand. For instance, daughters must exhibit exceptional abilities or a giving spirit, but the standard of strength and giving is defined by men. Inamorata must be beautiful or bring benefits to her husband, but the standard of beauty is also determined by men. A mother must love and protect her son unconditionally for men to recognize her motherhood. Such demands make women objects of male interests, and they are required to pay affection and love so that men can maintain the initiative in choosing women. As a result, women became subordinate to men for a stable life. They renounced or were forced to give up their personal will and became men's property, remaining single-minded. Women were required to focus on specific primary roles that men used to ensure they changed from "property" to "own property." Similar guidelines for selecting and educating mothers, innamorata, and daughters still exist in modern society. However, people have learned to convince women more tactfully and gently that such oppression is justified. Sometimes, people are even willing to change specific criteria, using personal preferences to mask their need to remain the initiator.

Nonetheless, any similar stereotypes internalized as requirements are unreasonable and should not exist. Women are not weak; they are indoctrinated with the idea that women are inferior to men. For example, Daphne was a victim of Apollo's coercion and could not protest the injustice she suffered. Powerful goddesses such as Athena and Hera are still willing to submit to the patriarchal rule of Zeus. Their stories demonstrate that holding higher powers is not enough; women need a change of mind and an awakening. Loyalty and devotion should be personal choices, not stereotypes dictated by social roles.

Greek mythology has oppressed women, but it also has characters who choose to resist. Greek mythology also has gods with an open style, bigender symbols, and even descriptions of

homosexuality. Greek mythology, as a literary subject, is a carrier of ideas. In addition to analyzing existing Greek mythological stories, feminists in modern society rewrite or expand the stories of potential characters to convey their ideas.

Analyzing the stereotypes reflected in the female characters of Greek mythology should raise awareness of these stereotypes that still exist in modern society to renew their thinking and envision an ideal feminist society. Feminism does not need another patriarchal society dominated by women but a society where queers are no longer strange. Suppose the women of Greek mythology were treated with the same respect as male heroes. In that case, the seemingly absurd and open world of Greek mythology might be the ideal society for feminists. As a result, Athena could reject her father, and Iphigenia could refuse to sacrifice for others. Aphrodite and Hera could live independently of their marriage, and Penelope could live independently of Odysseus. Gaia could avoid the struggle between her children and her husband, and Clytemnestra would have the right to stop her daughter's sacrifice.

When we reject an old structure, having a superior alternative in place is essential. This gives us the confidence to demolish the old and construct new buildings on the ruins. The stereotypes represented in Greek mythology are merely opinions from a particular perspective. As the overall plot of Greek mythology is not confined by specific moral principles, such simplistic stereotypes do not capture the essence of what Greek mythology is meant to convey. Therefore, we can find evidence supporting this new viewpoint when we examine these stories and characters from different perspectives. In a society governed by feminist ideals, social roles like parents, lovers, and children may still exist, but they will no longer be reduced to simplistic labels. No one should be subordinate to others, no one should be an eternal object or subject, and no one should be constrained or defined by stereotypes.

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