

Sympathy: A simple, tender, grace of the heart.
(Part Three Topography: The Landscape of My Soul)

by temi rose

Drama

Two Acts - Running time (approx.) 2 hours

11 Characters

Synopsis

Sympathy takes place in 1981, at a fringe theatre in new york city during a technical rehearsal of Euripides' Medea. The play is a language experiment: a combination of poetry and prose that uses character voices as instruments of a larger "greek" chorus of united yearning for the true, the beautiful and the good as a new generation of wall street yahoos were rediscovering the power of greed when combusted by a vacuous ethic.

The play opens with TRUDY, the stage manager, checking the light cues. BILLY, the director is in personal agony over the break up of his relationship with JEAN. During the course of the play, BILLY relives conversations with JEAN that led to their breakup. LOUISE, who plays THE CHORUS in Medea, is worried about the fact that she is pregnant. She doesn't know whether to tell her boyfriend, FRED, who plays JASON. ANGELA, who plays MEDEA, is high-strung and bored at tech, going over in her mind, elements of her life that feed her performance. CHRIS' feelings about his lover who died from AIDS are resurfacing because CHRIS' father has recently had a heart attack. Tech gives everyone too much time to think. MARGE remembers struggles she had as a mother. WILBUR voices a philosophical resignation towards the exigencies of life. HENRY is trying to reconcile his sexual desires with his desire for a more permanent relationship.

Themes of motherhood, passion and love in a new translation of the Euripides', weave into 1980's America as liberal idealism was struggling for air and life under an avalanche of capitalist greed and right-wing nihilism.

The play is also about killing our children, what that means to us; how we feel about killing what we love in order to get what we want. The play ends, leaving the audience to wonder whether or not LOUISE will tell FRED that she is pregnant and what they will decide to do. The play moves in a surrealistic manner between actual encounters the actors and tech staff are having during the technical rehearsal, to personal rhapsodic time when characters reveal how they think and feel, to joking parodies, into deep immersion into the Medea. The play is choreographed so that the movement and the voices are in a heightened state of realization. This is an ensemble piece and the process is the basis of the entire exploration. This is living art.

Michael Winetsky presented (to the symposium on theatre in academe, at washington and lee university in march 2006) a paper called "*temi rose's sympathy as reckoning of the feminist avant-garde.*" Available upon request.