How Translation Affects Understanding in Euripides' *Medea*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis considers Medea, from Euripides' *Medea,* in her role as mother, wife, and a Woman of Corinth. Previous literature has considered the context within which Medea can be viewed as an icon for feminism in the modern world. Utilizing the translations from George Theodoridis, David Kovacs, Gilbert Murray, E. P. Coleridge, and Cecilia Luschnig, as well as my own translation, I investigated how Medea's story can be viewed differently when carefully selecting words as a translation of the original Greek from her famous "Women of Corinth" speech. Each translation has similarities and differences, but they all portrayed a slightly different version of Medea. The consequences of the inconsistency of translation within *Medea* is the way in which modern audiences can relate and connect with her story.

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to interpret the treatment of women in classical drama and literature. As a result of the inconsistency of translation between classicists, stories about women from the ancient world are told differently with different meanings behind them. The classical world was one completely different from the present and women held a much different place in society. Some of the most famous ancient Greek authors lived during the 400-500s BC, like Euripides, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristophanes and Herodotus. Each of these authors depicted women in different ways, all to suit their individual needs and purposes (Easterling, 1987, p. 18). The representation that women have in classical drama and literature is also different from their actual place in classical Athens. For the most part, their role in tragedy does not reflect the true role they had in their home and society (Richter, 1971). Most of what we know about women in classical Athens comes from a male source, through sculpture, writings and artifacts (Richter, 1971, p. 4). However, when all of what is known about women in classical Athens is collected, a more cohesive picture of their lifestyle can be found. Richter suggests that "while ancient literature certainly suggests that Athenian husbands wished their women were more docile and subservient, even secluded, it is apparent that in real life the Athenian wife was as free and independent as in any period of Greek history" (1971, p. 8). Many classical scholars have fallen prey when it comes to distinguishing between ideology and reality in the lives of women (Cohen, 1989, p. 4). According to Cohen, the two authors who were most conscious of this difference were Euripides and Aristophanes (1989, p. 3). Both of these authors used juxtaposition to create an ideological and real version of the women in their texts (Cohen, 1989, p. 4).

With this in mind, one must consider how the portrayal of women in these tragedies made sense to the contemporary audience. One of the most popular genres of modern novels is dystopian fiction, which is wholly inaccurate and portrays idealized versions of society. Thousands of years from now, how will dystopian literature be interpreted? Classical tragedy offers a wide range of female behaviors, some of which may have been accurate representations and others than may have been complete fiction (Easterling, 1987, p.26). It is wholly impossible to try and discern how it would have made sense to the contemporary audience, but it is worth discussing how it can be applied to a modern audience.

One of the most popular and tragic plays from the 5th century BC is Euripides' Medea. This play is, thematically, somewhat of a continuation of the *Argonautica*, by Apollonius of Rhodes, who wrote about Jason and the Argonauts, however Apollonius wrote the *Argonautica* after Euripides wrote *Medea*. In the *Argonautica*, Jason meets Medea, who quickly falls in love with him. Medea promises to aid Jason on his journey to find the Golden Fleece on the condition that, if he succeeds, he would take her home with him and marry him. Euripides skips over the period where they get married and have two children and begins at a point where Jason has abandoned Medea to marry the daughter of the King of Corinth, Kreon. Fearing what Medea will do in response to Jason leaving her, he banishes her and her children from the land. Medea begs for mercy and Kreon grants her one day to remain in Corinth to gather herself and her children to prepare for their departure. This conflict sets the tone of the play, and from that point on Medea plots her revenge. As a result of this plot, Medea ends up killing Kreon and his daughter Glauce, as well as her own two children, leaving Jason distraught and alone.

Who is Medea?

The story of Medea, as written by Euripides, is told from all points of view, first, second and third person. This allows the reader and audience to connect with her character in a unique way, as they are able to gain more insight into her life and relate to her story. Arguably, one of the most important parts of this play is the language that is used, both the original Greek and the translation. There are several translations offered by classicists, all similar but with some different word choices. In most versions, Medea is portrayed as a very selfish and jealous woman. All of the feelings she had that led up to the murder of several characters were shown as spiteful and intentful. The play portrays her as someone who wanted to hurt people to get revenge for Jason's actions.

There were specific words that Euripides used throughout the play that built Medea's wicked persona. These words were used frequently and interchangeably. The word that was used most often was ταλας, -αινα, -αν, which means wretched or suffering. It was used 17 times in *Medea* and 227 times overall by Euripides (Murray, 2013). Δυστηνος, -ον and Δυσμενης, -ες were used interchangeably (Murray, 2013). They meant unfavorable or hostile and miserable or wretched, respectively. Δυστηνος, -ον was used 11 times in the text and 88 times overall; Euripides used this word more than any other ancient Greek writer (Murray, 2013). Δυσμενης, -ες was used 7 times in the text and 26 times overall (Murray, 2013). Εχθιστος, -η, -ον was used twice in the text and means most hated or most hateful (Murray, 2013). Ματαιος, -α, -ον was used 17 times in the text and means vain or futile (Murray, 2013). Μυσαρος, -α, -ον was used twice in the text

and meant heinous, abominable, and odious (Murray, 2013). Μωραινω means to make stupid or stupify. Μωρια, -ας, -η was used 14 times in the text and means silliness or stupidity (Murray, 2013). Οξυθυμος, -ον was used 3 times in the text and means hot-headed or irascible (Murray, 2013). Οργη, -ης, -η means anger, wrath or temper (Murray, 2013). Χωλος, -ου, -ο was used 7 times in the text and means anger, wrath or gall (Murray, 2013). Λεαινα, Τυρσηνιδος and Σκθλλης were all used once in the text and mean lioness, Tuscan monster, and Scylla, respectively (Murray, 2013). It is clear through his use of descriptive language that Euripides was hoping to frame Medea as a wicked woman. While this language helps build her character, there are also many characteristics that she holds that help develop the play further.

Medea's character combines a lot of characteristics of someone who is both feminine and masculine. McClure notes that one of Medea's most famous lines represents the clash between characteristics, "I would rather stand before a shield three times than give birth once" (McClure, 1999, p. 382). Her feminine and masculine side clash throughout the play, as she strives to be both an independent and strong woman as well as a hero who is able to stand up for herself. This heroic side of her is where most of the masculine characteristics can be attributed to. She is a woman with both vengeance and a plan to execute. While this may not be out of the ordinary for women today, this was far from ordinary in ancient Greece, where women had such a limited role in society. The way that Medea is able to write her own story and give what she believed to be justice is what many classicists would view as characteristic of a male hero (Cairns, 2014, p. 134). These are the qualities that, while they may fear, the audience would admire. The feminine characteristics that she represents are the ones that allow the audience to

connect with her so well. She is a woman scorned, something that many other women of that time could likely relate to. Medea is seen as someone who is struggling with her marriage and her husband having extramarital affairs. Throughout the first half of the play, the Chorus and the audience are able to relate to the pain and anger she is feeling.

Similar to the way that Medea embodies feminine and masculine characteristics throughout the play, she also takes on several different personas. She is portrayed as a witch, a wife, a mother, a mistress, and a murderer (Gellie, 1988, p. 16). These personas clash with each other throughout the course of the play, as Medea struggles with inner turmoil. All of these roles allow her to connect with different characters of the play and increase the connection between the audience and her character. The idea of Medea as representative of the 'Ordinary Woman' (which will be discussed more at length later) is seen through her role as a wife, where she has been betrayed by her husband and feels so alone. The audience connects with her here, as does the Chorus, the Nurse, and the Tutor, as they have all likely had similar experiences with love. Her role as a witch becomes more evident towards the end of the play, most notably in the last scene where she escapes the scene of the murder of her children. She is seen flying away on a chariot towards the sun, which is an indirect mention of her relation to Helios the sun god, who is Medea's grandfather. This scene makes it difficult for anyone to connect with Medea at all and creates discord among the audience and the characters because they no longer can relate with what she is going through. Medea's act of filicide is obviously not a relatable action to most mothers, however it definitely leaves room for consideration among the audience. To be a mother also means to be a wife in many cases. Those who are in a happy and successful marriage would likely look upon Medea with disgust and disdain,

but those who can relate to her and her pain may see her actions in a different light. They may not agree with her, but they may understand the despair and rage behind her actions because they, too, have also been there.

The emotions that Medea portrays and experiences are a driving force behind her actions. In Cairn's *The Dynamics of Emotion in Euripides' Medea*, he discusses how emotions can help shape the experience of the audience as well as add more depth to a story. The way that the audience can interpret the emotions of a character, both verbally and visually, is actually what has made *Medea* such a popular story in modern times (Cairns, 2021, p. 9). Medea's emotional well-being throughout the play goes back and forth from stable to concerningly unstable. When speaking with Aegeus, the King of Athens, Medea seems very composed and is able to tell him her story without any dramatics or need for concern. On the other hand, her conversations with Jason are charged with emotion and strong language. According to Cairns, Medea is both "conscious of and explicit about her ability to manipulate others' emotions and exploit their susceptibilities' ' (Cairns, 2021, p. 17). She uses this ability to help her interact in more meaningful ways with the other characters of the play and get what she wants. From Aegeus, she gets his aid and the potential of refuge to Athens by pulling on his heart strings. From Jason, she receives an extra day to remain in Corinth by feeding into his ego and telling him how he has always been right. From the Chorus, the Nurse, and the Tutor, she gets their strict silence despite all of them knowing her plans to murder her children, Kreon, and Glauce. It is this juxtaposition of emotion that makes the play so interesting and captivates the audience, as they watch Medea's composure unravel and ravel itself back up time and time again. According to Cairns, Medea "repeatedly exhibits

a subtle understanding of *other* characters' emotions, motivations and dispositions" (1999, p. 14).

While Medea's character is an important aspect of this play, her interactions with other characters help build a more comprehensive view of what her character offers to the audience and the reader. The interactions that best help understand her character are between her and Jason, her and her children, and her and the Chorus. Several classicists have tried to dissect the importance of these relationships and how they contribute to Medea's character development.

Medea and Jason

In Cairns' article, the dynamic of Medea and Jason's relationship is discussed at length. He references Medea's role in the *Argonautica*, a tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece, which is where Medea met Jason and fell in love with him (Cairns, 2014). Cairns believes that the downfall of Medea and Jason's relationship began at its conception, when Medea betrayed her father and her family by running off with Jason and marrying him. During this process, she murdered her brother Absyrtus, sealing her broken fate with her family, or as Cairns says "puts [her] conjugal family before natal" (Cairns, 2014, p. 124). Throughout the play, Medea suggests that their marriage has been problematic from the beginning, but only after her marriage with Jason was broken down and Jason was pursuing Glauce, daughter of King Kreon. Cairns makes a reference to the oath Medea and Jason made, the δεχιοσις (the clasping of right hands), during their marriage ceremony. He says that this is not a contract between a man and woman to be married, but between a woman's male guardian and the man, so "Medea subverted this [marriage]

process from the start" (Cairns, 2014, p. 124). Since Jason abandoned his wife, and she has no οικος (house) to return to, the primary blame for the breakdown of this marriage is placed on Jason, by Medea, the nurse, the tutor, the Chorus, and King Aegeus. Whether or not their marriage would be seen as legitimate by the rest of Classical Athens is up for debate, as they did not go about the traditional way of getting married. According to McClure, "From the Athenian standpoint, the union of Medea and Jason has no legal basis because it was contracted not between the father of the bride and the husband, but directly between husband and wife" (1999, p. 379).

Cairns also discusses the role of marriage in Athens, which was "the production of children and the continuation of the οικος that this ensured" (Cairns, 2014, p. 126). Medea gave birth to two sons by Jason, however with Jason's betrayal of Medea and the ultimate murder of the children, their marriage entirely loses its purpose. Medea talks to the tutor and her nurse at great lengths about her plans to murder Glauce, the King, and her own children and during these discussions she is aware of how much pain the murder of her own children will cause her. Despite knowing this and knowing that like Jason, she too will be without care at old age, she sees no other option than to murder her children.

Anne Burnett discusses the relationship between Jason and Medea at length in "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge," in which she discusses the motives behind Medea's actions. Burnett mentions that "the oldest doctrine was that oath-breaking was twin to kin-murder," which was thought to be upheld during the time of Euripides (Burnett, 1973, p. 13). Despite the fact that their marriage was subverted and the oaths not drawn properly for a typical marriage at that time, Medea and Jason both swore before the Gods and were bound by Ge and Helius to uphold that oath. Considering the

ancient doctrines at the time the play was written, Medea committed an act equally foul to that of Jason by murdering their children, because he broke their oath.

Considering both that their marriage likely was not viewed as legitimate in Classical Athens and that also breaking oaths was an equivalent act to kin-murder leads to an interesting discussion about the severity of Jason and Medea's actions. While the marriage may not be legitimate, Jason and Medea both swore an oath before the gods, with δεχιοσις. By having extramarital relations, Jason broke the oath, thereby invalidating whatever agreement was made between him and Medea. The idea that kin-murder is equal to that of oath-breaking is not something that would uphold in today's society, however it is important to consider the values that were held in Classical Athens. People typically use the phrase "I swear to god" when they are attempting to convince someone of a truth or are agreeing to something rather important. The fact that this tradition still lives on thousands of years after the end of the classical period helps to show how important oaths were to those living in that period. The purpose of equating kin-murder to oath breaking is not to lessen the severity of murdering one's own children, but to increase the severity of when one breaks an oath. McClure notes Medea's speech at line 150, where she calls for the death of Jason's new wife, Glauce, and her entire household. She says that "the loudness and violence of Medea's speech serves as the tangible signs of a greater disturbance in the *oikos,* an aberrant equality of status between husband and wife brought about by Jason's crime of perjury" (McClure,1999, p. 382). The cries of women in classical text were often thought to be dangerous, as they could serve as a means of protest or resistance against the gender norms of the time (McClure,

1999, p. 382). However, Medea's cries are within the realm of acceptance because of the crimes Jason has committed.

The interactions between Jason and Medea can be described as 'toxic,' as a large majority of their conversations are arguments and contain many insults. While Medea attempts to express her dislike of Jason's actions, Jason continuously invalidates her feelings by telling her that she is overreacting over something trivial. In lines 459-62, Jason says "Anyway, I won't neglect my family. I've come here, woman, to look out for you, so you won't be thrown out with the children in total need and lacking everything" (Vancouver, 2008). On the surface, it seems that Jason does care for both Medea and the children and has genuine concern for their wellbeing. However, he disregards the fact that he is the reason that they are alone now. Medea is well aware of where the blame lies for the predicament she is in, as she says in lines 605-10, "Keep up the insults. You have your refuge. I'm alone and banished from this country. Jason - That's what you've chosen. The blame rests with you" (Vancouver, 2008). They argue back and forth like this throughout the entirety of the play, with Jason 'selflessly' offering aid for their problem and Medea reminding him that he is the cause of the problem.

There are components of their conversations that are particularly dark, which is when Jason's true nature shines through the brightest. He seems to believe that women are the source of all problems and without them, things would be much easier. The nature of Jason and Medea's marriage is not well known, as there is a large gap between the *Argonautica* and *Medea*. However, conclusions could be drawn that Jason always engaged in misogynistic behavior because of the way he speaks to Medea after being married to her and having children with her. His behavior also speaks to the place that

Athenian women held in society at the time, where their presence was not valued. In lines 571-75, Jason says "What mortals need is some other way to get our children. We ought to have no female sex and then men would be rid of all their troubles" (Vancouver, 2008). In saying this, he equates the mortal race to only the male species, and completely disregards the need for females to reproduce.

Jason's character is placed in opposition to Medea, as he is portrayed as a "cool, sensible man who plans intelligently for the future" (Lawrence, 1997, p. 52). While Medea is shown as hotheaded and manipulative over and over again, Jason always remains collected and almost comes across as judgemental throughout the text. It seems that he views Medea's woes as trivial, as though he did not wrong her in any way. Jason is also completely unheroic, seen both in *Medea* and the *Argonautica.* Medea was the reason that he had any true claim to fame, since she was the one who helped him retrieve the Golden Fleece.

Medea and the Children

Little is known about the nature of Medea's relationship with her children. There is almost no dialogue that occurs directly between Medea and her children; it mostly consists of the children overhearing conversations between Medea and the Nurse or Medea speaking to herself. The children are also, for the most part, not directly in the scene, but are just somewhere on stage based on the stage directions. The Nurse says to the audience in the opening scenes at line 45, "Here come her children… they've no notion of their mother's troubles. Young minds don't like to dwell on pain" (Vancouver, 2008). This line will prove to be untrue, as the children will hear of Medea's troubles as

soon as they enter the house. In one of her first speeches on stage, Medea curses her children. The stage directions show that the children had just entered the house with the Tutor, therefore able to hear her cries. In lines 111-12 she says “O cursed children, may you perish at the hands of your hated mother along with your father, and may the whole house be damned” (Vancouver, 2008). These lines set the tone of the play and foreshadow the filicide that Medea will commit.

Something to consider is to what extent Medea blamed her own children for Jason’s betrayal, as they were an offspring of them both. In line 115, the Chorus says to Medea, “O the sorrow of it all. Poor woman! Why link your children with the nasty things their father’s done? Why do you hate them so? I’m terrified the children will be hurt” (Vancouver, 2008). Medea explicitly says that she wants Jason to feel what she felt, to be without anything at all and totally hopeless, which was a motive for killing the children. However, there is little remorse seen in their actual murder. She says things to the Chorus, the Nurse and the Tutor about her actions, but only in reference to her pain and how she feels she has no other options. This is seen at Line 111, where she says “The pain of this suffering - this intense pain. Am I not right to weep? O my children, cursed children of a hateful mother - may you die with your father and his house, may it all perish, crash down in ruins!” (Vancouver, 2008). She reflects the blame off of Jason and onto her children, just as the Chorus says.

The Nurse has a significant impact on the understanding of the children, most notably with two lines early in the play. She says “Children, do you hear what sort of man your father is to him? My curse on him! No. He is my master - but a bad man to his own family. Of that he’s guilty” and then shortly after “My dear children, you hear your

mother's cry. Her heart's upset. Her anger's growing, too. So quickly now, run off inside the house. Stay out of sight. Don't try to go and see her. She's fierce, headstrong by nature. Take care. So go now - inside as quickly as you can" (Vancouver, 2008). These two lines compose what little we know about the emotional understanding of the children. They have been told both that their father is a bad man and that their mother is suffering. Whether they understand why or are able to connect the dots is up for debate, but a conclusion could be drawn that they at least have been groomed to take the side of Medea. This can be further seen when one of the children says "What do I do? How can I escape my mother's hands?" (Vancouver, 2008). While they are dying, they do not curse their mother or make any cries for help to their father, a note of their allegiance to their mother.

Medea and the Chorus

The relationship between the Chorus and Medea is very intricate. Much of the manipulation that other classicists discuss regards Medea's manipulation of the Chorus. There is an established level of trust between the Chorus and Medea because of their shared attitudes and emotions (Cairns, 2021, p. 15). Medea divulges her feelings and her plans to the Chorus, similar to what one would do with a friend. Upon her request, the Chorus does not reveal any of Medea's plans to Jason or the children. While they feel that her plan is extreme, they understand where her anger and frustration are coming from and sympathize with her. They also agree that Jason is, in fact, in the wrong with his actions.

In the beginning of the play, the Chorus and the Nurse go back and forth discussing Medea while she cries from the depths of the house. The Chorus of Corinthian women call her "friend" in line 137 and they are plagued by her torment. McClure says that the "Chorus sympathetically interprets her plangent rage as a form of mourning, "I heard the sad cry of lamentation as she wails her shrill, painful grief" (1999, p. 380). They can relate to her pain as a scorned woman who has been wronged by the marriage bed, but do not expect the dark plans that she has in mind. This relationship increases in strength with Medea's famous Women of Corinth speech, where she addresses the women of the Chorus and the state of women in Greece at the time. She explains to them her own troubles and then continues on by saying how little control women have over their futures and their love lifes. She equates marriage to a lottery, saying that it is just as easy to be married to a bad husband as it is to a good husband. She finishes her speech by asking the Chorus to say nothing if she finds a way to repay her husband for the torment he has caused her. The Chorus replies in lines 266-68 with "I'll do what you request. For you are right to pay back your husband. And, Medea, I'm not surprised you grieve at these events" (Vancouver, 2008).With this response, Medea's strength is bolstered and she moves forward with her plans, knowing that she has the women of Corinth on her side. Even after Medea reveals her plans to murder her children later in the play, her relationship with the Chorus does not fail her. In lines 811-12, they say to her, "Since you've shared your plans with me, I urge you not to do this. I want to help you, holding to the standards of human law" (Vancouver, 2008). In saying this, the Chorus reveals that they are still on Medea's side and believe that revenge should be sought, just not in the way she aims to do so.

The Chorus' perspective on Jason does not waiver throughout the play. From the beginning, they have taken Medea's side by proclaiming that Jason is wrong for abandoning her and betraying their marriage bed. In lines 576-579, the Chorus speaks directly to Jason and says, "Your reasons here seem logical, but it strikes, if I may presume, you're in the wrong abandoning your wife," and then later in lines 652-54 says "The man who shames his family, who does not open up his heart, and treat them in all honesty - may he perish unlamented. With him I never could be friends" (Vancouver, 2008). By repeatedly blaming Jason, the Chorus encourages Medea to have vengeance against Jason and his actions.

Medea's Motives

This raises questions as to what emotions underlie her actions; was she acting out of anger, fear, jealousy? In her first speech, addressed to the Women of Corinth, Medea says "Will he be cruel or good?" (Cairns, 2014, p. 134). This is in reference to a man or husband in general. She talks about how finding a husband is like entering the lottery. Women in Classical Athens had little to no say in their choice of life partners, so if they were stuck with a bad husband, they are "better [off] dead" (Cairns, 2014, p. 134).

Medea is so different from other classical women because of how she openly confesses her rage. She is honest with Jason about the emotional plague that pains her and will argue about it with him. Other female characters from the same time period were not offered this same agency and were more often than not passive in their character. This opportunity is available to her because she has nothing to lose from standing her ground,

"Rather than fighting to maintain a circumspect silence, she openly rages because she has nothing shameful to conceal" (McClure, 1999, p. 379).

Much of Medea's motive is revealed through her conversations with Jason. Jason argues with her, claiming that her revenge stemmed from jealousy and possessiveness. In line 1367-8, Jason says "You actually thought it right to kill them for the sake of sex?" to which Medea responded "Do you think that this is a minor trouble for a woman?" (Vancouver, 2008). Medea clearly admits that some of what drove her to murdering her children was Jason's betrayal of the marriage bed, but while Jason thinks this is a trivial matter, Medea thinks otherwise. Where Jason is wrong is in his claim that this is the sole reason for her crimes. In line 568-733, Jasons says "But you women have reached the point that if everything is fine in bed you think you have it all, but if something goes wrong in that area, you regard the best and most satisfactory of situations as hostile" (Vancouver, 2008).

Medea's motives are much more complex than a broken-down marriage. She conveys feelings of betrayal, anger, jealousy and contempt to the Chorus. In her famous speech addressed to the Women of Corinth, she generalizes her experiences to all women. She says to them in line 280, "But if the marriage doesn't work, then death is much preferred" (Vancouver, 2008). She goes on to explain that women in Ancient Greece only have one chance at happiness and that their happiness is based on the chance that they are married off to a good and loyal husband. Medea is overwhelmed with emotion because her chance at happiness has been ruined, it does not just have to do with her husband having extra-marital affairs with another woman. Jason fully intends to leave her with the children and marry the daughter of King Creon, leaving her without a

husband in a country that she would not consider home. The level of betrayal she experiences is on many levels but Jason demeans it to just being a jealous woman. The motive behind murdering her own children and the daughter of King Creon lies in making Jason feel the same pain that he made her feel, without family in a place that no longer feels like home.

Medea as an 'Ordinary Woman'

Cairns discusses Medea in the frame of representing the Ordinary Woman. As discussed earlier, many classicists have made the claim that Medea embodies feminism because of the actions she takes against her verbally abusive and manipulative husband. Cairns, however, argues that she does not represent the Ordinary Woman because she, herself, is manipulative and all of her actions are very selfish, as well as her embodying the traits of a classic hero (Cairns, 2014, pp. 139-140). While she should not be seen as an icon for women, her actions could benefit women in society by showing that being bold and brave against an abuser can guide you out of bad situations.

Van Zyl Smit's paper discusses Medea as a modern icon for feminists. There have been numerous translations and also several interpretations of the text. The story of Medea "can be made to represent not only betrayed women, but also oppressed racial groups, exploited colonials and women" (van Zyl Smit, 2002, p. 102). Van Zyl Smit makes the point that any piece of classical text can be used, out of context, to advocate for certain groups of people or prove a point. Even Euripides, who historically wrote about women in a demeaning sense, could be seen as a "proto-feminist" if the right pieces of text were quoted (van Zyl Smit, 2002, p. 103).

Similar to Cairns, van Zyl Smit draws conclusions about Medea being represented as an ordinary woman at the beginning of the play, where she is betrayed by Jason, to whom she devoted her life and sacrificed much for. However, he notes that as the play progresses, her acceptance as an ordinary woman becomes more complicated. In her speech addressed to the women of Corinth, Medea makes it known that she too is aware of the low social status that women have in her society. She grovels and complains about the unequal position of women and how they have little choice in the path their lives take. Her actions against her own children do not uphold this view though, and neither does her being carried away in a chariot at the end of the play. This issue makes it difficult for interpreters to accurately portray her as a modern feminist (van Zyl Smit, 2002). The stage directions indicate that the last conversation between Jason and Medea takes place while Medea is in the chariot with the children, hovering above the house. The displacement of height here can be a metaphor for the inequality and distribution of power between Jason and Medea that makes it so difficult for the audience to relate to her at this point. After committing filicide, much of the audience has already disconnected from her. But now, it is almost as if she is gloating that she has taken everything away from him: his lover, his children, and the opportunity to bury his children properly. Even after he begs her to let him touch the skin of his children one more time, she declines, further pushing the narrative of how this was a crime of rage and anger.

TRANSLATING *MEDEA*

The Women of Corinth speech is arguably one of the most famous monologues of ancient Greek text. This speech takes place in lines 214-266, after the Nurse, the Tutor, and the Chorus have set the background of the play. In her monologue, Medea addresses

the Women of Corinth (the Chorus) and speaks of what is troubling her. The monologue can be easily divided into three sections based on the topics of her speech. In the first section she speaks of her notions towards being a foreigner in Corinth, and how it has affected others' opinions towards her. In the second section, she talks about a woman's place in society in Corinth, specifically in regards to husbands and marriage. In the third section, she returns again to her place as a foreigner, and asks the Women of Corinth to swear themselves to secrecy and not tell anyone of her plans. The setup of this monologue is incredibly important, because it helps build the relationships that Medea has created with the Chorus, as well as indicates how the Chorus can reasonably have sympathy for Medea.

While doing my own translations of this text, I have chosen four authors to compare. Each and every translation of *Medea* that can be found is different, some more than others. It's important to consider the background of the translator as well as other texts they have translated in order to understand their translations to the fullest extent. The first is George Theodoridis, who published his translation of Medea in 2005. The second is David Kovacs, a professor of Classics at the University of Virginia. His research interests are in translating Greek Tragedy and understanding text-critical problems. He has translated several texts of Euripides, as well as written more broadly about Euripides as an author. He published his translation of Medea in 1994. The third is Gilbert Murray, who was one of the first authors who incorporated anthropology into his writings, which helped to increase the understanding of ancient Greek text and religion. His *Euripides and His Age* (1981) was considered one of the most influential books of his time because of how he helped the reader understand Euripides' importance in the

context of both modern and ancient times. The fourth is E. P. Coleridge, who published his translation in 1994. The last is Cecilia Luschnig, whose translation was the most recently published in 2019.

The translations in this section will be literal, meaning that it will be a word for word translation and more difficult to understand than the comparison translations. Notes from other classicists will not be used to help interpret the text, except where noted. The purpose of this is to better understand the original text as well as how other classicists interpret original text and have the opportunity to change the meaning of it.

Medea Lines 214 - 229

Medea - Original Greek	Medea - My Translation
Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες, ἐξῆλθον δόμων μή μοί τι μέμψησθ': οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς βροτῶν σεμνοὺς γεγῶτας, τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο, τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις: οἱ δ' ἀφ' ἡσύχους ποδοσ δύσκλειαν ἐκτήσαντο καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν. δίκη γὰρ οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς βροτῶν, ὅστις πρὶν ἀνδρὸς σπλάγχνον ἐκμαθεῖν σαφῶς στυγεῖ δεδορκώς, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος. χρὴ δὲ ξένον μὲν κάρτα προσχωρεῖν πόλει: οὐδ' ἀστὸν ᾔνεσ' ὅστις αὐθάδης γεγὼς πικρὸς πολίταις ἐστὶν ἀμαθίας ὕπο. ἐμοὶ δ' ἄελπτον πρᾶγμα προσπεσὸν τόδε ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ': οἴχομαι δὲ καὶ βίου χάριν μεθεῖσα κατθανεῖν χρῄζω, φίλαι. ἐν ᾧ γὰρ ἦν μοι πάντα, γιγνώσκω καλῶς, κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν ἐκβέβηχ' οὑμὸς πόσις.	Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many mortal men who have become haughty, some on the one hand away from eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment has not been placed into the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary on the one hand for the stranger to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected hopeless deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

As mentioned earlier, this section is about Medea's experience on being a foreigner in Corinth and other people's perceptions of her and foreigners in general. It

begins with Medea addressing the Women of Corinth, which is likely why many classicists refer to it as 'The Women of Corinth' speech. She makes a statement about how she wants to address them in case they find Μέμψησθ' in her. This can be translated as blame, fault or censure, but I chose to use 'fault' because the audience is unsure yet what she can be blamed for. From what the audience knows about Medea at this point, 'fault' implies that she may have done or will do something wrong. It sets the tone for the rest of her speech, where she inevitably tells the Chorus her goal of punishing her husband. Her next statement is about the way in which men present themselves to the public. She uses σεμνοὺς as an adjective to describe them, and considering the tone and precedent that has already been set for men in the play, I chose to use 'haughty,' which is σεμνοὺς in the negative sense. τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις was translated using footnotes to 'in the public eye,' as it does not translate well. Literally, it says "on the other hand, with the strangers." Strangers in this context denotes the general public, and the eyes can be taken from the previous line, where she says "on the one hand, away from the eye." Adding on to her observations of men, Medea says "They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the foot." ησύχου here can be translated as still, quiet, at rest, at ease or leisure, but I chose laziness in order to further Medea's narrative against men. Similarly, ῥᾳθυμίαν can be translated in a more positive sense like relaxation, but I chose infamy. Her statement 'away from the quiet foot' had footnotes that described it as being something not noticed by society or a group of people, which is seen in other classicists' translations (Euripides, Steadman and Murray, 2015).

Medea says that no judgment has been placed, but that men will judge other men before they are able to clearly learn the σπλάγχνον, which can be translated as inward

parts, of the σπλάγχνον, or the heart. The next line is the first reference Medea makes to the ξένον, or foreigner. This calls into question all the earlier uses of βροτῶν, which was translated as 'mortal man.' Whether Medea was in fact referring to foreigners/strangers during the beginning of the passage or just men in general is unknown, but there is a clear shift directly to foreigners for the rest of this passage. She says that foreigners must comply with the rules of the city they are in, and only foreigners who are 'stubborn' are 'sharp' to the local citizens.

She then returns to her own experience, saying that the deed (the murder of her own children) has ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ,' or destroyed her soul. She tells the Chorus that she wants to die and that she has given up all χάριν, or grace. The definition of χάριν has to do with being full of all things good, so Medea feels that she can no longer hold onto any good sentiments anymore. The last line of this passage helps transition into the next section because Medea makes direct reference to her husband. She says that her husband, who was once μοι πάντα, or her everything, is now the worst of men. Notice here the use of κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν, a superlative adjective which again furthers her narrative against Jason to the Chorus.

Excerpt from George Theodoridis -	My Translation -
Corinthian women. I have come out among you so that you'll stop talking behind my back, condemning my every action. I know many people –some directly, with my own eyes and others I've heard about- who were born good folk but because they stayed quietly away from society, got themselves the odious reputation of being arrogant and conceited individuals. Eyes alone are inadequate judges of people. A judgment made without knowing a person well could result in hating that	Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many proud mortal men who have been born, on the one hand away from their eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment is not in the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary

person, for no reason at all, except for the way he looks. Sure, a foreigner must accept all the customs of his new city but I cannot praise the man who's local-born but who, due to ignorance and immaturity, hurts bitterly his fellow citizens. Corinthian women, you know that I have to suffer an insufferable thing, a thing that has worn my soul away. I'm no longer alive! I refuse all of life's charms and I seek death. Yes, death, Corinthians, because my husband, who was my whole world, had become the most evil of all men	on the one hand for the foreigner to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

Theodorodis' translation uses many similar words that I used in my translation. It is very simple and uses plain language. Instead of saying "found fault" in Medea, he says "so that you'll stop talking behind my back." This implies that there is something that the Chorus knows about Medea already at this point, most likely that Jason has left her to marry the daughter of Creon. It also builds on the sense of empathy that the Chorus inevitably finds for her. When Medea is talking about men, the phrase Euripides uses the contrasting 'τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο, τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις' signifying away from and towards her eyes. Theodoridis instead says that Medea has seen some of the men and then only heard about others. The adjectives he uses to describe men are "arrogant" and "conceited," conveying a similar meaning to my "lazy and "infamous" description. The most notable piece of his translation is Jason "had become the most evil of all men" instead of my "has proved to be the worst of men." I think the strength of 'proved' instead of 'become' furthers Medea's vendetta against Jason in a more succinct way, because it was his actions against her that has made her feel this way, which she goes on to explain later in the speech.

Excerpt from David Kovac - Women of Corinth, I have come out of the	My Translation - Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from

house lest you find some fault with me. For I know that though many mortals are haughty both in private and in public, others get a reputation for indifference to their neighbors from their retiring manner of life. There is no justice in mortals' eyes since before they get sure knowledge of a man's true character they hate him on sight, although he has done them no harm. Now a foreigner must be quite compliant with the city, nor do I have any words of praise for the citizen who is stubborn and causes his fellow-citizens pain by his lack of breeding. In my case, however, this sudden blow that has struck me has destroyed my life. I am undone, I have resigned all joy in life, and I want to die. For the man in whom all I had was bound up, as I well know—my husband—has proved the basest of men.	the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many proud mortal men who have been born, on the one hand away from their eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment is not in the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary on the one hand for the foreigner to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

Kovac's translation seems to adhere more to the actual definitions of the Greek, much more similar to my translation than Theodoridis'. For example, he uses 'fault' in order to describe the feelings of the Chorus and 'haughty' to describe the actions of men. When discussing the character of men, Kovac says "before they get sure knowledge of a man's true character," whereas I said "before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man." I prefer Kovac's translation here because it is clearer while not straying too far from the original Greek in the text. One notable piece of Kovac's translation was "lack of breeding," referring to the actions of the local citizens. I cannot deduce exactly what Greek led him to this piece of the translation. The rest of Kovac's translation here is incredibly similar to mine, with just a few substitutions in adjectives, like "I have resigned all joy in life" instead of "I have given up grace." In my opinion, Kovac's translation does a great job at portraying the pain felt by Medea while also conveying her

underlying anger. This is done through simple adjustments, like Jason has "proved to be the basest of men," an even lower insult than the worst.

Excerpt from Gilbert Murray -	My Translation -
Women of Corinth, I am come to show my face, lest ye despise me. For I know some heads stand high and fail not, even at night alone—far less like this, in all men's sight: And we, who study not our wayfarings but feel and cry—Oh we are drifting things, and evil! For what truth is in men's eyes, which search no heart, but in a flash despise. A strange face, shuddering back from one that ne'er hath wronged them? . . . Sure, far-comers anywhere, I know, must bow them and be gentle. Nay, A Greek himself men praise not, who alway should seek his own will recking not. . . . But I— This thing undreamed of, sudden from on high, hath sapped my soul: I dazzle where I stand, the cup of all life shattered in my hand, longing to die—O friends! He, even he, whom to know well was all the world to me, The man I loved, hath proved most evil.	Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many proud mortal men who have been born, on the one hand away from their eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment is not in the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary on the one hand for the foreigner to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

Murray's translation is incredibly formal and uses a considerable amount of antiquated English. It seems that he paraphrased much of the Greek instead of using a direct translation. While it is not the easiest to read, it is interesting because it shows more of how translations have changed over time. In the first line, he translates "I am come to show my face," despite there being no Greek in that first line to indicate the word 'face.' In place of μέμψησθ, he says "lest ye despise me." This plays even more deeply into the sympathy that Medea hopes to gain from the Chorus with this speech. Lines 216-224 of Murray's translation convey the meaning of the original Greek but using many different English words, most of which cannot be found in dictionary definitions of the Greek. He makes mention of how some men are proud close to and

away from the public eye, by saying ‘some hands stand high and fail not, even at night alone - far less like this, in all men’s sight.” The piece of the translation where I used “away from the quiet foot,” Murray opted to use “we are drifting things,” a similar notion to actions taking place away from the eyes of the public. The next piece about strangers hating a man before knowing him is less straightforward. He says that strangers will look them in the face and shudder, despite “ne’er hath wronged them” and that foreigners should “bow them and be gentle” anyways. His last piece on Medea’s current state is much more similar to my own translation. He says that the unexpected deed has ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ’, or has sapped Medea’s soul. His use of sap here accurately portrays Medea’s feelings of hopelessness. Instead of saying that Medea has οἴχομαι χάριν, or gone from grace, Murray says that the cup of all life shattered in her hand. I think that Murray’s version of this line digs even deeper into Medea’s true feelings and motive for filicide, as she feels that not only her life, but all life, has been shattered by Jason’s actions. In the last line of this section, Murray says that Jason, whom, “to know all well was the world to me, the man I loved, hath proved most evil.” The word ‘world’ in this sentence likely comes from παντα, which means everything, so Murray is again exacerbating Medea’s feelings. He finishes by taking advantage of the superlative κάκιστος, making Jason the most evil. However, what is the most evil of is up for interpretation by the Chorus and audience, because unlike other translations, he does not specify that he is the most evil or worst among man-kind.

Excerpt from E.P. Coleridge -	My Translation -
From the house I have come forth, Corinthian ladies, for fear lest you be blaming me; for well I know that amongst men many by showing pride have gotten them an ill name and a reputation for indifference, both those who shun men's gaze and those who move amid the stranger crowd, and likewise they who choose a quiet walk in life. For there is no just discernment in the eyes of men, for they, or ever they have surely learnt their neighbor's heart, loathe him at first sight, though never wronged by him; and so a stranger most of all should adopt a city's views; nor do I commend that citizen, who, in the stubbornness of his heart, from churlishness resents the city's will. But on me hath fallen this unforeseen disaster, and sapped my life; ruined I am, and long to resign the boon of existence, kind friends, and die. For he who was all the world to me, as well thou knowest, hath turned out the worst of men, my own husband.	Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many proud mortal men who have been born, on the one hand away from their eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment is not in the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary on the one hand for the foreigner to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

Overall, Coleridge's translation is similar to mine. The only large difference is his sentence structure, as he has flipped the subject and predicate in many of the sentences. He starts off by addressing the 'Corinthian ladies,' from γυναῖκες, which in my opinion is a more sophisticated way for Medea to address the Chorus and is fitting considering how he chooses to translate this piece. He chooses to use 'blame' for μέμψησθ', which I steered away from because of the implications 'blame' places on Medea, who has done nothing wrong yet. Coleridge's translation of lines 215-219 is the most cohesive of any of the translations in this paper. He succinctly states that some men have received bad reputations by showing pride, some behind closed doors and others in public. He translates δύσκλειαν and ῥᾳθυμία as ill-named and reputation, respectively, which are both very fitting. In the next line, instead of 'searching out the heart of a man,' Coleridge says 'learnt their neighbor's heart.' I do not believe that this piece of translation fits well

with the rest of the text because Medea is discussing the status of strangers and foreigners (like herself) in a new city, so there was no reason to specify the heart of a neighbor. He also uses 'stranger' for ξένον instead of foreigner, which does get a similar point across. For ἄελπτον πρᾶγμα, he uses 'unforeseen disaster,' whereas I used 'deed.' This really drives home the point that Jason has torn up Medea's life from the roots. Like Murray, Coleridge uses sap for διέφθαρκ'. The last major difference is in οἴχομαι χάριν, which he translates as 'to resign the boon of existence,' which means that Medea has let go of everything that has made life worthwhile.

Excerpt from Cecilia Luschnig -	My Translation -
Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house, so that you will not hold anything against me. I know that many people are standoffish, some in the privacy of home and others in the public sphere. Some people, because they are shy, have acquired the ill repute of indifference. There is no justice in people's perception: there are some who, before they know a person inside out, hate him on sight, even if they have never been wronged by him. An outsider in particular must conform to the city. A native too: I do not condone self-absorbed people who through insensitivity irritate their neighbors. But for me this unexpected disaster has wrecked my life. I am cast adrift. I have lost all pleasure in living and I want to die, my friends. The man who was everything to me, try to understand this, has turned out to be the vilest man alive, my own husband.	Oh Corinthian Women, I have come out from the house in case you all have found fault with me. For I have known of many proud mortal men who have been born, on the one hand away from their eyes but on the other hand in the public eye. They have acquired laziness and infamy away from the quiet foot. The judgment is not in the eyes of mortal men. Before anyone clearly searches out the heart of the man, hates him having seen him right away, having injured no one. It is necessary on the one hand for the foreigner to comply with the city in good earnest. Anyone who is stubborn is sharp to his fellow citizens on account of his stupidity. But for me, this unexpected deed falling upon me has destroyed my soul. But, I have gone from life, I have given up grace, and I want to die, oh beloved! My husband, in whom to me was everything, I know it well, has proved to be the worst of men.

Luschnig's translation seems to use language most similar to the dictionary entries associated with the original Greek. Most of the words she chooses, specifically adjectives, are synonymous to the words I chose. Medea starts by addressing the Women of Corinth and says she has come out of the house so that they (the Chorus) will not hold

anything against her. This comes from ‘μή μοί τι μέμψησθ’,’ which I translated as ‘in case you all have found fault with me.’ Luschnig’s word choice alludes to Medea’s future actions as well as builds on the sympathy Medea wishes to gain from the Chorus. She continues by saying she knows that people are standoffish, from πολλοὺς βροτῶν, some in the privacy of the home and others in the public sphere. The section on judgment is very similar to mine, with just a few changes. Luschnig translates ‘ἀνδρὸς σπλάγχνον’ as to know a person inside out instead of to know the heart of a man and ‘‘οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος’ as never been wronged by him instead of having injured no one. Neither of these translations change the purpose of the speech but they do add a bit more passion into Medea’s speech. When speaking on the place of the foreigner, Luschnig chooses to translate ξένον as outsider instead, and says that those who irritate (αὐθάδης) their neighbors are insensitive (ἀμαθίας), rather than sharp and stupid, respectively. Her word choice here is less harsh, which makes sense considering Medea, herself, is an outsider to Corinth. The only notable differences in the rest of this section are her translations for ‘ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ’’ and ‘κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν’. Instead of saying that Jason’s actions destroyed her soul, she said they have wrecked her life. I prefer my translation here because it speaks to how detrimental Jason’s actions were to Medea’s mental health. She describes him as the vilest man alive, a much more appropriate choice than the worst of men.

Medea Lines 230 - 251

Medea - Original Greek	Medea - My Translation
πάντων δ’ ὅσ’ ἔστ’ ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην ἔχει γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν: ἃς πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ χρημάτων ὑπερβολῇ	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a

πόσιν πρίασθαι, δεσπότην τε σώματος [λαβεῖν: κακοῦ γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἄλγιον κακόν]. κἀν τῷδ᾽ ἀγὼν μέγιστος, ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν ἢ χρηστόν: οὐ γὰρ εὐκλεεῖς ἀπαλλαγαὶ γυναιξὶν οὐδ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν. ἐς καινὰ δ᾽ ἦθη καὶ νόμους ἀφιγμένην δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, μὴ μαθοῦσαν οἴκοθεν, ὅπως ἄριστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτῃ. κἂν μὲν τάδ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐκπονουμέναισιν εὖ πόσις ξυνοικῇ μὴ βίᾳ φέρων ζυγόν, ζηλωτὸς αἰών: εἰ δὲ μή, θανεῖν χρεών. ἀνὴρ δ᾽, ὅταν τοῖς ἔνδον ἄχθηται ξυνών, ἔξω μολὼν ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄσης [ἢ πρὸς φίλον τιν᾽ ἢ πρὸς ἥλικα τραπείς]: ἡμῖν δ᾽ ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βλέπειν. λέγουσι δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίον ζῶμεν κατ᾽ οἴκους, οἱ δὲ μάρνανται δορί, κακῶς φρονοῦντες: ὡς τρὶς ἂν παρ᾽ ἀσπίδα στῆναι θέλοιμ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἅπαξ.	master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well, our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes outs and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age. But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

This next section is about the trials and tribulations of being a woman in Ancient Greece at the time. The statements Medea makes here are much more generalizable to the Chorus, as she speaks to the general experience of womanhood and being a wife. She starts by saying that, of all living things, women are the ἀθλιώτατον, which can be translated as struggling, wretched, or miserable. I chose wretched as it fits with the rest of this portion of the text, where she describes the unfortunate situation of a woman's life and made sure to include 'most wretched' to honor the superlative. She then continues by describing what makes life so wretched for women. She says that must πρίασθαι, or purchase, both a husband and a master of the body. Perseus notes that 'χρημάτων ὑπερβολῇ πρίασθαι' as a phrase means 'to purchase at an extravagant price,' likely alluding to the dowry that was required from the family of the bride at the time. Medea says that taking a husband is the worst evil of any other evils. To make this struggle even more difficult for women, they have little choice in ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖνἢ χρηστόν, to take a

bad one or a good one (husband). Medea explains this struggle by saying that divorce is not εὐκλεεῖς, or glorious, for women and that they cannot ἀνήνασθαι, or renounce, their husbands. I chose to translate εὐκλεεῖς as glorious instead of famous because it would tarnish the reputation of the woman, and glorious is a good antonym for that notion. I chose to translate ἀνήνασθαι as renounce instead of disown or reject because Medea likely means that women cannot leave a marriage after it is legitimized and try to marry someone else. She continues to say that as a woman comes into the ἤθη καὶ νόμους (customs and manners) of her husband's home, she must be a μάντιν. I translated μάντιν as diviner instead of seer or prophet because of the expectations that Medea is referencing to. Women uphold the expectations, morals, and customs of the home. Medea says that women will not have learned these customs at home, so they will have to find the best way to deal with their husband.

Medea then switches to talk about the feelings of men within a marriage. She says that if life is not enviable, it is necessary for one to θανεῖν, or die. But instead of this being true for men, she says that whenever men are annoyed, he goes out and ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄσης, or stops the heart of distress. She explains what she means by "heart of distress" in the next line, which is a φίλον (friend) or ἥλικα τραπείς (someone of the same age). Medea returns again to the status of women and says that for us (women), we are forced to look at μίαν ψυχὴν. I originally translated this as 'the one life' but changed it to 'one soul.' This better fits Medea's point that men have outlets for anger beyond their marriage whereas women do not. She continues and says that men tell women that they live a life free from danger, meanwhile men fight with a δορί, or spear. Medea's response to this sentiment is that she wishes to stand with the shield (like the men do) three times

than τεκεῖν ἅπαξ. I translated τεκεῖν ἅπαξ as beget once, a reference to giving birth. Medea's point in this is that the living through childbirth is a worse pain than any man would ever experience in battle.

Excerpt from George Theodoridis	Medea - My Translation
Of all the living things, of all those things that have a soul and a sense, we, yes we, the women, are the most pathetic! Imagine! We need to spend a fortune to buy us a man who… what will he do? He will become the master of our bodies! And, it's obvious, that this dangerous thing we do, becomes even more dangerous when we don't find the right husband. Is he a good husband? Or is he a bad one? By the time you find that out it's already too late. And then, for a woman to leave her husband is neither proper nor possible. To live in a place where new laws and customs apply one needs to be a prophet, since even your own folk don't tell you how you should behave towards your husband. And if all these things work out well and our husband lives with us without thinking the marriage yoke to be too heavy, well that would indeed be a great life. If not, though, only Death opens his arms for us. Only Death awaits us. Whereas the husband, however, if he finds the house to be too great a burden for him, he leaves the place, he finds a friend or someone of similar age and immediately his heart shrugs off that weight. We, on the other hand, we, women, can only let our eyes fall upon one person and one person only, our husband. Then people also say that while we live quietly and without any danger at home, the men go off to war. Wrong! One birth alone is worse than three times in the battlefield behind a shield.	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well, our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes out and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age. But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear. Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

Theodoridis' translation of section 2 uses very strong language and punctuation, which really drives home Medea's point of view that women are unfairly treated in marriage. Medea begins by describing living things as having soul and sense, from ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην. This description, instead of life and intelligence, does not change much as they are synonymous. She then says that women are the most pathetic of all

living things, from ἀθλιώτατον. Describing women as pathetic, instead of as wretched, adds a negative connotation when thinking about the status of women. Theodorodis translates εὐκλεεῖς as neither proper nor possible, in terms of leaving one's husband. He says that a women must be a prophet, from δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, when learning the new customs and manners of the household. The idea that a woman must be a prophet speaks to the idea that they have to try so much harder than men within a marriage to make sure it is successful. He then says that if a women is able to be a prophet of the household, her husband would think that the marriage yoke is not too heavy, from Βίᾳ. The language here is still not much more clear than my translation, not bearing the force of the marriage yoke. One of the biggest differences between Theodoridis' translation and everyone else's is seen in ζηλωτὸς αἰών: εἰ δὲ μή, θανεῖν χρεών. He is the only classicist referenced in this paper who translates θανεῖν directly as Death, instead of the act of dying. He says that 'only Death opens his arms for us. Only Death awaits,' which is an exaggeration of how a woman would feel in an unsuccessful marriage. Theodoridis again uses the collective voice and says that we women can look at one person and one person only, despite men being allowed to entertain men and women outside of the marriage, playing again on the sympathy of the Chorus. While the last line of this section is similar to mine, there is a notable difference. He translates ὡς τρὶς ἂν παρ᾽ ἀσπίδα στῆναι θέλοιμ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἅπαξ as 'one birth alone is worse than three times in the battlefield behind a shield.' This is essentially the same as my translation but reversed, however the reversal of it reiterates the point that giving birth is by far worse than going to war any amount of times.

Excerpt from David Kovac	Medea - My Translation

Of all creatures that have breath and sensation, we women are the most unfortunate. First at an exorbitant price we must buy a husband and master of our bodies. [This misfortune is more painful than misfortune.] And the outcome of our life's striving hangs on this, whether we take a bad or a good husband. For divorce is discreditable for women and it is not possible to refuse wedlock. And when a woman comes into the new customs and practices of her husband's house, she must somehow divine, since she has not learned it at home, how she shall best deal with her husband. If after we have spent great efforts on these tasks our husbands live with us without resenting the marriage-yoke, our life is enviable. Otherwise, death is preferable. A man, whenever he is annoyed with the company of those in the house, goes elsewhere and thus rids his soul of its boredom [turning to some male friend or age-mate]. But we must fix our gaze on one person only. Men say that we live a life free from danger at home while they fight with the spear. How wrong they are! I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well, our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes outs and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age. But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear. Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

Kovac starts his translation of section 2 by describing people as having breath and sensation, from ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην, instead of as having life and intelligence. His translation speaks to the humanity of people in a time where gods and goddesses were so prevalent. He then describes women as being unfortunate, as a result of the things they experience. He says divorce is discreditable, from εὐκλεεῖς, instead of not glorious. Kovacs' translation of the sentence on customs and manners is nearly identical to mine. He then says that the life of a woman is enviable, only if her husband does not resent the marriage yoke, from βίᾳ. This translation is much more clear than mine, where I said a husband does not bear the force of the marriage yoke. Continuing on to how men act, Kovac says that they ride their soul of boredom whenever they are annoyed with the

company of their household. I translated ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄση as stopping the heart from distress, but Kovac's translation is preferable. He concludes by saying that women must fix their gaze on one person only, from ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βλέπειν, showing how women are confined to the walls of their marriage but men are able to have extramarital affairs. The last sentence of this section is also nearly identical to mine.

Excerpt from Gilbert Murray	Medea - My Translation
—Oh, Of all things upon earth that bleed and grow, A herb most bruised is woman. We must pay our store of gold, hoarded for that one day, To buy us some man's love; and lo, they bring a master of our flesh! There comes the sting of the whole shame. And then the jeopardy, for good or ill, what shall that master be; Reject she cannot: and if he but stays His suit, 'tis shame on all that woman's days. So thrown amid new laws, new places, why, 'tis magic she must have, or prophecy—Home never taught her that—how best to guide toward peace this thing that sleepeth at her side. And she who, labouring long, shall find some way whereby her lord may bear with her, nor fray his yoke too fiercely, blessed is the breath that woman draws! Else, let her pray for death. Her lord, if he be wearied of the face withindoors, gets him forth; some merrier place will ease his heart: but she waits on, her whole vision enchainèd on a single soul. And then, forsooth, 'tis they that face the call of war, while we sit sheltered, hid from all peril!—False mocking! Sooner would I stand three times to face their battles, shield in hand, than bear one child.	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well, our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes outs and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age.But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear. Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

Murray's translation is the most different from mine and the other translations in this paper. It is difficult to deduce exactly from where Murray got some of his translation, so I will only speak to what is deducible. Similar to Kovac, Murray begins his translation with a description of people as those who bleed and grow, from ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην. He

says that “a herb most bruised is women” from γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον. A bruised herb is a plant that has been crushed, so he is likely saying that the souls of women have been crushed. He continues by saying that women must pay their store of gold hoarded for that one day, from ὑπερβολῇ πόσιν πρίασθαι. He is likely referencing a dowry, which is an amount of money paid by the bride’s family to the groom on the day of the wedding. In talking about the greatest challenge of women, Murray says ‘the jeopardy for good or ill, what shall the master be,’ from ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν ἢ χρηστόν, which I translated as ‘either to take a good or bad one.’ You can see clearly in that piece of translation that Murray’s main point of the text is very similar, his translation just uses more vibrant language. On customs and manners, he says a woman must have magic or prophecy, from δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι. This is the first translation that has directly mentioned magic and likely alludes to the fact that many people thought Medea was some sort of witch. The magic Murray says a woman must have should help them ὅπως ἄριστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτη, or learn how best to guide toward peace this thing that sleepeth at her side. It seems that Murray is getting towards the sole purpose of a woman being to make her husband happy. Regarding men, Murray says that going elsewhere to some merrier place will ease his heart, from ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄση, showing how men are never pleased with their marriage or their home. He then says that men face the call of war while women sit sheltered, hid from all peril, from λέγουσι δ’ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίον ζῶμεν κατ’ οἴκους, οἱ δὲ μάρνανται δορί. Murray concludes with a statement similar to mine, that Medea would rather stand three times to face their battles, shield in hand, than bear one child. This is the only translation where the word child is used, which begs the question of

whether or not Medea believes that childbirth or raising a child is more painful than going to war.

Excerpt from E. P. Coleridge -	Medea - My Translation
Of all things that have life and sense we women are the most hapless creatures; first must we buy a husband at a great price, and o'er ourselves a tyrant set which is an evil worse than the first; and herein lies the most important issue, whether our choice be good or bad. For divorce is not honorable to women, nor can we disown our lords. Next must the wife, coming as she does to ways and customs new, since she hath not learnt the lesson in her home, have a diviner's eye to see how best to treat the partner of her life. If haply we perform these tasks with thoroughness and tact, and the husband live with us, without resenting the yoke, our life is a happy one; if not, 'twere best to die. But when a man is vexed with what he finds indoors, he goeth forth and rids his soul of its disgust, betaking him to some friend or comrade of like age; whilst we must needs regard his single self. And yet they say we live secure at home, while they are at the wars, with their sorry reasoning, for I would gladly take my stand in battle array three times o'er, than once give birth.	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well, our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes outs and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age. But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear. Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

Coleridge begins his translation similar to mine, using life and sense to describe humanity. He then says that women are the most hapless creatures, from γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον, hapless being equivalent to wretched from my translation. In my translation, I chose husband and master of the body to translate δεσπότην τε σώματος, but Coleridge chose to use tyrant as a translation, which can be seen as a combination of both words. He says that divorce is not honorable for women, from εὐκλεεῖς, and that women can not disown their lords, from ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν. Translating πόσιν as lords is an interesting

choice but works well considering the way Medea speaks about marriage as more of a transaction than a pact made out of love. On customs and manners, Coleridge says that women must have a diviner's eye, from δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, instead of just translating it as being a diviner. This difference is important because he is saying that women must directly harness the power of a diviner to make the marriage successful. When discussing the acts of men, he says that when men are vexed, from ἄχθηται, they are able to entertain themselves otherwise to rid their soul of disgust, from ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄσης. The idea that men can be disgusted just by being in the company of their wives is a despicable one, and definitely was used to aid the Chorus in building hatred for men. In finishing this section, Coleridge for the most part stays pretty close to my translation. He says that women are secure at home, from ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίονζῶμεν κατ᾽ οἴκους, while men are away at war. He finishes by saying that Medea would gladly take her stand in battle array three times o'er, than once give birth, from ὡς τρὶς ἂν παρ᾽ ἀσπίδα στῆναι θέλοιμ᾽. Coleridge is showing how giving birth is worse than going to war by saying 'take my stand in battle array' because Medea is saying she would rather actively fight than even consider giving birth to a child.

Excerpt from Cecilia Luschnig -	Medea - My Translation
Of all creatures that have life and reason we women are the sorriest lot: first we must at a great expenditure of money buy a husband and even take on a master over our body: this evil is more galling than the first. Here is the most challenging contest, whether we will get a bad manor a good one. Besides, divorce is unsavory for a woman and it is not possible to say no to one's husband. And when she comes into new customs and rules a woman must be a prophet of what she could never learn at home: how best to deal with her marriage partner; and if we get it worked out well and a	But of all the creatures that have life and intelligence, women are the most wretched. First they must purchase both a husband and a master of the body at an extravagant price. To take one: this evil is so much the worse than evil. And in this is the biggest struggle, either to take a bad one or a good one. For divorce is not glorious for women and they cannot renounce their husband. When she is coming into new customs and manners, she must be a diviner, not having learned it at home, how she will best deal with her husband. If to us, having worked it out well,

husband shares our life with us, and he bears the yoke without violence, life is to be envied. Otherwise we are better off dead. But the man, when he is bored with things at home he can go out to ease the weariness of his heart. But we have just one person to look to. They say that we live a life free of danger at home while they face battle with the spear. How wrong they are. I would rather stand three times in the line of battle than once bear a child.	our husbands live with us not bearing the yoke of force. Life is enviable, but if not, dying is necessary. But a man, whenever he is annoyed by being with the ones that are within, he goes outs and he stops the heart from distress. Either towards a friend or towards someone of the same age. But we are forced to look at one soul. They say we live a life free from danger in the house while they fight with the spear. Badly minded: I would wish to stand with the shield thrice instead of begetting once.

Luschnig's translation is most similar to mine, with small discrepancies in word choice. She begins with describing humanity as having life and intelligence, from ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην, and saying that women are the sorriest lot, synonymous to most wretched. She continues to describe what women must do in a very similar manner to the way that I do. She translates κἀν τῷδ᾽ ἀγὼν μέγιστος as the most challenging contest instead of 'the biggest struggle,' which is an interesting translation when considering the hoops women had to jump through in society at that time. She says that divorce is unsavory, from εὐκλεεῖς, which I prefer to 'not glorious' because of its reference to being morally wrong, and that it is not possible to say no to one's husband. Not saying no instead of not renouncing is a much simpler of translating οὐδ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν but it gets the point across nonetheless. Similar to Theodoridis, she translates δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι as prophet instead of diviner. When discussing the matters of men, she describes them as getting bored, from ἄχθηται, and says he can go out to ease the weariness of his heart, from ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄσης. I think Luschnig's translation there is more straightforward and gets to the point that the men of that time would often get bored of their wives and could entertain themselves with other women, either with prostitutes or at brothels. The last notable difference in is seen in ἀσπίδα, which she translated as in the line of battle

instead of with a shield. Again, Luschnig is able to keep the main purpose of the text intact while more directly getting to the point: birthing a child is worse than going to war.

Medea Lines 252 - 266

Medea - Original Greek	Medea - My Translation
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἥκει λόγος: σοὶ μὲν πόλις θ᾽ ἥδ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ πατρὸς δόμοι βίου τ᾽ ὄνησις καὶ φίλων συνουσία, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔρημος ἄπολις οὖσ᾽ ὑβρίζομαι πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐκ γῆς βαρβάρου λελῃσμένη, οὐ μητέρ᾽, οὐκ ἀδελφόν, οὐχὶ συγγενῆ μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ᾽ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς. τοσοῦτον οὖν σου τυγχάνειν βουλήσομαι, ἤν μοι πόρος τις μηχανή τ᾽ ἐξευρεθῇ πόσιν δίκην τῶνδ᾽ ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν [τὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο], σιγᾶν. γυνὴ γὰρ τἄλλα μὲν φόβου πλέα κακή τ᾽ ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν: ὅταν δ᾽ ἐς εὐνὴν ἠδικημένη κυρῇ, οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρὴν μιαιφονωτέρα.	My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband, having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, there is no other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

This final section of Medea's "Women of Corinth" speech is arguably the most important. She compares her situation to that of the women in the Chorus, saying that not only is the place of women in society dire, but specifically Medea's place in society is more dire than all. She then requests that the Chorus keep quiet if she finds a means of retribution for the wrongs done against her. The word choice in this section has the opportunity to make or break the image that is created of Medea for the rest of the play. Medea starts by saying that her story has not πρὸς, or come to the same point as yours (the Chorus). Story here comes from λόγος, which can also be translated as reckoning or words, however, story fits Medea's narrative better. This is the first indication that Medea makes by saying that her life is worse than the rest of the women's lives. She says that

the rest of the Chorus have the city and their father's house, as they are from Corinth unlike her, as well as the profit of life and company of friends. Despite δόμοι being plural, I translated it as singular in the text. She continues, saying that she is lonely without a city, and that she has been ὑβρίζομαι, or maltreated, by her husband and having been seized as booty out of a foreign land. Ὑβρίζομαι could also be translated as insulted or outraged, but maltreatment is more accurate in describing the actions Jason took against her. She says that she has no mother, no brother, and no relative to seek refuge from her συμφορᾶς, which I translated as misfortune. Medea then turns to the Chorus, and says she wishes to gain, from τυγχάνειν, this much. What she asks of them is that if she finds out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for his bad deeds, they should σιγᾶν, or stay silent. The people she addresses to punish, along with her husband, are both Jason's wife and her father. She then switches gears to speak more generally about women again. She says that women are φόβου, or full of fear, and bad at looking upon strength and iron. Strength and iron is likely referring to women being weak and afraid of war. Medea's last statement, while referring broadly to the state of women, is likely a direct reflection of how she is actually feeling about her situation. She says that whenever a woman is ἠδικημένη, or injured, in marriage (inferred from εὐνὴν), there is no heart more murderous than hers. In translating φρὴν, I chose to use heart instead of mind, as I believe her crimes are a crime of passion rather than anger. For μιαιφονωτέρα, I chose to use murderous instead of bloodthirsty because bloodthirsty seemed too harsh of a way to describe her actions and did not accurately portray her motives.

Excerpt from George Theodoridis -	Medea - My Translation

In any case, Corinthians, things between you and me, are different. You are here, in your own country and in your own home, enjoying your life and your friends, whereas I am here alone and without a country. My husband deceives me and treats me like a prize he has just ripped out of some barbarous country; I have no mother, no brother, no relative at all to whom I can turn for support at this dreadful hour of mine. From you, however I ask only one thing: If I manage to find some means by which I can punish my husband and his father-in-law, that man who gave him his daughter as wife, I ask of you to say nothing to anyone. Keep it a secret. A woman is, in all things, timid, shy, weak and can't even look at weapons but when she's deceived by her husband, when her marriage is mocked, there is nothing more bloodthirsty than her.	My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband. Having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, there is no other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

This translation begins with a direct address of the Corinthians. Theodoridis says that things between Medea and the Chorus are different, things likely coming from λόγος instead of using story. He says that 'you are here, in your own country' in place of saying that the Chorus has their own city. For ὑβρίζομαι πρὸς ἀνδρός, he translates it as her husband having deceived her instead of maltreated her. This could be a useful translation when thinking about Medea's heart and love for Jason, because he deceived her in their marriage. He then says that Jason had treated her like a prize by carrying her out of her home country, from λελῃσμένη. She doesn't know who to turn to for support at this 'dreadful hour of mine,' from μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ᾽ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς. A piece of the Greek that Theodoridis did not translate is τὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο, as he only addresses Jason and the bride's father in terms of who Medea wants to punish. Medea asks the Chorus to say nothing at all of her plans, from σιγᾶν, which is much friendlier than saying 'stay silent' the way my translation does. He describes women as being timid, shy and weak and not able to look at weapons, which is a much better way of

translating κακή τ᾽ ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν. In the last line of her speech, Medea says that when a woman's marriage is mocked, from ἠδικημένη, there is nothing more bloodthirsty than her. He misses φρὴν in the last line but is still able to get the point across.

Excerpt from David Kovac - But your story and mine are not the same: you have a city and a father's house, the enjoyment of life and the company of friends, while I, without relatives or city, am suffering outrage from my husband. I was carried off as booty from a foreign land and have no mother, no brother, no kinsman to shelter me from this calamity. And so I shall ask from you this much as a favor: if I find any means or contrivance to punish my husband for these wrongs [and the bride's father and the bride], keep my secret. In all other things a woman is full of fear, incapable of looking on battle or cold steel; but when she is injured in love, no mind is more murderous than hers.	Medea - My Translation My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband. Having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, there is no other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

This section of Kovac's translation is very similar to mine. He starts by saying that Medea's story is not the same as the Chorus's, from ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἥκει λόγος. Instead of saying that they have the profit of life, from βίου τ᾽ ὄνησις, he says that they have the enjoyment of life. He translates ὑβρίζομαι πρὸς ἀνδρός as Medea suffering outrage from her husband. I think this translation perfectly hits the mark and explains that Medea is feeling the way she is feeling because of Jason's actions. He says that Jason carried her off as booty from foreign land, from λεληισμένη, which more accurately describes the story from Jason and the Argonauts. Furthermore, she has 'no kinsman to shelter me from this calamity,' from οὐχὶ συγγενῆ μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ᾽

ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς. I think that kinsman is a bit of a formal translation considering the rest of Kovac's translation, but calamity fits well. In talking about punishing Jason, he says for 'these wrongs' instead of 'these bad things' fromκακῶν; he also makes note that Medea would like to punish the bride and her father, from τὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο, in a much more concise manner than I did. Medea then asks the Chorus to keep her secret, from σιγᾶν, which I prefer to my translation because it builds on the trust that Medea is trying to gain from the Chorus. Kovac says that women are full of fear, from φόβου πλέα, and are incapable of looking upon battle and cold steel, instead of strength and iron from ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον. In the last line, he translates εὐνὴνas love instead of marriage. This adds to the fact that Medea was not just married to someone because that's what women had to do in that time period, but that she was genuinely in love with Jason. He finishes by saying that no mind is more murderous than hers. This is the only translation in this paper that translates φρὴν as mind instead of heart, which can change how people view the crimes that Medea ends up committing.

Excerpt from Gilbert Murray -	Medea - My Translation
But peace! There cannot be ever the same tale told of thee and me. Thou hast this city, and thy father's home, And joy of friends, and hope in days to come: But I, being citiless, am cast aside by him that wedded me, a savage bride won in far seas and left—no mother near, no brother, not one kinsman anywhere for harbour in this storm. Therefore of thee I ask one thing. If chance yet ope to me some path, if even now my hand can win strength to requite this Jason for his sin, betray me not! Oh, in all things but this, I know how full of fears a woman is, and faint at need, and shrinking from the light of battle: but once spoil her of her right in man's love, and there moves, I warn thee well, no bloodier spirit between heaven and hell.	My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband. Having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, there is no

	other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

Murray continues to use some antiquated language in his translation. He starts this section with ‘But peace!’ I think this is a good way to transition from the last section, as Medea could be seen as getting carried away with her feelings. He says that there could never be the same tale told of her and the Chorus, from ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἥκει λόγος. He continues by saying that the Chorus has the ‘joy of friends and hope in days to come.’ His translation of βίου ὄνησις as the hope in days to come is interesting, as it seems to allude that Medea’s days are numbered. For ὑβρίζομαιπρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐκ γῆς βαρβάρου λελῃσμένη, Murray translates ‘cast aside by him that wedded me, a savage bride won in far seas and left.’ The idea of being seized out of a foreign country is still there but he somewhat misses how badly Jason treated Medea, from ὑβρίζομαιπρὸς. He says that she has no mother, brother or kinsmen to harbor her from this storm, from ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς. Using storm from συμφορᾶς is an interesting translation, but it can be equivalent to a misfortune or a mishap. Similar to Theodoridis, Murray does not translate τὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο. He only makes reference to Jason as who Medea wants to punish. Medea then asks the Chorus to ‘betray me not,’ a good way of playing into the Chorus’s sympathy for her. He says that women shrink from the light of battle, from κακή τ᾽ ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν, instead of bad at looking upon strength and iron. For the last line of her speech, Murray translates ὅταν δ᾽ ἐς εὐνὴν ἠδικημένη κυρῇ as ‘but once spoil her of her right in man’s love.’ I personally don’t think this translation does the speech justice because it is too wordy and not direct enough in saying that a woman is hurt within a marriage. He concludes with ‘no bloodier spirit between heaven and hell,’ from οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρὴν μιαιφονωτέρα.

Excerpt from E. P. Coleridge -	Medea - My Translation
But enough! This language suits not thee as it does me; thou hast a city here, a father's house, some joy in life, and friends to share thy thoughts, but I am destitute, without a city, and therefore scorned by my husband, a captive I from a foreign shore, with no mother, brother, or kinsman in whom to find a new haven of refuge from this calamity. Wherefore this one boon and only this I wish to win from thee, -thy silence, if haply I can some way or means devise to avenge me on my husband for this cruel treatment, and on the man who gave to him his daughter, and on her who is his wife. For though woman be timorous enough in all else, and as regards courage, a coward at the mere sight of steel, yet in the moment she finds her honour wronged, no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers.	My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband. Having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, there is no other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

Coleridge starts this section with ‘this language suits thee as it does me.’ Language comes from λόγος, which is a suitable translation. He says that the Chorus have friends to share thy thoughts with, likely coming from συνουσία, which I translated as ‘the company of.’ He says Medea has been scorned, from ὑβρίζομαιπρὸς, and that she is a captive from a foreign shore, from βαρβάρου λελῃσμένη. His translation of οὐχὶ συγγενῆ μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ᾽ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς is a combination of Kovac and Murray’s translation. She has no mother or brother, and no ‘kinsman in whom to find a new haven or refuge from this calamity.’ Medea asks the Chorus τοσοῦτον οὖν σου τυγχάνειν βουλήσομαι, which Coleridge translates as ‘wherefore this one boon and only this I wish to win from thee.’ What she wishes to gain is their silence, from σιγᾶν. Regarding what Medea is looking to do, he translates πόρος τις μηχανή τ᾽ ἐξευρεθῇ as some way or means devise to avenge herself on her husband. He then translates ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν as cruel treatment, which is an accurate way of depicting Jason’s

behavior. Coleridge's translation of τὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο is equally confusing to mine, where he translates 'and on the man who gave to him his daughter and on her who is his wife.' He describes women as being timorous, from φόβου πλέα, and cowards at the mere sight of steel, from κακή τ᾽ ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν. While his translation is better than mine here, I do not believe that coward is a proper translation of κακή. To conclude his translation, Coleridge translates εὐνὴν ἠδικημένη κυρῆ as a woman having her honor wronged. Similar to my translation, he translates φρὴν as heart, and says that 'no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers.' Deadlier thoughts likely comes from μιαιφονωτέρα, which in my opinion is not an accurate translation of the word.

Excerpt from Cecelia Luschnig -	Medea - My Translation
But the same story does not apply to you and me. You have this city and your father's home, enjoyment of life, and the companionship of friends, but, alone and without a city, I am abused by my husband, carried off as plunder from a foreign land, I have no mother, no brother, no relative to offer me a safe haven from this disaster. I ask you this one small favor: if some way or means can be found to make my husband pay for this abuse [and the father of the bride and the bride herself] — keep it silent. For a woman in all other things is full of fear and a coward when it comes to looking on deeds of valor and the sword but when she is wronged in her marriage there is no heart more bloodthirsty.	My story has not come to the same point as yours. For you have both this city and the house of the father, both the profit of life and company of friends. But I am lonely without a city, having been maltreated by my husband. Having been seized as booty from out of foreign land. No mother, no brother, no relative to seek refuge from this misfortune. I will wish to gain from you this much. For if I find out any means of accomplishing or contrivance to punish my husband for these bad things. Both the one giving his daughter to him and the one he marries. Stay silent. In respect to other things, a woman is both full of fear and bad at looking upon strength and iron. But whenever she happens to be injured in marriage, no other woman who is more murderous in her heart.

Again, Luschnig has the translation most similar to mine. She begins by saying the same story does apply to her and to the Chorus. Similar to Kovac, instead of saying that they have the profit of life, from βίου τ᾽ ὄνησις, she says that they have the enjoyment of life. I like this translation because Medea still can reap the benefits of her

life, but she will not enjoy it. She said that Medea has been abused by her husband, from ὑβρίζομαι πρὸς ἀνδρός, which is a good synonym of maltreatment. From μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ᾽ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς, Luschnig says ‘to offer me a safe haven from this disaster.’ This translation is preferable because Medea is truly just looking for a place to run off to to avoid the horrible situation she is in. Her translation of ἤν μοι πόρος τις μηχανή τ᾽ ἐξευρεθῇ πόσιν δίκην τῶνδ᾽ ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν is incredibly direct and simply says ‘if some way or means can be found to make my husband pay for this abuse,’ as well as ὸν δόντα τ᾽ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ᾽ ἥ τ᾽ ἐγήματο, which she translates as ‘and the father of the bride and bride herself.’ In regards to women, Luschnig says they are cowards, from κακή, when it comes to looking on deeds of valor and the sword. That translation makes much more sense than strength and iron. Her last sentence is nearly identical to mine, with the exception of ἠδικημένη, which she translates as being wronged, and μιαιφονωτέρα, which she translates as bloodthirsty rather than murderous.

CONCLUSION

I came to Medea during my junior year of college, as a result of my interest in sociology and domestic violence. In choosing a text to translate for my independent study, my advisor recommended Euripides’ *Medea,* as she believed I could find a lot to discuss regarding Medea’s character and the role she plays in the text. A short 5-page paper my junior year inevitably turned into my senior thesis. I’ve been studying Classics and Ancient Greek for three years now. It took me about four weeks to carefully translate and dissect these 52 lines of Greek from *Medea.* Each of the classicists I chose to study in comparison have been translating Greek and Latin for decades and have all translated a myriad of ancient texts. There is a notable difference between each individual translation

and they each summon a different image of Medea through language, some more subtle than others. The question I will raise as a conclusion to these translations is the following: how do different translations impact the enduring legacy of an ancient text?

Each translation of *Medea* seen in this paper can offer a different version of Medea. My translation is the simplest, as it uses direct dictionary entries from the LSJ instead of using the implied meaning of certain Greek phrases like other translators do. The most similar translations to mine were seen from Luschnig and Theodoridis. This makes sense as these two translations are the most recent (2019 and 2005, respectively). They use English in a way that is more comfortable with a modern audience, unlike Murray, Kovac, and Coleridge, who use somewhat outdated and antiquated English. Luschnig and Theodoridis's translations offer the best depiction of the sympathy that Medea hoped to gain from the Chorus by allowing Medea to relate to them through her experiences. As a result, the Medea that is seen in those translations is someone who is struggling in a way that the audience can also relate to. Kovac and Coleridge paint the struggles of women during the time period quite harshly. This can make it difficult for audiences to relate to Medea because she is not truly even gaining sympathy from the Chorus. The depiction of Medea there may seem more selfish, as she is doing whatever she can to further her own personal agenda, and not seen as truly suffering from heartbreak. Murray's translation arguably depicts the worst image of Medea because of the language used. He isolates Medea from the Chorus by describing in detail how much being a foreigner has made her life difficult and by using strong language to describe how miserable she is in life. Her character can then be viewed as dramatic or over-the-top instead of relatable.

As I hope to have shown you, the image and character of Medea can be viewed differently depending on the language and translation. While *Medea* has an important role in the classical world as an important piece of literature, it also has an important role in the contemporary world. Many modern interpreters have taken the story of Medea and adapted it to examine modern issues like immigration or domestic violence. A scholarly article written by Demetra Kasimis places Medea in the role of the refugee and investigates how her exile could relate to refugees in the modern world (2020). Similarly, Luis Alfaro adapted Medea into a play about immigrants living in their new countries (Pollack-Pelzner, 2019). These modern interpretations and translations show that the play is a good example of how the Medea myth may be manipulated to conform to ideas that are acceptable to the politically sensitive in the modern world" (van Zyl Smit, 2002, p. 115). Other translators reach back to alternate versions of the tragedy, where there is less blame placed on Medea for the death of her children. In a play by Gloria Albee, Albee absolves Medea of the death of her brother and places the blame onto Jason. She also writes that Medea's children are stoned to death by the Corinthians who believe that Medea is a witch, and Jason assumes some of the guilt in this matter. Another example of this is seen in *Medea: A Sex-war Opera* by Tony Harrison. In this opera, Harrison has the two sexes compete against one another by placing the blame on Jason, but still leaving Medea guilty of her crimes. He also incorporates two Choruses, one male and one female, to articulate the feelings of both sides (van Zyl Smit, 2002, p. 115).

It has been made clear that translators have a large effect on the understanding of ancient texts. Medea in Euripides' *Medea* has been used far and wide by classicists, translators, and script writers alike. Each of these translations and interpretations has

different biases behind them depending on the goal of the person who is using the text. This goal can be to try and discern the meaning behind the original textor to use the story to help an audience understand a different issue that relates to the story. Now that you have all of this knowledge, I hope that you know and understand that each translation you read of *Medea* (as well as any other ancient text) may be different, and that each of those translations contributes to a larger narrative surrounding the inconsistencies of translation between authors.

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