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# Ovid's Prequel to Euripides' Medea 476: The Intertextual Tension of Saving Jason

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# OVID'S PREQUEL TO EURIPIDES' *MEDEA* 476:
## THE INTERTEXTUAL TENSION OF SAVING JASON

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More than four hundred years after Euripides' *Medea* was presented to its Athenian audience, Ovid published his *Metamorphoses*. Although Ovid's poem comes centuries after its mythological predecessors, it still sets the stage for readers of the earlier Euripidean text.[1] In Book VII of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid creates his own version of the Jason and Medea myth, beginning his episode back in Colchis, where Jason is still attempting to obtain the Golden Fleece. Among versions like the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes and the *Medea* of Seneca, the Ovidian text presents a Medea who expresses powerful psychological anxiety about future events, events that will take place in Euripides' version. I argue that this episode in the *Metamorphoses* sets up psychological background for Euripides' character, as Ovid's Medea foreshadows her Euripidean regret for having saved Jason. This is evident in the dialogue between two important lines: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII.39 and Euripides' *Medea* 476.[2] The authors of the two lines have common concerns, even though

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1. The tradition of creating a prequel narrative to proceed and enrich an earlier poetic work became increasingly conventional during the Hellenistic period of Mediterranean history. During this time, copying texts and establishing libraries were valued aspects of the culture. Writing became a process of coming to terms with previous texts. See "Hellenistic Poetry," *Brill's New Pauly*, 6:86–89  Ovid is known for his adoption of Alexandrian literary style; see Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History* (trans. J. Solodow; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 350. Alessandro Barchiesi has identified aspects of the "future reflexive" in Augustan literature, particularly Ovid's epistolary poetry, the Heroides. See Alessandro Barchiesi, "Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion and the Heroides," in *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets* (ed. Matt Fox and Simone Marchesi; London: Duckworth, 2001), 105–127.

2. For further scholarly study of poetic allusion across language and genre, see Stephen Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Hinds studies the myth of Persephone under the "common-sense assumption" that Ovid probably incorporated previous texts, which treat the same myth, into his own poem. See Bettie Rose Nagle, "Review of *The Metamorphosis of Persephone*, by Stephen Hinds,"

they are bound in the culturally distant worlds of fifth century B.C.E. Athens and first century C.E. Rome. In another sphere, in the two lines of poetry themselves, Medea exhibits similar preoccupations while in different places and times. These common elements—recognizable across both spatial and temporal circumstances—suggest that some sort of intertextual dialogue is at play.[3]

Both of the lines under examination contain forms of the verb "to save,"[4] *seruabitur* and ἔσωσά respectively.[5] On the micro level,[6] both words have the same meaning and both lines contain similar devices of alliteration and word placement. Acting as a narrative precursor, Ovid's *seruabitur*, in the future tense, looks forward to action that will take place in Euripides' *Medea*. On the other hand, Euripides' aorist verb ἔσωσά looks back with regret on previous action that took place in Ovid's version. On the macro level, an analysis of the two contexts reveals the coinciding psychological preoccupations of Medea. I argue that Ovid's episode, even though separated from Euripides' text by space and time, has a powerful intertextual connection that enriches the psychological depth of Euripides' *Medea*; carefully considered, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII.39 provides an indispensable commentary on Euripides' *Medea* 476. Through my analysis of the intertextual interaction of Medea's words, I will contribute to the idea that later literature can strongly affect readings of preceding literature.

In order to analyze this intertextual relationship, I will largely rely on Lowell Edmunds's theory of intertextuality.[7] Edmunds's work is most useful

for the purposes of this paper because of his recognition that the authorial intention behind poetic allusion must remain a mystery. Indeed, for him, the interpreter of a poem "must be a poem reader; he [or she] cannot be a mind reader."[8] He suggests—much like Charles Martindale in his work on reception[9]—that meaning must be gleaned through "an accumulation of readings,"[10] for no text contains within itself a single objective interpretation. With this in mind, Edmunds argues that texts can be interpreted retroactively.[11] One text can affect the reader's interpretation of a preceding text and vice versa.[12]

In addition to this theoretical framework, Edmunds provides terms that are helpful for an analysis of interacting texts, quotations, and contexts. Although I shall not apply Edmunds's intertextual sigla[13] throughout this study, the technical terms that are associated with them will prove useful:

> $T_1$ – Target text, the text to be explained
> $T_2$ – Source text, the source of the intertextual phenomena in $T_1$
> $Q_1$ – Quotation (allusion, reference, echo) in $T_1$
> $Q_2$ – Source of $Q_1$

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treatment, see Edmunds, *Intertextuality*. For further discussion of intertextuality in Roman literature, see also Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). A thorough study of Ovid's texts and their intertextual characteristics is found in Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes*; especially relevant to this paper are the Ovidian characteristics discussed in the chapter entitled "Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion and the Heroides." For a good general survey of scholarship on Ovid, especially his use of allusion and intertexuality, see Sara Myers, "The Metamorphosis of a Poet: Recent Work on Ovid," *JRS* 89 (1999): 190–204.

8.   Edmunds, *Intertextuality*, 20. Here, Edmunds is pointing out the impossibility of studying the personal motives of historical poets. By the end of his study, Edmunds argues against perspectives, such as that of Stephen Hinds, which can tend to focus on allusions intended by authors (*Allusion*, 164). Although Hinds attempts "to find (or recover) some space for the study of allusion," his confession, in which he acknowledges the "ultimate unknowability of the poet's intention," is, for me, more persuasive than his main thesis (*Allusion*, 47–48).

9.   Charles Martindale, *Reading the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Instead of letting the author's intention take priority, Martindale argues that meaning "is always realized at the point of reception" (*Reading the Text*, 3).

10.   Edmunds, *Intertextuality*, xv.

11.   Edmunds, *Intertextuality*, 159–63.

12.   A helpful example is presented in Edmunds's discussion of "retroactive intertextuality," referencing Horace's common phrase *carpe diem.* Edmunds asks, "Can any reader of [Horace's] *Odes* 1.13 be indifferent to this banalization of the phrase?" Certainly, our experience with modern usage of the phrase—Edmunds cites Michèle Lowrie for specific examples—affects our reading of Horace (162–63).

13.   Edmunds, *Intertextuality,* 134. For the sigla, Edmunds credits Heinrich F. Plett, ed., *Intertextuality* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991).

$C_1$ – Context of $Q_1$

$C_2$ – Context of $Q_2$

According to Edmunds's framework, $T_1$ represents Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in my study and $T_2$ represents Euripides' *Medea.* As Edmunds suggests,[14] and as is the case in this paper, $T_1$ can affect $T_2$, for $T_1$ enhances the psychological background for $T_2$. $Q_1$ here would be *Metamorphoses* VII.39: *ope nescioquis seruabitur aduena nostra,* "will some stranger I do not know be saved by my help." $Q_2$ would be Euripides' highly alliterative line in *Medea* (476): ἔσωσά σ', ὡς ἴσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι, "I saved you, just as so many of the Greeks know." Following Edmunds, I argue that $Q_1$ alters the reader's understanding of $Q_2$. As Edmunds suggests, "$Q_1$ has the final word as soon as it has spoken and $Q_2$ can never regain its prequoted status."[15] In other words, although different in form, the verb "to save" in Ovid, *seruabitur,* directly informs the reader's understanding of ἔσωσά in the Euripidean tragedy. The words themselves and the quotations into which they are placed suggest some level of connection. However, it is the contexts of these passages that showcase the psychological background that Ovid's Medea adds to Euripides'.[16] Although the intertextual connection between these two lines may at first glance seem vague, I shall argue that through close analysis of both contexts, the connections become more meaningful. A close analysis at both the micro level (words and immediate details) and macro level (contexts, themes, character preoccupations) is necessary to determine the intertextual connection.

First I shall examine the words and their immediate surroundings at the micro level. As noted above, both *seruabitur* and ἔσωσά are forms of verbs meaning "to save." At first glance, these verbs have little to do with one another,

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14.  Edmunds, *Intertextuality*, 137.

15.  Edmunds, *Intertextuality*, 144. With this idea, Edmunds seems to echo influential ideas forwarded by both T. S. Eliot and Harold Bloom. In his "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot suggests that readers should not be surprised by the fact "that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (5). Harold Bloom, though willing to "confess a lifelong hostility to T. S. Eliot," seems deeply affected by him: see Harold Bloom, *The Best Poems of the English Language* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), 896. "The strong poet," says Bloom, "fails to beget himself—he must wait for his Son, who will define him even as he has defined his own Poetic Father" (*Anxiety*, 37).

16.  Much of the current scholarship on the characteristics of Euripidean allusion and intertextuality tends to focus on Euripides' relationship to his Greek predecessors. See Richard Garner, *From Homer to Tragedy: The Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1990); I. Torrance, "In the Footprints of Aeschylus: Recognition, Allusion, and Metapoetics in Euripides," *American Journal of Philology* 132.2 (2011): 177–204; John Davidson, "Euripides, Homer, and Sophocles," *Illinois Classical Studies* 24/25 (1999–2000): 117–28. The question of how subsequent poetry can be in retroactive intertextual dialogue with Euripides remains largely unexplored.

except for their definition: the verbal form *seruabitur* is a third-person, singular, future, passive form, while ἔσωσά is a first-person, singular, aorist, indicative, active form. However, a mere glance at the immediate context on the same line will inform the reader that the subject of *seruabitur* is Jason, the *aduena* "stranger." Likewise, in Euripides' text, Medea and Jason have been in clear dialogue since line 446. When Medea says ἔσωσά σ᾽, "I saved you" in 476, the elided σ᾽, the accusative direct object, is, of course, Jason. So, in both instances, Jason is the person being saved. In *Metamorphoses* VII.39, the person who does the saving is Medea. This is evident in the words *ope* and *nostra* (our help), *nostra* being a poetic plural referring to Medea only. And with the first-person verbal form ἔσωσά, Medea refers directly to herself. In both cases, Medea is the person who performs the action of salvation. In Ovid's text, Medea wonders whether Jason "will be saved" by her, while in Euripides' text she recalls how she has, in fact, "saved" him. Thus, through an analysis of the words, the connection becomes apparent.

The immediate lines in which these words are found also reveal a certain connection. This connection is rhetorical, the main devices being alliteration and emphatic word placement. In Ovid, the sentence in question, and especially the line itself, contains frequent sibilants, as underlined in the following:

> prodamne ego regna parenti<u>s</u>,
> atque ope ne<u>s</u>cioqui<u>s</u> <u>s</u>eruabitur aduena no<u>s</u>tra
> ut per me <u>s</u>ospe<u>s</u> <u>s</u>ine me det lintea uenti<u>s</u>
> uirque <u>s</u>it alteriu<u>s</u>, poenae Medea relinquar?

Similarly, Euripides' line is dense with sibilant sounds:

> ἔ<u>σ</u>ω<u>σ</u>ά <u>σ</u>᾽, ὡ<u>ς</u> ἴ<u>σα</u><u>σ</u>ιν ῾Ελλήνων ὅσοι

The repeated use of sibilants, present in both sentences about saving Jason, strengthens the connection of these two passages. In the Ovidian sentence, Medea uses the *s* a total of twelve times, four times in the single line of saving itself. Line 40 is especially interesting as it contains initial alliteration[17] in close proximity with the words *sospes* and *sine*. In the Eurpidean version, Medea looks back on her action of saving Jason and the effect is even more emphatic. In line 476 alone, the letter *s* (sigma) is found seven times, six times in the first

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17. W. M. Clarke, "Intentional Alliteration in Vergil and Ovid," *Latomus T.* 35 (1976): 276–300. Clarke suggests that initial alliteration, where two words begin with the same letter, is a "deliberate feature of the poets' art" (300). Sixty-three percent of all the lines in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contain some form of initial alliteration (279).

four words.[18] This emphatic alliteration emphasizes the act of saving in the texts of both Ovid and Euripides.

Further emphasis is showcased in the placement of the verbs of saving themselves. For instance, in line 39 of Book VII, Ovid's Medea creates a golden chiastic line that stresses the verb *seruabitur*.[19] The verb is at the very center, immediately surrounded by the interrogative pronoun *nescioquis* and its accompanying noun *aduena*. These words, in turn, are also surrounded by the noun *ope* and its modifying possessive pronoun *nostra*. This chiasmus stresses the importance of the word *seruabitur*. Similar emphasis is given to the saving verb in Euripides' *Medea* 476. The line itself places ἔσωσά at the very beginning, making it the most prominent feature of both the line and the sentence. Thus, on the micro scale, both Ovid's Medea and Euripides' Medea give emphatic prominence to the verb "to save" through the use of literary figures. These devices have much in common in both texts, even though Medea's situations are separated spatially and temporally. In both passages, the details found in Medea's rhetorical language point to a common psychological tension showcased in the broader narrative context.

I shall now examine the larger contexts of each line, beginning with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII.39. The first soliloquy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (11–71) hints at Medea's emotional state in Euripides. Medea expresses uncertainty about whether or not she should help Jason; she loves him uncontrollably but attempts to resist. Before she begins speaking, the reader realizes that Medea *ratione furorem / uincere non poterat,* "was not able to conquer her fury through reason" (10–11). Her soliloquy begins emphatically with the adverb *frustra,* "in vain" (11)—all her resisting will eventually be futile. She realizes that her desire to love Jason will lead her into evil circumstances; however, her mind cannot overpower this desire: *aliudque cupido, / mens aliud suadet: uideo meliora proboque, / deteriora sequor!,* "this desire persuades me one way, my mind another: I see the better circumstances and I esteem them; I follow the worse!" (19–21).

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18.   For Euripides' excessive sigmatism, see Dee L. Clayman, "Sigmatism in Greek Poetry," *TAPA* 117 (1987): 69–84. Clayman suggests that as early as the sixth century b.c.e., the Greek sigma had gained a negative reputation for its poor aesthetic quality (69). In his Heortae, the comic poet Plato mocked Euripides for his use of the sigma in Medea 476 (69–70). Examples such as these suggests that Euripides' line would have been noticed by the Greek audience, which probably would have found it somewhat repulsive, if not barbaric. Nevertheless, Euripides, seems to have valued the aesthetic qualities of the sigma. Clayman references Mommsen, who found that "Euripides is almost three times as sigmatic as Aeschylus and twice as sigmatic as Sophocles" (70).

19.   William S. Anderson, ed., *Ovid's Metamorphoses Books 6–10* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 248.

Her desire increases and Jason's outstanding qualities compel her to help: his *aetas / et genus et uirtus,* "youth, race and courage" (26–27). However, Medea knows that, even before she helps Jason, even before she leaves Colchis, things will turn out badly for her. Her hesitation recalls Virgil's Dido in Book IV of the *Aeneid,* who eventually *coniugium uocat, hoc praetextit nomine culpam,* "calls it marriage; by this name she cloaks her guilt" (*Aen.* IV. 172).[20]

Likewise, despite her recognition of possible problems, Medea must help and love Jason, for, as she says:

> nisi opem tulero, taurorum adflabitur ore
> concurretque suae segeti, tellure creatis
> hostibus aut auido dabitur fera praeda draconi.

> unless I offer help, he will be breathed upon by the mouth of the
> bulls and he will meet his own crop, enemies created by the earth,
> or he will be given as a wild prize to the greedy dragon (29–31).

Without her, Jason is sure to fail. Nevertheless, her anxiety does not leave. It is at this point that Medea questions whether or not she should save him. The immediate context surrounding this quote is crucial:

> prodamne ego regna parentis,
> atque ope nescioquis seruabitur aduena nostra,
> ut per me sospes sine me det lintea uentis
> uirque sit alterius, poenae Medea relinquar?

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20.   This connection becomes even more meaningful when the reader of the *Aeneid* recognizes that the Medea of Apollonius of Rhodes notably influences Virgil's Dido. In the *Argonautica,* after having left Colchis and helped Jason to obtain the Golden Fleece, Apollonius' Medea seems regretful. She expresses a sentiment of guilt and doubt about her relationship to Jason, iv. 362–375: τηλόθι δ᾽ οἴη / λυγρῇσιν κατὰ πόντον ἅμ᾽ ἀλκυόνεσσι φορεῦμαι / σῶν ἕνεκεν καμάτων, ἵνα μοι σόος ἀμφί τε βουσὶν / ἀμφί τε γηγενέεσσιν ἀναπλήσειας ἀέθλους. / ὕστατον αὖ καὶ κῶας, ἐπεί τ᾽ ἐπαϊστὸν ἐτύχθη, / εἷλες ἐμῇ ματίῃ· κατὰ δ᾽ οὐλοὸν αἶσχος ἔχευα / θηλυτέραις. τῶ φημὶ τεὴ κούρη τε δάμαρ τε /αὐτοκασιγνήτη τε μεθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἕπεσθαι. / πάντη νυν πρόφρων ὑπερίστασο, μηδέ με μούνην / σεῖο λίπῃς ἀπάνευθεν, ἐποιχόμενος βασιλῆας. / ἀλλ᾽ αὔτως εἴρυσο: δίκη δέ τοι ἔμπεδος ἔστω. / καὶ θέμις, ἣν ἄμφω συναρέσσαμεν: ἢ σύγ᾽ ἔπειτα / φασγάνῳ αὐτίκα τόνδε μέσον διὰ λαιμὸν ἀμῆσαι, / ὄφρ᾽ ἐπίηρα φέρωμαι ἐοικότα μαργοσύνησιν. Revealing her guilt, she tells Jason, εἷλες ἐμῇ ματίῃ, "you grasped [the Golden Fleece (κῶας)] by my folly," (367). Then, having acknowledged her guilt, she establishes her strong relationship with him: τῶ φημὶ τεὴ κούρη τε δάμαρ τε / αὐτοκασιγνήτη τε μεθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἕπεσθαι, "therefore, I say that [I am] your girl, your wife, and your own sister, following you in quest of Greek land" (369–70). Finally, Medea appeals to a law (θέμις) for some kind of security. Following this pattern of Medea in the *Argonautica,* Virgil's Dido also helps the hero and joins in "marriage" despite her overwhelming guilt. This showcases the complex intertextual activity Ovid is involved in.

> Shall I betray the kingdom of my father, and will some stranger I
> do not know be saved by my help, that saved through me, he may
> set sails to the winds without me and be another's man, I, Medea,
> to be abandoned for punishment? (38–41)

Medea recognizes that in order to love Jason, she must first abandon her father's kingdom. Her doubts are based on events in the future (note that *seruabitur* is in the future tense). Even though she is passionate for him, she even distances herself from Jason with the words *nescioquis* and *aduena*.[21] This is followed by a purpose clause, which William S. Anderson has commented on:

> The purpose clause reveals that Medea did not hesitate so much
> over duty to her father as over her suspicions that she would get
> nothing out of her action: she would merely be saving Jason for
> another woman in Greece![22]

Medea's very words showcase her anxiety. She then anxiously fears that if Jason is saved, he will abandon her *uirque sit alterius,* "and be another's man" (41). She, without any forewarning, fears the future that is to take place. She even feels like obtaining revenge for a crime that Jason has not yet committed: *si facere hoc aliamue potest praeponere nobis, / occidat ingratus!,* "if he can do that thing, to prefer another woman before me, let the ungrateful man die!" (42–43). The end of her soliloquy places an added emphasis on the evil fate that she will face in the future. She knows that she should shun her desire to love Jason. Once again, just like Virgil's Dido, Medea knows this will end in pain:

> coniugiumne putas speciosaque nomina culpae
> inponis, Medea, tuae? quin adspice, quantum
> adgrediare nefas, et, dum licet, effuge crimen!
>
> Medea, do you think it is marriage and do you give beautiful
> names to your guilt? Rather look at how great an impiety you are
> approaching, and, while you still can, flee your crime! (69–71)

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21.   Tarrant's critical edition uses *nescioquis*, which should be translated as "some (unknown or unspecified), one." The word also carries the nuance of "slightness or unimportance." See "nescio," *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2:1291. The word *aduena* is also to be understood pejoratively. See Franz Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen Buch VI–VII* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Carl Winter, 1976), 210. Thus, Ovid's word points to Medea trying to distance herself from Jason, as she feels anxiety about saving him.

22.   Anderson, Ovid's, *Metamorphoses*, 248.

The extent of Ovid's intertextual program is hinted at again with the word *coniugiumne,* "marriage." This reminds the close reader of Dido's anxiety in Book IV of the *Aeneid*, when she considers her relationship to Aeneas, which in turn, recalls Apollonius' Medea, then Euripides', then Ovid's once more.[23]

After Medea's strong expression of anxiety in the first soliloquy, Ovid goes on to narrate many parts of this myth of Medea and Jason. He covers numerous episodes including how Medea saves Jason, how she gives strength to Jason's father, Aeson, and how she arranges the death of Pelias. What Ovid does not attempt to cover thoroughly is the revenge Medea takes on Jason in Corinth. Perhaps, as Anderson notes, Ovid does not have any "intention of vying with Euripides."[24] Whatever the case, Ovid covers this important mythical episode in four lines:

> Sed postquam Colchis arsit noua nupta uenenis
> flagrantemque domum regis mare uidit utrumque,
> sanguine natorum perfunditur impius ensis,
> ultaque se male mater Iasonis effugit arma.

> but after the new wife burned with Colchian potions, and either
> sea had seen the home of the king burning, and the pious sword
> was covered in the blood of his sons, after this evil vengeance had
> been taken, she fled from the weapons of Jason. (394–97)

In these four lines, Ovid covers most of the action of Euripides' *Medea*. It is clear that this is not the emphasis of Ovid's retelling of the myth. By focusing his version of the myth on everything but the Euripidean narrative, Ovid seems to acknowledge that Euripides has created a masterful work of literature. Instead of retelling his precursor's narrative, Ovid focuses on adding depth to and expanding the emotional context for Euripides' version. He does this by allowing Medea to express similar anxieties and preoccupations to those in Eurpides' *Medea*. This allows the two texts to interact, regardless of Medea's distance from Colchis or Ovid's distance from fifth-century Athens.

I shall now turn to the context of the *Medea* 476 and analyze it with Ovid's version in mind. In the Euripidean text, the context surrounding line 476 is a long speech that Medea gives during an intense argument with Jason (465–519). Jason has distanced himself from Medea by seeking a royal marriage

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23. See footnote 20. See also *Medea* 489, a line from Euripides that is part of the context surrounding line 476. Medea accuses Jason of ruining the one thing that gave her hope, their marriage: προΰδωκας ἡμᾶς, καινὰ δ᾽ ἐκτήσω λέχη, "having forsaken me, you acquired new marriage ties."

24. Anderson, Ovid's, *Metamorphoses*, 280.

with the daughter of Creon. Nevertheless, just before Medea's speech, he is able to defend himself rationally by pointing out Medea's passionate rage:

> οὐ νῦν κατεῖδον πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
> τραχεῖαν ὀργὴν ὡς ἀμήχανον κακόν.
>
> I do not see now for the first time, but often, that your rough anger is an impossible evil. (446–447)

When contrasting himself to Medea's wild behavior, Jason endeavors to make himself seem perfectly rational. Indeed, Jason suggests that the reason Medea is in trouble is that she has little regard for the κρεισσόνων βουλεύματα, "the purposes of her betters" (449). He wants to enforce the idea that he and the royal family are logical, while she is passionately mad. Mastronarde notes that Jason "gives evidence of the major contrast between himself and Medea: his smug assumption of a natural hierarchy of male over female and of the excellence of his own capacity to plan things out."[25] Jason goes on to express a logical reason for his relationship with Creon's daughter:

> ἥκω, τὸ σὸν δὲ προσκοπούμενος, γύναι,
> ὡς μήτ᾽ ἀχρήμων σὺν τέκνοισιν ἐκπέσηις
>
> I have come, looking after you, woman, in order that you may not be exiled, poor with the children. (460–61)

In response to Jason's reason and logic, Medea simply continues in her anger, using the superlative παγκάκιστε, "most wholly evil" (465) to address Jason. This type of word does not get her anywhere with Jason; it merely helps "Jason distinguish himself as a rational being from Medea as a passionate one."[26] Nevertheless, they do remind the careful reader of a similar experience Medea has faced previously. Back in Colchis, Medea *ratione furorem / uincere non poterat,* "was not able to conquer her fury through reason" (10–11). This uncontrollable passion has now caused her serious problems. Medea sees this and looks back at her fierce *furorem.* She realizes that she left Colchis σὺν σοί, πρόθυμος μᾶλλον ἢ σοφωτέρα, "with [Jason], more eager than wise" (485). She had been πρόθυμος, "eager," and her *cupido,* "desire," had been the motivating factor (19). With the word σοφωτέρα, Medea remembers rejecting her *mens,* "mind," when she was in Colchis (20). So, her previous intense love

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25. Donald J. Mastronarde, *The Art of Euripides: Dramatic Technique and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 226.
26. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic of Women* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 140.

for Jason has now transformed into an intense hatred. This hatred, of course, is fueled by passion and not reason. The same is true now as was true back in Colchis: *aliudque cupido, / mens aliud suadet,* "this desire persuades me one way, my mind another" (19–20). Just as before, her passion will take control. Though in a new space and time, both mythologically and textually, Medea's words exhibit similar emotions.

Medea shows continually how her troubles have been caused by intense passion, which she can recognize. In fact, sometimes her words themselves get her into trouble. As Nancy Rabinowitz suggests, throughout Euripides' tragedy Medea's words tend to make the situation worse:

> Early on in the play, Medea's words seem to have caused her trouble; Creon was afraid and exiled her because he heard that she was cursing his family (287–89); Jason taunts her with the fact that her own words are responsible for her exile (450, 457).[27]

This is certainly true for her words within *Medea* itself, but it is also true for the words that she speaks outside of the play, the words Ovid has her speak in Colchis. What she said then seems to be directly affecting her now. For example, she realizes that when she was in Colchis, she was αὐτὴ δὲ πατέρα καὶ δόμους προδοῦσ᾽ ἐμοὺς, "forsaking her father and her home" (483). However, this was something that she had already questioned in the Ovidian soliloquy: *prodamne ego regna parentis,* "shall I betray the kingdom of my father?" (38). Medea also expresses anxiety and anger about Jason's new bride. For example, Medea now sees that Jason προὔδωκας ἡμᾶς, καινὰ δ᾽ ἐκτήσω λέχη, "having forsaken [her], acquired new marriage ties" (489). She had previously felt that this might happen, even while still in Colchis: *ut per me sospes sine me det lintea uentis / uirque sit alterius, poenae Medea relinquar?,* "that saved through me, he may set sails to the winds without me and be another's man, I, Medea, to be abandoned for punishment?" (40–41). The words προὔδωκας and *relinquar* are both signaling Jason's action of disowning Medea to seek another woman. In both texts, though separated by space and time, just as Medea is far away from Colchis, similar emotions are expressed through words and narrative contexts. Thus, the Ovidian text clearly expands and adds depth to Medea's psychological tension. It is not surprising that "when Jason appears, Medea refers to what she has been suffering, locating this as having taken place in her *psyche.*"[28]

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27.  Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled,* 142.
28.  Shirley Darcus Sullivan, *Euripides' Use of Psychological Terminology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 105.

This pattern continues in numerous parts of Medea's speech. Medea looks back on all the ways she has helped Jason, as witnessed by the Greeks, who ταὐτὸν συνεισέβησαν Ἀργῷον σκάφος, "stepped aboard the hull of the Argo" (477). She saved him who πεμφθέντα ταύρων πυρπνόων ἐπιστάτην / ζεύγλαισι καὶ σπεροῦντα θανάσιμον γύην, "was sent to be in charge of the fire-breathing bulls by means of yokes and to sow the deadly earth" (477–79). Through these actions, Medea has saved Jason: ἔσωσά σ' (476). And she now looks back to the anxiety she felt before helping him:

> nisi opem tulero, taurorum adflabitur ore
> concurretque suae segeti, tellure creatis
> hostibus, aut auido dabitur fera praeda draconi.
>
> unless I offer help, he will be breathed upon by the mouth of the
> bulls and he will meet his own crop, enemies created by the earth,
> or he will be given as a wild prize to the greedy dragon (29–31).

Obviously, the Euripidean Medea now wishes that she had not saved Jason. Since he has married Glauce, Medea has lost her only hope and painfully deals with the consequences. She remembers the words with which she once urged herself: *effuge crimen!,* "Flee your crime!" (71).  Indeed, now she determines that she will flee from Jason, just as she once fled from her fatherland to love Jason (503). She will leave him, but not until she has taken revenge, killing both Jason's new wife and his children.

These examples exhibit a strong intertextual relationship between Euripides and Ovid. The connections give the careful reader good reasons to maintain that Medea's references to saving Jason in both Euripides and Ovid are in an intertextual dialogue; Ovid's version provides psychological complexity to Euripides'. Thus, in the Euripidean tragedy, when Medea says to Jason ἔσωσά σ', "I saved you" (476), she is expressing emotions of "vehemence or exasperation."[29] She remembers that back in Colchis she wondered whether she should help Jason: *ope nescio quis seruabitur aduena nostra,* "will some stranger I do not know be saved by my help?" (39). She knows that she had once felt anxiety about this. She knows that she had once wondered whether Jason would turn to another woman, leaving her behind. Now she wishes that she had let her mind persuade her. She wishes that she had been wise rather than passionate. Nevertheless her passion continues as she deals with this overwhelming psychological problem. In this way, the Ovidian Medea's

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29.   Donald J. Mastronarde, *Euripides' Medea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 252.

verb of hesitation, *seruabitur*, seems to speak to the Euripidean Medea's verb of wrath, ἔσωσά. It informs the reader of Euripides' text about Medea's earlier inner turmoil in the *Metamorphoses*. Across space and time, Medea uses similar words to express her concern about the problem of saving Jason. Her words are charged with intertextual emotion that bridges different parts of her story.

Through this study, I have argued that Ovid's version of the myth in the *Metamorphoses* offers psychological depth to the character Medea in Euripides' tragedy. Beginning on the micro level, my analysis has identified verbs of saving in both Euripides and Ovid. Both of these verbal forms have been given strong emphasis through two literary devices in their respective lines: alliteration and word placement. Turning to the macro level, I have shown that the contexts of these two passages share similar psychological preoccupations that are exhibited through similar words and phrases. I have shown that there are similarities that bridge the distance of both Medea's mythological situations and the texts of both Euripides and Ovid. These similarities—which without close analysis may seem improbable in light of the spatial separation between Medea's respective circumstances and the temporal separation between texts— secure an intertextual relationship. The passages are in intertextual dialogue, enriching and nuancing each other. Thus Ovid's prequel has the ability to permanently affect a close reading of Euripides' text.