humanities

MDPI

Article

Reexamining Medea's Monstrosity in Greek Mythology and Eilish Quin's *Medea*

Rachel Scoggins

Department of English & Foreign Languages, College of Arts & Humanities, Lander University, Greenwood, SC 29649, USA; vscoggins@lander.edu

Abstract: In 2024, Eilish Quin published the novel *Medea*, which is a feminist approach to the Medea myth from Greek mythology. Medea's myth is heavily influenced by Euripides' play *Medea*, a play in which she kills her children to enact revenge on her cheating husband Jason. Quin's novel is a reimagining of the myth, which explores Medea's monstrosity and attempts to make her more sympathetic and less monstrous than the source text. I argue that Quin's novel pulls from established characteristics of Medea that depict her as a monster and attempts to shift the narrative perspective. Using monster theory, I examine Medea's monstrosity by looking at Euripides' play and Quin's novel. Quin attempts to recast Medea as a sympathetic woman instead of a monster through Medea's anti-woman sentiments and monstrous power, along with her status as an outsider; moreover, Medea's villainous nature is removed by changing the story surrounding the murder of her brother and children while stressing Jason's excessively violent nature. Quin's novel reflects a contemporary concern with female autonomy and victimization, but the novel's approach highlights the issues with trying to remove Medea's monstrosity.

Keywords: monsters; Medea; monster theory; feminist theory; female monsters; Greek mythology; Euripides

Citation: Scoggins, Rachel. 2024. Reexamining Medea's Monstrosity in Greek Mythology and Eilish Quin's *Medea*. *Humanities* 13: 168. https://doi.org/10.3390/h13060168

Received: 1 November 2024
Revised: 6 December 2024
Accepted: 10 December 2024
Published: 11 December 2024

1. Introduction

The story of Medea is mostly told in Euripides' tragedy *Medea* from 431 BCE. However, she first appears in Hesiod's *Theogony* circa 700 BCE, and also in Apollonius Rhodius' poem *Argonautica* from the third century BCE and Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* from the first or second century CE. Medea's depiction from antiquity is biased since "the extant formal literature of classical antiquity was all written by men. In addition, misogyny taints much ancient literature" (Pomeroy 1995, p. xv). Because of this trend, many contemporary retellings of Greek myths have been by women authors written with a feminist lens. Madeline Miller's *Circe*, Natalie Haynes' *A Thousand Ships* and *Stone Blind*, Jennifer Saint's *Ariadne*, and Claire Heywood's *Daughters of Sparta* are only a few recent novels reimagining well-known Greek myths from the point-of-view of the female characters. Eilish Quin's novel *Medea* explores the myth of Medea, beginning with her childhood in Colchis and ending during her time in Athens.

Medea is best known for being a sorceress who kills her children. Kirsty Corrigan states that Medea:

> is perhaps best known for a horrific deed which does not involve her powers: the murder of her two sons in revenge for their father's faithless abandonment of her. This act mostly overshadows the rest of her mythological life. . .[t]he extraordinary and abhorrent actions of Medea thus appear to be responsible for much of the interest in her character: there has always been an eagerness to examine her psychology, and what lies behind such behavior, especially given her contradictory personality and the extreme nature of her acts. (Corrigan 2013, pp. 2–3)

Since Medea is a complex character whose mythology is filled with violent and shocking deeds, many view her as an intriguing villain or monstrous figure. Eilish Quin's novel *Medea*, published in 2024, explores Medea's life from her point-of-view and attempts to bring justice to Medea's story, which is overshadowed by violence and her connection to the hero, Jason. By giving Medea a voice, Quin's narrative exudes sympathy through Medea's victimization by the men in her life, starting with her father and ending with Jason, while also changing her violent actions from the myths into something completely different in an attempt to erase, or at the least downplay, her monstrosity. Picking up narrative threads from classical sources such as Euripides' *Medea*, Quin's novel explores Medea's monstrosity through her discomfort with gender norms, an erasure of the violence from the original myths, and a greater emphasis on Jason's violent nature.

2. Medea as the Anti-Woman

Gender is one of the major themes in Euripides' *Medea*, and Quin uses the same subject as one of the controlling themes in the novel. William Allan states, "Gender is presented as a source of conflict in almost every scene and song of *Medea* (Allan 2002, p. 50). The issues that arise between Medea and Jason can be attributed to the gender differences and extend from male–female to include husband–wife. Even Creon admits his fear of Medea stems from her position as a clever woman. Medea's positions as wronged wife and vulnerable female contribute to her desire for revenge.

One aspect explored in Quin's *Medea* is Medea's discomfort with socially imposed gender expectations. Medea states numerous times that she does not fit into traditional gender standards. Early in the novel, Quin compares Medea with her sister Chalciope to strengthen Medea's difference. Chalciope is described as a traditional woman, with stereotypical feminine beauty and the desire for a husband and children. When discussing a potential match with Phrixus, Medea says to her sister, "[T]ell me how you know you love him". Then Medea continues to think, "I was not skilled at this kind of girlish chatter, the idle talk of feelings that seemed to come naturally to Chalciope, or the serving girls in the kitchens. After all, I never had use of it" (Quin 2024, p. 76). The "girlish chatter" that was so natural to her sister and the serving girls represents a stereotypical female action. In ancient Greece, "[a] frequent criticism of women was that they were. . .unable to control their own words" and that "[w]omen's inability to control their words is expressed [] in the idea that women were terrible gossips" (Levett 2010, pp. 56–7). By claiming she was not skilled at this, Medea separates herself from stereotypical female behavior. Medea's urging of Chalciope to explain how she knows she loves Phrixus highlights Medea's lack of romantic and interpersonal knowledge, which is understood to be innate and universally feminine, if not universally human. However, the scene depicts Medea as a social outsider because she does not understand how to talk about stereotypical and expected topics, such as men, with other girls, something she points out is "natural" to Chalciope and even the lower-class servant girls. By Medea stating that she "never had use of it", she further others herself by implying that she is above such pointless gendered notions. Medea's attitude towards this type of interpersonal interaction is revealed in the use of such words as "girlish" and "idle". Both words suggest Medea's dismissive disdain for these female-coded activities, thus creating a gender gap between Medea and these other women. Medea distances herself from these gendered expectations through her negative response and lack of knowledge.

Medea eventually extends her gendered self-hatred to other women as well, furthering her separation from her femaleness. Quin's Medea feels alienated from women, even her sister, as she does not believe she fits into stereotypical female roles. In the novel, Medea often looks at other women with disdain. Not only does she dismiss Chalciope's actions as silly because they are too feminine, but she also criticizes her mother, evidenced when she tells Chalciope, "Mother was too weak to stop [Aeetes]" (Quin 2024, p. 106). Medea expresses disdain towards women in the novel because she feels that women are weak, and this disdain also extends to stereotypical female roles. Chalciope defends their mother and says, "Mother would never have allowed that" (Quin 2024, p. 106). Chalciope's confidence

in their absent mother suggests an understanding of feminine solidarity and maternal protection, reflecting Chalciope's comfort with her femininity. Contrarily, Medea's hatred of feminine weakness has only intensified. Part of Medea's anger stems from their mother's abandonment of them. Their mother, Idyia, was a sea-nymph whom Aeetes trapped on land and never allowed her freedom. Once she gained the opportunity, she disappeared into the sea, leaving her three children to fend for themselves with Aeetes. Medea harbors resentment for her mother because she has had to raise her younger brother Phaethon in her mother's absence, along with facing Aeetes' cruelty with no maternal support. Medea views her mother as just another example of a female too weak and subjugated by males to do anything. Females have become nothing but weaker beings who lack agency to Medea, and thus she hates them and further separates herself from her gender and its associated expectations.

When talking with Circe (perhaps the only woman in the novel Medea respects, more than likely due to her magical powers), Medea poses the question, "What if I am not meant to be a wife?" Circe replies, "Then you will doubtless find a way to free yourself from your marital bonds when the time is right" (Quin 2024, p. 166). This exchange suggests that Medea has always believed she was not fit to be a wife, which contrasts with the depiction by Euripides. In the play, Medea's first speech on stage has her addressing the Women of Corinth (lines 214–266). Medea says, "[T]his thing has fallen so unexpectedly/[I]t has broken my heart. . .I let go/[A]ll my life's joy. . .my own husband, has turned out wholly vile" (Euripides 1993, lines 225–229). Then, in an attempt at connection with the other women, she states, "We women are the most unfortunate creatures" (Euripides 1993, line 231). Unlike the Medea in Quin's novel, who feels alienated from women and even views them with contempt, the Medea in Euripides' play reaches out to the chorus of women. Medea shares with them the pain of her husband's betrayal. She then brings them into her confidence by rhetorically unifying them into one categorical group of women through the phrase "We women" who share the difficulties of their gender. Thus, the chorus of women listen to Medea and "come, out of sympathy, anxious concern, or friendly interest. . .the scenario is. . .that of a shared women's world" (Easterling 1987, p. 24). Medea is successful in her endeavor of generating solidarity since "[t]he chorus of Corinthian women are entirely sympathetic to Medea" (Morwood 2016, p. 13). Additionally, Medea is introduced in the play through her betrayal as a wife. Instead of Medea finding a way to free herself from the marriage as Circe suggests in the novel, Euripides' Medea feels rejected at Jason's betrayal.

Quin's novel also highlights the contrast between Medea's feminine and masculine sides. Though Euripides' play has Medea seeking sympathy from the Corinthian women, the tragedy also depicts a gender dichotomy that Medea's words and actions transcend. One of the most famous lines from the Greek play is when Medea compares giving birth to being a soldier: "I would very much rather stand Three times in the front of a battle than bear one child" (Euripides 1993, lines 250–251). Here, Medea's words convey a rejection of female social roles since they suggest a lack of the innate maternal nurturing expected of women. In the novel, Quin also characterizes Medea as devoid of maternal instincts. Medea says, "How. . .was I ever to be expected to be trusted with children of my own?" She follows this up by attributing her attitude to her own bad parents: "growing up as I had. . .I was doomed to repeat the behaviors of one or the other of my parents, damaging my children, just as I had been damaged" (Quin 2024, pp. 181–82). Quin erases Medea's maternal femininity through her childhood trauma. Because of a prophecy she experienced, Medea's mother shows her no love and eventually abandons her; Medea's father, Aeetes, is both verbally and physically abusive. When Medea becomes pregnant, she feels only anxiety during her pregnancy: "Less obvious was my anxiety about being a mother in the event the infants did survive. What if they loathed me immediately. . .what if I managed to hurt them somehow?" (Quin 2024, p. 225). Not only does Medea suffer from parental neglect and abuse, but she also rejects stereotypical female roles and feels like an outsider to her own gender. Medea's rejection of her femininity in the novel presents less as a desire

to be masculine than despair and frustration with the limits of her social placement. In the play, Medea adopts masculine qualities to gain power and exact revenge against Jason. In Elizabeth Bryson Bongie's article "Heroic Elements in the *Medea* of Euripides", she states, "From the very beginning of the play Euripides is concerned to reveal the paradox of Medea's masculine nature as he shows her reacting to a set of circumstances that could happen only to a woman" (Bongie 1977, p. 28). Bongie argues that Medea does not respond to Jason's betrayal as other women in the plays of Euripides who seek to regain the love of a man. She claims, "Medea's reaction, on the other hand, is not typically or ideally feminine at all: it is masculine" (Bongie 1977, p. 39). By aligning herself with masculine warrior values instead of female maternal roles, Medea places herself into the sphere of the masculine. However, Quin's Medea seems to reject both genders and thus exists in a genderless liminal space.

Medea furthers her scorn of women after her father Aeetes orders her to create a love potion to enchant Phrixus to fall in love with Chalciope. Briefly, Medea entertains the idea of using her own hair in the love potion instead of Chalciope, which would result in Phrixus falling in love with her instead. Medea pushes the thought away because "Aeetes would never allow it, and I was too young to marry, and Chalciope would never forgive me" (Quin 2024, p. 81). This reasoning reveals Medea's (and Chalciope's) subjugation to her father's control, along with her loyalty to her sister. She knows of Chalciope's feelings for Phrixus, and though she is unsure about using the love potion to gain Phrixus' affection for Chalciope, she does not want intentionally to hurt her sister. As Medea completes the love potion, she points out that Phrixus would not suspect her. She believes that Phrixus sees her as only "the child who watched his every move like some sort of pathetic dog eager for some compliment from its master" (Quin 2024, p. 81). Here, Medea emphasizes her age again to remind herself (and by extension, the reader) that she is too young for love and marriage, even though she is concocting love potions to control the outcome of her sister's marriage. Additionally, Medea reiterates the masculine control she feels, this time from Phrixus. She refers to Phrixus as the "master", while positioning herself into the subordinate position of "dog". The language accomplishes two things. First, Medea dehumanizes herself by referring to herself as an animal. This is something Euripides does often, as he compares her to a lion and tiger throughout the play. Second, she demeans herself further by using the word "pathetic", which paired with the image of a dog "eager" for compliments, highlights the abject submissive state she occupies. She concludes this thought by saying, "How humiliating it was to be a woman" (Quin 2024, p. 81). She now reveals her entire existence as a woman is something to be ashamed of, and that she feels no self-respect.

The version of Medea in Quin's book builds on the Euripides version in that Euripides has Medea question gender expectations. As a woman in ancient Greece, she "was expected to endure with patience and loyalty whatever was inflicted on her by her legitimate superiors. She was not expected to cope with crises, only survive them" (Bongie 1977, p. 31). Thus, women were not supposed to have the agency to take action in their own interests. For Medea, this means that as Jason was her superior because he was her husband, she was supposed to submit to his will and not fight back. When she takes matters into her own hands, Medea acts within the realm of active masculinity instead of passive femininity. In the play, "Euripides presents his vision of a woman who. . .lives in accordance with a male system of values", which she will use to not "lose the honour she had, not be disgraced and revealed as helpless in the course of events" (Bongie 1977, p. 31). The issue with Medea participating in masculine actions is that she is a woman and does not have the same physical prowess as a male. Medea "decides, therefore, to use that formidable substitute for physical strength that she possesses—her magical powers" (Bongie 1977, p. 40). Magic, in this instance, acts as a female passive ability that allows her to enact her violent revenge. However, the source material does not give her the same degree of power as Quin's recent novel. In the Greek myth, she had a magical ability that was powerful enough to aid Jason in stealing the golden fleece, though the details are overshadowed

by Jason and the Argonauts. She uses her magical arts to poison the crown and gown she gives to Glauce. Then, she is described as putting Aegeus under a magical spell in the Theseus myths. Nowhere in Euripides' play does Medea bring Phaethon back to life, though the source material does attribute rejuvenations to her. According to Daniel Ogden, "Ovid provides the most elaborate extant account of Medea's magical rejuvenations. . .Ovid has her. . .rejuvenate Aeson". That scene "comprises much material typical of necromantic evocation". In addition to Aeson, Medea is credited with bringing Jason back to life (Ogden 2002, p. 90). Some extant myths give Medea rejuvenating powers; however, Quin creatively places Medea as a necromancer in the novel. This choice serves as a focal point solely to save Phaethon, which enhances Medea's power even more. Therefore, the gender expectations relating to Medea's power occur through her ability to perform incredible feats of magic in the form of necromancy, outpowering heroes like Jason, and controlling men such as Aegeus.

Medea's intelligence and supernatural magic reflect a type of "othering" knowledge. In Euripides' play *Medea*, where many of the details of the Medea myth originate, Medea's intelligence is cited by Creon as one of the reasons she is exiled from Corinth. Creon admits to fearing Medea and says, "You are a clever woman, versed in evil arts. . .in my heart I greatly dread that you are plotting some evil, And therefore I trust you even less than before. A sharp-tempered woman, or, for that matter, a man, Is easier to deal with than the clever type Who holds her tongue" (Euripides 1993, lines 285, 316–21). Creon fears Medea because of her cleverness and knowledge of magic, which he believes she will use against him and his daughter. Medea's "magic becomes in Euripides' 'humanized' view of Medea a metaphor for intelligence in a world in which female intelligence is little valued" (Durham 1984, p. 56). Magic is female-coded and carries a negative connotation for Medea in the play, even when removing the mythical backstory of which a contemporary Greek audience may have been aware. Medea exists at a crossroads between masculine intelligence and female knowledge, thus becoming a category crisis. Marjorie B. Garber argues that a "category crisis" is "a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another", with the person in question becoming "a mechanism of displacement from one blurred boundary to another" (Garber 2011, p. 16). By being clever and refusing passivity, Medea acts within masculine gender expectations, while being a woman and practicing witchcraft falls into female expectations. Creon fears her and what she will do to his daughter. Thus, Creon "obviously does not put much faith in the image of the suffering and helpless woman that Medea has been trying to project. He knows that she is clever, knowledgeable in many evil arts" (Bongie 1977, p. 38). The magic serves as a type of intelligence not understood by the men, which alienates her from them. She is too intelligent to be a woman, but too magical to be a man, so she exists in between the categories, which threatens gender distinctions and reinforces her otherness.

Just as Medea is othered from Chalciope and other women for essentially not understanding their "girl talk", Medea is othered from the men in the play because of her feminine magical knowledge. In Quin's novel, Circe, the famous witch from *The Odyssey* and Medea's aunt, discusses her magic and exile with Medea. Circe explains that she was exiled to the island because a man she loved, Glaucus, rejected her, so she turned the woman he loved, Scylla, into a monster. She then blames her exile on masculine fear: "I revealed too much of my hand, too much of my own power. . .I was too much of a threat to be left to my own devices, unguarded" (Quin 2024, p. 163). The threat Circe poses stems from the intelligence and power evidenced by her magic. She claims her father and Zeus banished her; thus, Circe is imprisoned like a criminal for being too powerful as a woman. The scene creates a parallel between Circe and Medea, foreshadowing how Jason and others will also be threatened by Medea because of her intelligence and magic.

Quin's novel highlights Medea's intelligence repeatedly through the text. Much of the early book concerns how she learns *pharmaka* from her father Aeetes. Disappointed at not having a son, Aeetes agrees to teach Medea his magic. Once Phaethon, her brother, is

born, Aeetes abandons their lessons, but Medea continues to study in private. Medea's obsessive need to learn necromancy stems from a prophetic vision her mother shares with her; her mother sees Phaethon's death. Thus, Medea makes it her solitary goal to learn magic to bring Phaethon back from the dead when the prophecy comes true. The male characters mention her intelligence on multiple occasions in the text. Phaethon calls her "someone so brilliant", and Jason calls her "clever girl" (Quin 2024, pp. 174, 154). Medea loves Phaethon above all and spends the first half of the novel finding a way to bring him back to life through necromancy. For Phaethon, her magic represents her love and devotion to him. Jason selfishly benefits from Medea's magic when she aids him in acquiring the golden fleece, and Jason sees her magic as a way to further his glory. At the moment when he calls her clever, he has not turned on her yet because she has yet to refuse him the use of her magic. However, Medea's necromancy magic used on Phaethon benefits a man, so in both of these positive responses to Medea's magic, males have benefitted from feminine intelligence and supernatural power.

Conversely to these other male characters, Medea's father views her magic as a threat. Aeetes consistently downplays her intelligence in front of others because he knows the depth of her mind. Aeetes tells Phrixus, "You must forgive my youngest daughter for her foolishness. . .she is stupider than her sister". Medea internally responds to her father's words by thinking, "Father had slid into a pattern of snide remarks and cruel observances ever since Phaethon was born. It was as though he was attempting to negate everything he had taught me" (Quin 2024, p. 62). Medea's response highlights the gender divide between her and her brother and the dismissive way Aeetes treats her because she is female. By saying her father wants to "negate everything" she has been taught, Medea implies that Aeetes believes her inferior for the knowledge he has given her. Furthermore, by treating her cruelly, Aeetes attempts a dominant power play with Medea, which suggests that he finds his intelligent daughter a threat. The difference in who comments about Medea's intelligence is important. Phaethon loves her deeply, and at that point, Jason loves her and wants to use her power. However, Aeetes despises Medea and begrudges that his daughter, instead of his son, has the natural magical ability. As her father, Aeetes sees her intelligence and difference from the extremely feminine Chalciope as a rejection of the patriarchal establishment, which is where he gains much of his power.

Medea's intelligence and knowledge present such a threat to Aeetes that he decides to take those qualities from Medea when he declares she will be married. He tells Medea, "My primary concern is that your future husband might attempt to use your power against me. Even though you are frail and weak by virtue of your sex, and your expertise is premature and unpolished compared to mine. . .I will be stripping you of your memories, all those troublesome little spars of useless knowledge that plague your infantile brain" (Quin 2024, p. 103). Aeetes' fear that Medea's future husband may use her magic against him reveals the deep fear Aeetes feels because of his daughter. However, Aeetes does not fear *Medea* herself per se but instead is afraid that she will become a weapon for her future husband. This reveals that Aeetes does not view Medea as a person, but only as an object to be weaponized by the future husband. Moreover, Aeetes suggests that Medea's husband will control her magic and power, once again stripping her agency and objectifying her. He continues by saying to her, "You, Medea, were always an unnatural exception, far too cunning for your own good, but at last, I will be able to provide you with the peace and comfort you have doubtlessly been unconsciously craving for your entire sorry existence" (Quin 2024, p. 103). Aeetes inflates his power through his continued belittling and infantilization of Medea, which reflects his insecurities concerning his powerful daughter. Medea "does not play out her familial and societal roles as she should, according to ancient male definitions of ideals. . .[s]he is an active and truly powerful figure, not the passive female type which was to be admired and emulated in the classical period" (Corrigan 2013, p. 3). His punishment for his unnatural, "outsider" daughter is the removal of her intelligence through her memories. He further reveals his anxiety towards Medea's power by saying she is too "cunning for [her] own good", and then promising to give her peace and comfort. This

comment from Aeetes demonstrates a misogynistic belief that intelligence is too much for a woman and that cunning, knowledge, and power create an uncomfortable mental state, upsetting the natural balance of female passivity. By accomplishing the horrific deed, Aeetes neutralizes the perceived threat in Medea. Through the removal of Medea's intelligence, Aeetes controls her mind and knowledge, subsequently turning her into a passive woman who fits into the expected gender hierarchy.

3. Medea's Monstrous Power

Though a human, Medea can be read as a monstrous other. She is a sorceress who practices "evil arts", including necromancy. Though she uses her magic initially to help Jason, which positions her as "helper-maiden", her magic later becomes something more sinister. Because "Medea uses magic, which for the Greeks was always a frightening and disreputable art in the hand of women", she is positioned as a monstrous other since her use of magic "suggest[s] that the wicked woman always lurked within the helper-maiden" (Johnston 1997, p. 6). She hails from a barbarous land and has masculine traits despite being a woman. Finally, she is a murderer, killing her brother, her enemies, and finally, her children. Medea's monstrosity can be argued to stem from her refusal to adhere to female cultural norms as much as her use of witchcraft. In the book *Virgo to Virago: Medea in the Silver Age*, Kirsty Corrigan argues that Medea "had a power which most men did not have, and she used this for her own sake, not that of the home, husband and family, thus posing a significant threat to male-dominated society and social order" (Corrigan 2013, p. 4). Corrigan highlights one of the core issues with Medea's character: it is not that Medea uses witchcraft, but that she eventually uses witchcraft "for her own sake". In a patriarchal Greek society, Medea not only has a unique power that men do not possess, but she uses it against men more often than she uses it for their benefit. By Medea existing outside of the gender norms, both in terms of behavior and power, she rejects "traditional concepts of femininity" and inhabits a masculine space of intelligence and power. This poses a threat to society, and more specifically, the men around her. In the Greek myth, Medea and her aunt Circe are characterized by their witchcraft, while Aeetes, Medea's father and Circe's brother, is not connected with magic. However, in recent retellings, including Quin's novel and *Circe* by Madeline Miller, Aeetes becomes a sorcerer like his female relatives. Quin's novel depicts Aeetes as beginning to teach Medea magical arts when he lacks a male heir. His abrupt end to their lessons, when Phaethon is born, reflects a misogynistic attitude that women are not worthy of knowledge and learning. Furthermore, Medea becomes just as adept, if not better, at magic than her father is, which Aeetes views as a threat. The novel's emphasis on her magical power and intelligence, along with her rejection and misunderstanding of female social expectations reinforces her function as a category crisis that develops her monstrosity.

In *Monster Theory*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen theorizes that characters who resist categorization can be deemed monsters. According to Cohen's Thesis III: The Monster is Harbinger of Category Crisis:

> This refusal to participate in the classificatory 'order of things' is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions. (Cohen 1996, p. 6)

The monster represents a "mixed category", one where "the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition" (Cohen 1996, p. 7). Medea's refusal to adhere solely to female gender roles and instead act within masculine spheres of power suggests a rejection of social hierarchies and binaries, thus placing her into a liminal space that threatens to "smash distinctions" of acceptable gender categories. According to Bongie, this gender category crisis makes Medea a heroic figure. Bongie argues, "Euripides presents his vision of a woman who. . .lives in accordance with a male system of values". Therefore, "Medea has a negative aim inspired by the same values, namely, not to lose the

honour she had, not to be disgraced and revealed as helpless" (Bongie 1977, p. 31). Bongie's argument indicates that Medea's desire to save her honor by getting revenge on Jason fits the paradigm of Greek heroes. In the play, "Medea becomes the vehicle through which male models of heroism are reexamined: her unflinching resolve to destroy her enemies and her willingness to commit unspeakable crimes against her children form the kernel of her heroism" (Reilly 2007, pp. 29–30). However, Medea does not just reflect heroic values. Medea is a category crisis as "she is both mother and hero. . .a female figure who mediates the tension between female domesticity and masculine economies of heroism. . .straddling two realms of discourse" (Reilly 2007, p. 30). For Euripides, Medea's category crisis stems from her desire to act in a masculine way so that she can take agency for herself and enact violence and revenge. As Medea plans, she says, "I will make dead bodies Of three of my enemies—father, the girl, and my husband" (Euripides 1993, lines 374–375). Medea states she plans to kill Jason, Creon, and Glauce, but these deaths will differ from the previous murders Medea has committed in that the other deaths were for Jason to aid him on his quest. These murders are solely for revenge. Revenge is generally a masculine action, and Medea's revenge is calculated instead of enacted in a fit of passion. Medea "does not murder in an arbitrary frenzy. She plans every detail", and she "is not set back emotionally by these tyrants' attempts to wield power and authority over her" (Ertugrul 2023, p. 86). Instead, Medea calculates her plan to carry out the murders. She vocalizes potential ways she will kill them, considering that she might set fire to the palace "Or sharpen a sword and thrust it to the heart". She follows this with, "There is just one obstacle to this. If I am caught Breaking into the house and scheming against it, I shall die, and give my enemies cause for laughter" (Euripides 1993, lines 378–383). This line has Medea confronting the limits of her power. The problem is that "although Medea may have the soul of a man, she nonetheless has the body of a woman" (Bongie 1977, p. 39). This limits her available options for revenge and frustrates Medea more by reminding her of the social and gender limitations she faces due to being a woman. She does not have the physical strength to go against an enemy; furthermore, she refuses to allow her enemies to mock her. Later, after she decides to kill her children, she returns to her feelings surrounding her pride and honor by stating, "it is not bearable to be mocked by enemies" (Euripides 1993, line 797). Building on this, she points to one of the most important facts of her plan: "Let no one think me a weak one, feeble-spirited, A stay-at-home, but rather just the opposite, One who can hurt my enemies" (Euripides 1993, lines 807–809). Again, Medea fights against her feminine limits, refusing to be considered weak by her enemies as if she were a warrior instead of a mother and wife. Bongie asserts that Medea's words reflect her heroism: "The plans for vengeance that she now outlines contain many more indications of her heroic outlook" (Bongie 1977, p. 49). Her plans force her to act masculine and reject her femininity. Medea has developed her "heroic" plans, yet these plans consist of not only murdering arguably innocent people but also murdering children.

The line between heroism and monstrosity is a fine one. Myths often describe a "dichotomy by means of opposing characters. . .[w]hen self is opposed to other, and particularly when that other is meant to be censured, there usually are no 'in-betweens'" (Johnston 1997, pp. 7–8). However, Medea exists in a liminal space between hero and monster, thus Medea is the "in-between". Since myths tend to contain "opposing characters. . .[i]t is somewhat unusual, however, to find the dichotomy encapsulated within a *single* mythic figure, which brings us back to Medea" because "she veers between desirable and undesirable behavior, between Greek and foreigner" (Johnston 1997, p. 8). Medea's complex characterization complicates categorization and elicits sympathy, which makes condemning her difficult. In Quin's novel, before she kills her children or even finds out about Jason's betrayal, Medea admits, "now I'm a real murderer", to which Phaethon replies, "You are also a mother. . .And a damn good witch. You are not just the one thing" (Quin 2024, p. 249). The exchange between Medea and Phaethon highlights Medea's roles, good and bad. Yet the juxtaposition of mother with witch and murderer emphasizes her potential monstrosity since women, especially mothers, should not commit murder. Like other heroes, Medea seeks to save

her honor by enacting revenge upon Jason. When Medea choose to kill her children, the audience "realize[s] that she is going to pay a terrible price for the sake of vengeance and honor. . .[h]er maternal feelings. . .beg her to spare the children, but once more her fierce honor code prevents her from yielding" (Bongie 1977, p. 51). The innate struggle between societal gender categories causes Medea to second-guess her decision, but her female maternal instincts are eclipsed by her masculine fervor for violence against Jason. Even if Medea's actions fall within a heroic paradigm, "Medea's crimes cannot be justified; she has to take responsibility for her actions, particularly the senseless murder of her innocent children" (Ertugrul 2023, p. 90). In her quest for vengeance and the re-establishment of her honor, "[u]ltimately, she destroys herself most of all" (Ertugrul 2023, p. 90). Crossing the line of killing her children solidifies her monstrosity. Bongie argues that when Medea exhibits heroic qualities, she "is probably the most genuinely 'heroic' figure. . .in that she shows greater determination in the achievement of her ends and makes greater sacrifices to her honour". However, Bongie ends the point by stating, "but Medea sacrifices her own children" (Bongie 1977, p. 32). The act of killing her children is the most recognizable rejection of Medea's femininity. For the Greeks, "a child-killing mother negates not only the most basic human bond, but the definition of womanhood itself" (Allan 2002, p. 62). Thus, when Medea kills her children, she severs the ties to her femininity in pursuit of masculine violent revenge. Though Medea loves her children and feels anguish over her actions, the infanticide turns her into a social outsider through her dehumanization. In ancient Greece, "infanticide was viewed as a peculiarly evil and abnormal act, almost an effacement of human nature" (Allan 2002, p. 82). Furthermore, "Medea's repudiation of the nurturing maternal role" would have been to a Greek audience "especially horrendous" (Allan 2002, p. 87). By engaging in such a horrendous and abnormal act, especially as she is in the maternal role, Medea starts to lose her human identity. Typically, "for every rule or custom that is embraced by the individual or group, there can be found a polar opposite, which is rejected. Frequently, the opposing rules and customs are ascribed. . .to another person or group that has been chosen to fill the role of 'other'" (Johnston 1997, p. 7). As the "barbarian" and "other" in the Greek society, Medea's act of infanticide functions as the opposing custom, thus placing her into the role of monstrous outsider. The divisions between the dominant group and other "can have a reassuring effect, both because they impose firm rules and boundaries upon the world and because they imply that other is safely and permanently separated from self" (Johnston 1997, p. 7). Her distortion of the female maternal role into something unrecognizable becomes a threat to society, which pushes her further into the role of monstrous because of the disorder of social expectations. In *Deformed Discourse*, David Williams argues:

> Thus the identification of the monster with disorder makes it also the potential for order. As the appropriate sign for disorder, the monstrous reveals disorder as the precondition for being, since being depends on process/differentiation/opposition; the monster, itself nonbeing in the sense of Eriugena's "that which is-not", stands as a sign of the nature of being. (Williams 1996, p. 83)

By killing her children, Medea embraces the cultural disorder, which accentuates the non-monstrous order of maternal protection. Though Medea's intention may have been to regain her honor, her actions dissolve all boundaries of acceptable social actions and human and gender limits, allowing her to be categorized as a monster.

When discussing Medea's infanticide, many scholars point to the deeply disturbing nature of the crime and attribute it to her innate evil and difference. Denys Page provides a simplified assessment of her actions: "Because she was a foreigner she could kill her children; because she was a witch she could escape in a chariot" (Page 1938, p. xxi). In this oversimplified analysis of Medea, Page highlights only two qualities, and those two qualities are damning enough to lead to her monstrous actions: her foreign "outsider" status and her witchcraft. Musurillo argues that Euripides uses animal imagery to make Medea into a monster, and by the end of the play, "we are shocked at Medea's final callousness and animal brutality" (Musurillo 1966, pp. 68, 74). The connection to animals

begins to erase Medea's humanity and transform her into a sinister other. Allan posits the play's ending makes Medea "ultimately 'dehumanised' or 'demonised' by her actions" (Allan 2002, p. 98). Ian Storey claims that Euripides "has taken the witch of Greek legend, made her into a living, breathing human being for a time, before returning her to the status of demonic creature at the end" (Storey 2014, p. 273). This assertion suggests that Medea was supernatural and non-human before Euripides, and the play's events lead her back to an evil being. Morwood contends that Medea undergoes a "transformation into an infanticidal demon" and that "the initially sympathetic woman is transformed into a demon" (Morwood 2016, pp. 15, 18). Like others, Morwood claims that Medea's final actions in the play demonize her and make her into something pure evil. Demons by nature are hybrid beings; despite having "inhuman features" they cannot "mask the fact that the demons are also at least *half-human* in appearance" (Kearney 2002, p. 29). Describing Medea as a demon positions her as a monstrous other, the evil presence against the so-called "good" and "moral" order in the play. The demonic monster is "a fundamental expression of an unconscious 'savage mind' bent on dividing the world into a series of binary oppositions: culture and nature. . .good and evil". The monster comes from the outside, a "perilous nether world" of "foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons, foreigners" (Kearney 2002, p. 34). As a foreign other who participates in unimaginable acts of violence, who kills her children with her own hand, and who perverts every natural law by rejecting her position as mother, Medea becomes a monster in the end.

4. Medea Othered by Masculine Sources

Medea's power and refusal to use it for Jason's gain is at the heart of the conflict in their relationship in Quin's novel. In the text, after Jason witnesses Medea's power through her help with the fleece and her magic bringing Phaethon back to life, Jason begins making double-edged comments to Medea. He calls her "an unusual creature" and "lioness", and later refers to her necromancy as "unnaturalness" (Quin 2024, pp. 156, 160). These comments from Jason begin to separate Medea into the category of "other" by highlighting the weird and disquieting nature of her magic; furthermore, these comments initiate the process of dehumanizing Medea in Jason's eyes through the use of nonhuman descriptors such as creature and lioness. The use of lioness places Medea in a negative light since "[t]he regularly positive connotations of the lion imagery in epic poetry acquire a negative tone once the comparison involves women, stressing the savage side of the animal's emotions and behavior" (Konstantinou 2012, p. 126). In Philip Vellacott's translation of Euripides' play, he chooses a similar word "tiger" in the following comment from Jason to Medea: "No woman, but a tiger; a Tuscan Scylla—but more savage" (Euripides 1963, p. 58). Rex Warner's translation differs from tiger: "A monster, not a woman" (Euripides 1993, line 1342). Both examples reinforce Medea's monstrosity and otherness through her savagery. Jason's comments demonstrate the idea that "[w]omen are particularly conceived as 'other' in Greek culture, and this 'otherness' is conventionally categorized through animal metaphors" (Konstantinou 2012, p. 126). Even her maternal nature is linked with animal imagery. The Nurse says Medea will glare at anyone near her, "Like a lioness guarding her cubs" (Euripides 1993, line 189). This link between the typical female role of mother and animal savagery both foreshadows Medea's final act of monstrous infanticide but also begins the dehumanizing description early in the play from someone *other* than Jason.

While Euripides' version of Jason verbally belittles Medea and her contributions to his quest, the play has Jason diminishing her power by stating, "My view is that Cypris was alone responsible Of men and gods for the preserving of my life" (Euripides 1993, lines 527–528). He adds to this a few lines later, "In so far as you helped me, you did well enough" (Euripides 1993, line 533). In the Greek tragedy, Jason's speech emphasizes the power dynamic between them through Jason's denial and reinterpretation of the narrative. By shifting the cause of the successful quest to Aphrodite, Medea's supernatural power, and therefore her actions that result in the successful tasks, are erased and minimized in

importance. Quin's novel reflects a stronger emphasis on the othering of Medea—which is present in Euripides' play—and Quin's stronger focus on the othering suggests her modern feminist approach to the novel. Euripides and his audience would have been more favorable to Jason than a contemporary feminist lens would allow. Philip Vellacott in the "Introduction" to his translation of Euripides' *Medea* argues, "[W]e must take care not to prejudge Jason. He was a man of entirely respectable ambitions". He further states that the play "opens with an oppressed victim claiming the sympathy of Chorus and audience. As the action develops inevitably, and the punishment shows itself twice as wicked as the crime, sympathy changes sides" (Vellacott 1963, p. 8). Quin's novel depicts Jason as someone much more violent, who is both physically and verbally abusive to Medea, and manipulates her in a similar way as a modern abuser. Even Phaethon tells Medea, "Jason has proved himself to be dangerous, and I fear that we may have made an enemy out of him". Medea replies, "First Father, now Jason. When will I be free of them?" (Quin 2024, p. 249). The novel almost assumes the reader will prejudge Jason as a terrible person, and if they do not, Quin's narrative paints him as much of a negative male influence in Medea's life as her father Aeetes.

Medea's power and her othering leads to her monstrosity. In Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, he theorizes, "The monster's body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety" (Cohen 1996, p. 4). If we return to Corrigan's assertion that Medea's refusal to use her power for the males or the home "pos[ed] a significant threat to male-dominated society and social order", then Medea's monstrosity stems from a masculine fear and anxiety of her power. Since Medea's power was used selfishly, and not to further patriarchal concerns such as the well-being of a male or the woman's family, then it becomes something to fear. Euripides' "treatment of her development confirms men's most alarming phobias about women" (Morwood 2016, p. 15). Medea "certainly was not submissive and deferential, ideals of womanhood according to men in antiquity: her very behaviour acted against everything which was considered good and feminine or, at least, she was portrayed as thus behaving" (Corrigan 2013, p. 4). Not only is Medea a powerful woman, but she also questions the position of women in society. Medea's Women of Corinth speech in Euripides' play explores the injustices women face daily. She questions the establishment when she says, "[W]ith an excess of wealth it is required For us to buy a husband and take for our bodies A master. . . for there is no easy escape For a woman, nor can she say no to her marriage" (Euripides 1993, lines 232–237). By pointing out the hypocrisy in marriage and the culture, Medea questions and threatens the established gender hierarchy. In Quin's novel, Medea addresses similar concerns throughout her whole life. Early in the novel, Medea realizes: "I was a pawn to the men who populated my life—another frantic animal to be exacted of its usefulness" (Quin 2024, p. 87). Medea recognizes her worthlessness and lack of agency. This knowledge leads Medea to state, "[A]ll men repulsed me. They seemed to me to be oafs and liars. . .those who were intelligent were doubtless just better equipped to inflict their cruelty" (Quin 2024, p. 108). As Medea navigates her world filled with violent men, she loses respect for the established order and finds herself rejecting the authority of men. She declares that she "was immune to romantic love" before meeting Jason (Quin 2024, p. 108). Aphrodite's arrow causes Medea to fall in love with Jason, and when Medea is on the Argo with Jason, she says, "I had little interest in the conventions of mortal men. I would never be a man's property, a blushing, amenable bride. It was simply not in my nature. If he wanted to call me his wife, he could, so long as he knew that I was no more his than the sea owns the sky" (Quin 2024, p. 157). Quin's novel echoes Medea's anti-marriage stance and victimized language from Euripides' play; however, the timing of Medea's words suggests a significant difference. In the Greek tragedy, Medea has just learned of Jason's betrayal with Creon's daughter, which leaves her feeling vulnerable, rejected, and heartbroken. Quin depicts Medea throughout her novel as consistently adopting this attitude that rejects patriarchal control over her.

In addition to Quin's Medea discovering her lack of agency early in her life, she also becomes anti-romantic in the way that men "repulsed" her and she is not attracted to them.

As discussed earlier, Medea did not understand Chalciope's feelings towards Phrixtus, and the novel attributes all of Medea's romantic feelings to Aphrodite's arrow. This important detail reinforces Quin's approach to Medea, which depicts Medea as resistant to men along with romantic and physical affection. Unlike Euripides' Medea, Quin's Medea does not hate marriage because of Jason's betrayal; she refuses the established cultural norm before she even meets Jason. The authorial intent of both texts highlights significant cultural ideas reflective of the historical moment in which they were written. Scholars are undecided about Euripides' intent for Medea and the women in his tragedies generally. In his own time, "Euripides was the only tragedian to acquire a reputation for misogyny" (Pomeroy 1995, p. 103). The comedy playwright "Aristophanes chose to mock him as a misogynist" (Allan 2002, p. 46). However, Sarah B. Pomeroy argues the following about Euripides:

> [H]e uses the extreme vantage point of misogyny as a means of examining popular beliefs about women. On the other hand, Euripides does not present a brief for women's rights. . .I do not think it misogynistic to present women as strong, assertive, successful, and sexually demanding even if they are also selfish or villainous. . .Yet, it is fair to add that conventional critics—who far outnumber feminists—judge that Medea and Phaedra disgrace the entire female sex, and label Euripides a misogynist for drawing our attention to these murderesses. (Pomeroy 1995, pp. 107–8)

Furthermore, William Allan states that the criticisms are aimed at "Euripides' intense portrayal of female suffering and revenge. . .[*Medea*] explores the experience of an intelligent and articulate woman in a society which denied women such attributes" (Allan 2002, pp. 46–7). Regardless of whether Euripides is aiming to be misogynistic, he presents a complex and sympathetic female character capable of both intense love and violent revenge. The character of Jason reinforces Medea's non-Greek outsider status while Creon focuses on her magical ability. These characterizations of Medea from the two main male characters in the play help create Medea's monstrosity even before she kills her children. Quin's depiction of Medea fights against her monstrosity by portraying Medea as a reluctant sorceress and abuse victim desperate to escape. Medea's single-minded obsession to learn necromancy in the novel revolves solely around the prophecy that her brother will die, and her desire to help Jason is a mixture of Aphrodite's love arrow and her desperation to escape her father. Quin's modern take on the villainous and monstrous Medea seems to constantly be explaining away the villain that Euripides embraces at the end of his tragedy.

5. Medea as Outsider

A large part of Medea's monstrosity relies on her status as non-Greek. Medea is the princess of Colchis, an ancient region in the modern country of Georgia, and therefore, she is not Greek. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that "[e]very writer on the Orient (and this is true even of Homer) assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient" (Said 2018, p. 59). This is true for Medea, as her myth is told from a Greek perspective. Said explains the importance of the outside perspective:

> Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. . .What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient. . .The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation: as early as Aeschylus's play *The Persians* the Orient is transformed from a very far distant and often threatening Otherness into figures that are relatively familiar (in Aeschylus's case, grieving Asiatic women). The dramatic immediacy of representation in *The Persians* obscures the fact that the audience is watching a highly artificial enactment of what a non-Oriental has made into a symbol for the whole Orient. (Said 2018, p. 59)

Said theorizes that Western writers create a fictitious version of the East to reinforce the outsider status of the non-Westerner. Said presents a classical Greek tragedy example through Aeschylus, similar to what Euripides does with *Medea.* Just as Aeschylus presents what Said calls "grieving Asiatic women", Euripides depicts Medea at the beginning of the play as a sympathetic, victimized foreign woman. In one translation of Euripides' play, the translator Philip Vellacott translates Medea's response to Jason's explanation for marrying Glauce as, "an Asiatic wife Was no longer respectable" (Euripides 1963, p. 34). In the translation by Rex Warner, he translates Vellacott's phrase "an Asiatic wife" as "foreign wife" (Euripides 1993, line 591). The juxtaposition of the words "Asiatic/foreign" and "wife" highlights another category crisis for Medea. The play "present[s] Medea as both a quintessentially dangerous barbarian and as a recognisably 'Greek' wife and mother" (Allan 2002, p. 67). Because she is from Colchis, she is not Greek, yet as the wife of Jason, she begins the play in that domestic role. As the play progresses, the domestic ties to Greece lessen as she embraces violence, which Jason attributes to her non-Greek barbarian status. Both translations denote Medea's outsider status, yet Vellacott's choice to use "Asiatic" instead of "foreign" aligns with Said's argument that Western writers give voice and life to Eastern characters with intent to other them. Just as Aeschylus's women were familiar, Medea is not an obvious, threatening monster because she is a human woman. However, the play (and the myth) develops Medea through her monstrous, savagely violent actions.

In the classical tragedy, Euripides emphasizes Medea's non-Greek status in Jason's explanation for why he marries Glauce. After Medea proclaims her role in the quest for the fleece, Jason responds, "[O]n this question of saving me, I can prove You have certainly got from me more than you gave. Firstly, instead of living among barbarians, You inhabit a Greek land and understand our ways. How to live by law instead of the sweet will of force" (Euripides 1993, lines 534–538). Jason's argument refocuses the narrative away from Medea's active participation in his hero story to diminish her role while reimagining his role into one of heroic savior through his saving her from her barbarous homeland. Furthermore, he "draws on the stereotype that barbarians do not recognize the rule of law in an attempt to present Medea as morally inferior" (Swift 2017). Jason's Greco-centric prejudice reflects ideas that Medea comes from a lawless, savage land because it was not part of Greek culture. In *Monster Theory*, Cohen says the following about the geographical monsters:

> [The] monster delimits the social space through which cultural bodies may move, and in classical times (for example) validated a tight, hierarchical system of naturalized leadership and control where every man had a functional place. The prototype in Western culture for this kind of 'geographic' monster is Homer's Polyphemos. The quintessential xenophobic rendition of the foreign (the barbaric—that which is unintelligible within a given cultural-linguistic system), the Cyclopes are represented as savages who have not 'a law to bless them' and who lack the techne to produce (Greek-style) civilization. (Cohen 1996, pp. 13–14)

While Polyphemos and Medea are two very different monsters, Cohen's argument about the Cyclopes can also be applied to Medea. Cohen mentions how the Cyclopes reflect a xenophobic attitude towards foreign groups due to their lack of laws. In Euripides' play, both Jason and Medea emphasize how Medea had to learn Greek laws and customs, with Jason pointing out how this improves her. As a geographical other and non-traditional woman, Medea resides outside of the "tight, hierarchical system". This leads to a permanent othering once she settles within Greek culture. The othering makes her reliant on Jason for security, and "Medea's powerlessness as a barbarian is compounded by her status as a woman: the categories of female and foreigner both stand in opposition to the dominant agenda of the Greek male" (Allan 2002, p. 70). Medea highlights her understanding of this when she replies to Jason, "No, you thought it was not respectable As you got on in years to have a foreign wife" (Euripides 1993, lines 591–592). Medea accuses Jason of not finding respect and honor in his marriage to an outsider, which conveys that Jason does not believe she fits into the ordered system of Greek culture. Later, after Medea has killed her children, Jason uses her non-Greek status against her. He says, "Now I see it plain, though at that

time I did not, when I took you from your foreign home And brought you to a Greek house, you, an evil thing" (Euripides 1993, lines 1329–1331). He emphasizes that she is not from Greece, but an outsider, "an evil thing", someone so horrible that he cannot comprehend her being from what he considers the "civilized" world. The two categories that make Medea an "other" lead to her being "doubly disadvantaged, first as a woman. . .and secondly as a foreigner, who is automatically suspected of violence, deceit, and lawlessness" (Allan 2002, p. 70). Jason's rejection of his non-Greek wife in favor of a more advantageous Greek wife reflects his adherence to Greek cultural ideals. He "emphasizes Medea's foreignness in a more pointed way, using it to suggest the superiority of Greeks over barbarians" (Swift 2017). Medea is a foreigner in this land, and "[t]he figure of the 'stranger'. . .frequently operates as a limit-experience for humans trying to identify themselves over and against others" (Kearney 2002, p. 3). For the Greek Jason, Medea will never be an appropriate bride, thus she becomes monstrous even before she kills her children. In Quin's novel, the depiction of Jason focuses even more on Medea's otherness. When he decides to marry Glauce, he sends Medea a letter that reads, "I have no use for a savage bride, now that a legitimate one has made herself ready for me" (Quin 2024, p. 252). While Medea's violent actions are part of the reason for Jason calling her a "savage bride", Medea's otherness also comes from the physical geography of her birth, which makes her an outsider and reinforces her monstrosity.

In the play, Euripides repeatedly has characters mention how far Medea has traveled. The chorus mentions that Medea has been brought "away To the opposite shore of the Greeks Through the gloomy salt straits to the gateway Of the salty unlimited sea" (Euripides 1993, lines 209–212). Later, they tell her, "You sailed away from your father's home, With a heart on fire you passed The double rocks of the sea. And now in a foreign country" (Euripides 1993, lines 431–435). Near the end, the chorus mentions the distance a final time: "After you passed the inhospitable strait Between the dark blue rocks, Symplegades" (Euripides 1993, lines 1263–1264). This repetition acts as "a motif which emphasizes her exoticism and establishes a sense of distance" (Swift 2017). The references to the geographical distance "heightens the sense of a natural separation between Greeks and foreigners", especially in the case of Medea as the strait and rocks mentioned "form an impassable barrier between Greece and Medea's homeland" (Swift 2017). This obvious geographical border positions Medea into the realm of monstrous other through her repeated geographical distance, which also emphasizes her ethnic difference. She is an other, someone from way beyond the border of Greece, from a "savage" foreign land.

Medea's history of violence reinforces her monstrous nature to Jason. In Quin's novel, Jason convinces Medea to kill the giant Talos against her better judgment. Jason tells her, "So you'd have me abandon my quest, my birthright, as though it were nothing, just so some giant can continue his native savagery?" (Quin 2024, p. 191). By saying this, Jason emphasizes his innate belief that savagery is natural and inborn, thus reinforcing the damaging Greco-centric viewpoint. After he says this, Medea thinks, "The comparison was unsaid but obvious: one barbarian recognizes another". Jason categorizes Medea with Talos through their geographic ancestry and supernatural ties, lumping them into one large non-Greek "other" category. Medea then thinks of what her father had told her growing up, which was "*What king would want a savage bride*?" (Quin 2024, p. 191). By including Aeetes in this section, Quin supposes that Medea had an intrinsic sense of difference that stemmed from her upbringing. Growing up in Colchis, Medea internalizes her "savage" non-Greekness through her father's rhetoric. In the novel, before Jason begins to consider leaving Medea, Medea's internal voice already tells her that she is a "savage bride". Yet Medea does not actively want to kill Talos. After she completes the deed, she feels remorse: "'Talos,' I whispered again, for surely, he could not be dead—not like this. . .Talos would never have fallen if I had not appeared beside him tonight on the beach. He might have gone on traversing the shores for another thousand years" (Quin 2024, p. 202). Instead of feeling triumphant for killing the monster as Jason might have, Medea regrets her actions. This emotional response aligns Medea with Talos more than Jason; as Jason pointed out

when he tried to convince her to kill Talos, he considered the giant a savage, and Medea hears the unstated comparison from Jason. Jason used Medea's power as a weapon, thus he feels a heroic victory in Talos' death. However, when Jason shows concern when she returns, her reaction is one of "[r]evulsion, unexpected and unwelcome" (Quin 2024, p. 203). By aligning emotionally with Talos instead of Jason, Medea reinforces her connection to the monstrous other.

6. The Modern Attempt to Present Medea as Non-Monstrous

The Greek myths and Euripides' play about Medea all share the narrative perspective that Medea is a villainous, monstrous woman. Quin's novel, published over two thousand years later, seems to have the purpose of giving Medea a voice in her own story. The novel is a reimagining that attempts to erase Medea's monstrosity by providing explanations and reasons for the violent and horrific actions attributed to Medea in the myths. As discussed previously, some of how Quin tries to accomplish this is through the abusive and cruel upbringing she experiences from Aeetes, along with Medea's stance as anti-woman. Two other ways that Quin reimagines Medea's monstrosity are through a discussion of narrative perspective and an exploration of Jason's violent nature.

The most significant change Quin makes in the novel is through the situations surrounding Medea's murder of her brother and her children. In the novel, Medea's mother shares a prophecy with Medea where she sees Medea chopping her brother, Phaethon, to pieces. Since Medea loves her brother deeply, she is horrified by this image and devotes herself to the study of necromancy so she can save her brother from this future fate, not knowing that she is the one who will eventually kill Phaethon. To escape their father, Medea devises a plan to escape from Colchis with her brother by leaving with the Argonauts, cutting up Phaethon to fake his death, and then bringing him back to life. In two conflicting versions of the Medea myth, Medea kills her brother to help Jason and the Argonauts escape the pursuit of Aeetes. In the third-century BCE epic poem *Argonautica*, Apollonius Rhodius describes the death of Phaethon (called Apsyrtus in the poem) by a joint murder from Medea and Jason. Apollonius describes Medea's actions: "she had worked upon the heralds to induce her brother to come. . .so she might devise with him a cunning plan for her to take the mighty fleece of gold and return to the home of Aeetes. . .with such beguiling words she scattered to the air and the breezes her witching charms" (Apollonius 1919, pp. 323–25). Here, Medea uses her cunning and "witching charms" to convince her brother to meet her. Then Apollonius writes:

> Jason went to the ambush to lie in wait for Apsyrtus. . .he made trial in speech of his sister. . .to see if she would devise some guile against the strangers. And so they two agreed together on everything; and straightway Aeson's son leapt forth from the thick ambush, lifting his bare sword in his hand; and quickly the maiden turned her eyes aside and covered them with her veil that she might not see the blood of her brother when he was smitten. (Apollonius 1919, pp. 325–27)

In the version from *Argonautica*, Medea does not land the killing blow to her brother but tricks him into a trap where Jason violently kills him. This version presents a conflicted Medea, revealed by her physical response of looking away when Jason kills her brother. The *Argonautica's* conflict emerges because the reader does not know "how much of Medea's violent passion stems from her love for Jason, how much from her fear of her father and her instinct for self-preservation. At the same time, we are also moved to a greater distance from them as we see more clearly how Medea's love for Jason entails betrayal of her family, [] as we see Apsyrtus, the representative of that family" (Byre 1996, p. 8). A different version, presented in *Bibliotheca* by Pseudo-Apollodorus from the first or second century CE, removes Jason's involvement in the murder completely. Instead, Medea completes the horrific act. Additionally, because of the format of a compendium instead of epic poetry, the shortened narrative removes any conflict for Medea, which makes her actions all the more horrifying. In this version, Apsyrtus leaves on the Argo with Medea. Pseudo-Apollodorus writes, "When Aeetes discovered the daring deeds done by Medea, he started off in pursuit

of the ship; but when she saw him near, Medea murdered her brother and cutting him limb from limb threw the pieces into the deep" (Apollodorus 1921, p. 113). This version makes Medea much more of a monster than the Apollonius version since Medea does the dismemberment herself.

Quin's novel diverges from the classical narrative. Choosing the version of the myth where Medea commits the murder herself, Quin begins to remove the horror of Medea's deeds through a stronger development of the character of Phaethon. While Medea and Phaethon discuss the plan to kill him and then bring him back to life, Phaethon tells Medea, "I trust you, Medea. . .if something goes wrong, and I don't make it, you must not blame yourself. I consented to this" (Quin 2024, p. 147). Phaethon's part in the plan for his own death and his awareness of the danger changes the intention and impact of Medea's deeds. Instead of Medea killing her brother for an all-consuming love and to aid a man on his heroic quest, she instead loves her brother deeply and plans an escape from their abusive father. In ancient Greece, "Brother and sister were imagined to be especially close. . .but their closeness arose in part from the fact that the brother was *responsible* for the sister, and she was *dependent* upon him" (Bremmer 1997, p. 100). Quin inserts pathos into the narrative through the strong sibling bond between Phaethon and Medea and the physical and verbal abuse of their father. However, Quin flips the narrative by having Medea feel responsible for Phaethon as she spends her whole life practicing necromancy to save him. The sister protects the brother, instead of the other way around. When she kills Phaethon, Medea "permanently severed all ties to her natal home" and "simultaneously declared her independence from her family" (Bremmer 1997, p. 100). Medea's decision to fake Phaethon's death was to save them both from Aeetes and gain their independence. Additionally, Phaethon's declaration of "I consented to this" reflects a twenty-first-century cultural ideal. Quin very specifically has Phaethon give his consent to Medea for the use of his body in her plan, which echoes contemporary conversations about consent and bodily autonomy. Phaethon's complete understanding of the dangers and his consent remove any argument that Medea coerced, manipulated, or used evil arts on him in any way, which erases the monstrosity from her action of dismembering Phaethon.

After Medea brings Phaethon back to life, Quin uses the concept of narrative point-of-view to reframe Medea's actions. Jason tells Medea, "Now they will know that the king of Kolchis has a daughter who can kill a man and just as quickly resurrect him from the dead". Medea responds, "No, they will not know any of that. . .I will go down in history as the monster who murdered her own blood for some man who was still a stranger to her, because no one can ever know that Phaethon is still alive" (Quin 2024, p. 155). This very pointed and constructed conversation between Medea and Jason highlights a contemporary concern with the importance of point-of-view in monster narratives. Jason wants the glory of a powerful wife, while Medea only wants to protect her brother, even if that means the stories cast her as a villain. As the divide between Jason and Medea grows, Jason weaponizes Medea's actions. After the death of Pelias, Jason throws Medea's killing of Phaethon back into her face: "Pelias did nothing to you, if I recall. Neither, as a matter of fact, did your beloved brother, but you did not hesitate to cut him into chunks" (Quin 2024, p. 221). In his angry outburst, Jason aligns her killing of Pelias, which Medea does for Jason and his future heirs, with her killing of Phaethon, which she did to help them escape her father. Jason's description of the act shows that it is not only the outsiders, like the Argonauts or the Colchians, who believe she is a monster; as Jason grows to resent Medea, he changes his own memories to shape a different narrative of Medea, one in which she is a violent, savage monster.

Quin's depiction of the death of Pelias lessens Medea's violent nature while emphasizing Jason's. The myth of Medea and Pelias tells the following:

> They say that [Medea] spoke one-to-one with Pelias and urged him to tell his daughters to cooperate with her and do whatever she ordered them to. . .Pelias expressly told his daughters to do whatever Medea commanded them to in respect to their father's body. . .When night had fallen and Pelias had gone to

> sleep Medea told them that they must boil Pelias's body in a cauldron. . .They all struck their father and killed him. . .After this they say Medea stood back from cutting up the body or boiling it. (Ogden 2002, p. 80)

Quin follows the same story, yet expands the ending. While Medea watches the daughters slashing their father, she thinks, "With each gash, something broke and eased inside of me. . .the distinctive features of Pelias's face had begun to blur, and in flashes it was my own father, bleeding out inside the bath. . .violence to one was a violence to both in my fragmented mind" (Quin 2024, p. 218). Quin's inclusion of Medea's father in this scene emphasizes her depiction as a victim, which is aimed at eliciting more sympathy for Medea. The reader is reminded of Medea's trauma and abuse from Aeetes, and the scene serves as a symbolic revenge on her father due to her temporary madness. Moreover, Quin has the youngest daughter remain with Medea, blaming her. When Jason enters the room and sees the violent scene, he becomes unhinged. He tries to shift blame for the death of Pelias by exclaiming, "Medea, what have you done?" to which Medea internally replies, "Regardless of what Jason said, he had known full well what I had intended. I had told him, after all". Then, when Medea states that she cannot bring Pelias back, she notices that Jason's eyes are "wild and unrecognizable". As the youngest daughter cries loudly, Jason's "face [was] a mask of animosity. . .a vein bulging grotesquely in his neck". Then, he brought "the blade down across her throat" (Quin 2024, p. 220). By adding this scene to Medea's story, Medea's evil deed of killing Pelias is nearly overshadowed by Jason's violence of killing the young girl. Jason killing the young girl makes him appear more violent and savage than Medea, as he does it out of rage instead of safety and security. While Medea's actions are still cunning and disturbing, the intensity is muted by the juxtaposition of Jason's actions.

After the death of Pelias, Quin returns to the narrative perspective to diminish Medea's monstrosity while emphasizing Jason's violent nature. Medea asks Jason, "What if we are only bound together by our own propensities for evil? We have both spilled our fair share of blood". Medea admits her own responsibility for the violent acts she and Jason have performed together; however, Jason rejects all responsibility and places it onto Medea. He responds, "The darkness comes from you, Medea. None of it would have been necessary if you hadn't made such a mess of things with Pelias. His blood is on your hands, as is that little girl's" (Quin 2024, p. 228). Like the Jason from Euripides' play, he shifts the blame onto Medea so that she fulfills the role of villain while he remains the hero. In this example, Quin has Jason refuse to be accountable for his murderous actions of the girl. He further disparages Medea by saying, "I do not have to listen to a kin-slaying witch discuss ethics with me". Here, he uses her power, which she has invoked multiple times to aid him on his quest, to belittle her. Additionally, he reframes Phaethon's death into the sacrilegious act of kin-slaying, though he consented and she brought him back. When she says he knows this is untrue, Jason replies, "But no one else does, do they, my love?. . . It may be true that you brought him back, but as you said yourself, your legacy will never be cleansed, not truly. You will go through this life a traitor and a murderess. . .I can say whatever I wish about you, and the great men of this world will listen" (Quin 2024, pp. 228–29). This entire scene encapsulates the power of narrative and reinforces how the dominant group will control history, thus suggesting that Jason's heroic status aids in the creation of Medea's monstrosity. The way Quin depicts Jason's words is a clear example of gaslighting since Jason manipulates his words to change the narrative and place the blame onto Medea. Though Euripides characterizes Jason as changing the story to fit his own ends, Quin's treatment of Jason utilizes a feminist approach where Medea is married to a gaslighter who verbally and physically abuses her.

The final way in which Quin attempts to erase Medea's monstrosity is through the depiction of Medea's killing of her children. The death of Medea's children at the hands of Medea was invented by Euripides. In the 700 BCE poem *Corinthiaca* by Eumelus, "Hera promises Medea that she will make her children immortal, but when Medea leaves them in Hera's sanctuary, they perish". Two other versions have Corinthians killing Medea's

children and Creon's relatives killing her children (Allan 2002, p. 22–3). In the play, Medea kills her children as revenge for Jason's betrayal. In Quin's novel, the lead-up to the death of her children is rushed and passed over, more than likely to avoid rehashing the plot of Euripides' *Medea.* When the final moment occurs, instead of Medea killing her children out of spite, Quin has Medea kill them with the intent to bring them back to life, just as she did for Phaethon. The change in this part of the myth is the most extreme attempt at erasing Medea's monstrosity. In leaving Corinth, Medea reenacts her escape from Colchis, complete with dismembering her children like she did to her brother. However, unlike the first time, Medea is unable to put her children back together and bring them back from the dead. Instead of a vengeance-crazed woman who kills her children to hurt the man who took everything from her, Quin presents a woman who decides that killing her children is okay, as long as she can put them back together. Her misplaced pride in her abilities causes her to mutilate her children, but the depiction of the event once again attempts to elicit sympathy from the reader instead of revulsion like in the classical version. With the evidence of pre-Euripides examples erasing Medea's culpability in the death of her children, it is significant that Quin decides to keep that plot element. Perhaps Quin wanted to use the most well-known myth for her novel since the Medea best known to contemporary audiences is the one who killed her children.

7. Conclusions

Medea is a fascinating, complex figure that has excited readers and viewers for thousands of years because of the duality of her nature and the difficulty in deciding what to think about her. Laura Swift argues:

> In the figure of Medea, Euripides has created perhaps his most complex and ambiguous character, a figure who is in many ways attractive yet whose actions are the most repellent in tragedy; a barbarian who espouses Greek ideals; a woman who draws on her femininity to do battle with men, yet whose ultimate vengeance involves the rejection of her most female instincts. (Swift 2017)

Approaching Medea through monster theory highlights the innate otherness Medea possesses throughout the play. Even though she elicits sympathy, she was always going to become a monstrous figure. Medea was doomed from the start, as she was an outsider from a foreign land, a supernatural witch who was not quite human, and a woman determined to resist gender categorization.

Eilish Quin's novelization of Medea's story sets out to change Medea's status from an evil monster to a sympathetic woman. From the start, Quin explains away certain monstrous characteristics from the original myth, such as the murder of her brother Phaethon, while simultaneously placing Medea into the role of victim. Medea's early life is characterized by maternal neglect and paternal abuse, and though she escapes from her father, the abuse continues when she marries Jason. Quin also explores how the dominant narrative determines a person's reputation. In the novel, Medea wants to keep Phaethon hidden from Aeetes, so she allows the story that she "murdered" him to prevail. As Jason's derision for her continues, part of his abuse is changing the narrative to be in favor of his heroic story and constructing her identity into one of a more monstrous figure. The shift from drama to novel aids in Quin's aim. By writing her story in the form of a novel, Quin is able to provide Medea with a first-person narrative, giving the reader direct insight into her thoughts. By doing this, Quin reveals Medea's internal conflicts and her own complicated and problematic views of herself. Unlike Euripides' play and the other extant mythological source material, Quin gives Medea a voice, and with this voice, Medea can defend herself and provide insight into her story.

However, Quin's novel is as much a creative endeavor to retell Medea's story as it is a reflection of contemporary issues. Like many of the contemporary Greek myth novels published in the last decade, Quin's novel highlights the female experience in Greek mythology instead of focusing on the male characters who dominate the ancient stories. This shift in perspective reveals the contemporary concern for prioritizing underrepresented

voices and dissolving narratives constructed by dominant groups in power. Monster theory aids in this resituating as viewing stories and characters through monster theory highlights the peoples not in power, those peoples considered "savage" or "othered" due to their geographical or ethnic differences and their inability to neatly fit into culturally constructed categories of being.

The issue with Quin's novel is that in a feminist attempt to erase Medea's monstrosity and evil deeds, Quin reduces Medea's character to a weaker, victimized version. At the end of the novel when Medea decides to kill her children, she does so with the intention of bringing them back. Phaethon repeats to her, "They are your children" and "This is madness". Medea tries to be brave by retorting, "You doubt my abilities?" but she follows this up by thinking that she is trying "to look enraged instead of worried" (Quin 2024, p. 256). Unlike Euripides' Medea, Quin's Medea is not overcome with rage; instead, she feels fear and sadness. Medea says that "[m]adness had been kindled" in her mind and that she "was burning alive". Yet the brief scene shows no madness or burning anger. Medea almost reads as robotic as she describes giving the poisoned garments to the messenger. When she gives the messenger the poisoned garments for Glauce, she thinks, "My throat was tight with pity—for Jason's new bride and for myself". Then she adds, "I wondered at my ruthlessness" (Quin 2024, pp. 254–55). Here, Medea does not feel the deep rage that propels her through Euripides' play; instead, she pities Glauce and herself for their shared pain and experience in a moment of feminist solidarity. The lack of rage makes these final scenes seem hollow and leaves the reader questioning why Medea poisons Glauce anyway. Leading up to this point, the novel depicts Jason as an abuser who Medea does not want to be around. There is no hurt pride or betrayal in Quin's Medea. She just seems defeated.

The problem with Quin's aim to explain away Medea's horrific actions is that some things in Medea's story cannot be explained away. Medea *does* send the poisoned dress and coronet, and Quin does not explain *why* Medea does this. She just does it and thinks "Surely, this was not who I was. *Not Really*" (Quin 2024, p. 254). This line rests at the core of Quin's characterization. In the novel, Quin approaches Medea with the idea that surely this (a violent, vindictive woman who would kill her children for revenge) was not who Medea was. But no matter how much a contemporary writer desires to change Medea, that is who Medea is. When Euripides adds the details that Medea kills her children, her character is forever changed. Even if the Medea in the novel means to bring back her children like she does Phaethon, she still kills them, just like she kills Glauce, Creon, Talos, and Pelias.

The novel ends with Medea sitting with Phaethon and her ten-year-old son Medus, who is fathered by Aegeus. Medea says of her son, "his smile would never know the horrors of what had become before. . .I cannot keep my eyes off him". Ten years in the future, Medea has distanced herself from the horrors of Corinth, Jason, and their children. Medea's early trauma still echoes in her head as she looks at her son: "*This child is not his grandfather*". Then, she thinks, "I am content" (Quin 2024, p. 276). The novel ends with a happy, domestic picture of Medea, one vastly different from the ending of Euripides' play where she rides away on Helios' chariot, carrying the dead bodies of her sons. However, the novel, like the play, ends with the threat of her future interactions with Theseus hanging over her head. Quin chooses to ignore that part of the myth, instead giving Medea a happy ending. Quin's approach to Medea's character, and the end of the novel, highlights the issue with contemporary society's preoccupation with retelling monster and villain stories. Just because we want them not to be a monster does not mean they are *not* a monster. While monster theory can help elucidate elements that lead to Medea's transformation that cause her to enact the horrific deeds, and Quin's feminist approach to her character can try to reframe her narrative, these approaches cannot change the core facts of Medea's story. Medea chooses to enact horrific acts of violence that include, unfortunately, killing her children. But if any of her acts are explained away, maybe she would not be as intriguing to audiences as she has been since the fifth century BCE.

It is obvious from the end of Quin's novel that trying to explain away Medea's monstrosity is nearly impossible. Even if Medea had been successful in bringing her children back from the dead, no retelling can move away from the fact that Medea kills her children. While so many aspects of Medea's story make her sympathetic, including her forced othering by the men around her, the complexity of Medea's horrific filicide firmly positions her into the role of villain. There are multiple speeches by Medea (and even Jason) in Euripides' play that make her a tragic figure, despite her murderous actions. Jason's treatment of her in the play elicits the audience's sympathy, more so a contemporary audience than one from ancient Greece because of our culture's shifted perspective on women's autonomy. While a contemporary audience cannot ignore her violent actions, we can contextualize her extreme response within the context of oppression, betrayal, and societally imposed otherness. Quin's focused attempt to explain away Medea's monstrosity removes what continues to make Medea's myth fascinating.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not Applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

Allan, William. 2002. *Euripides: Medea*. London: Duckworth.
Apollodorus. 1921. *The Library*. Translated by James George Frazer. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
Apollonius, Rhodius. 1919. *The Argonautica*. Translated by R. C. Seaton. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
Bongie, Elizabeth Bryson. 1977. Heroic Elements in the Medea of Euripides. *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974–2014)* 107: 27–56. Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/284024 (accessed on 9 December 2024). [CrossRef]
Bremmer, Jan N. 1997. Why Did Medea Kill Her Brother Apsyrtus? In *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*. Edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 83–102.
Byre, Calvin S. 1996. The Killing of Apsyrtus in Apollonius Rhodius' "Argonautica". *Phoenix* 50: 3–16. [CrossRef]
Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. 1996. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Corrigan, Kirsty. 2013. *Virgo to Virago: Medea in the Silver Age*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
Durham, Carolyn A. 1984. Medea: Hero or Heroine? *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 8: 54–59. [CrossRef]
Easterling, Patricia E. 1987. Women in Tragic Space. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 34: 15–26. Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43646826 (accessed on 9 December 2024). [CrossRef]
Ertugrul, Beyza. 2023. A Feminist Icon or a Homicidal Coward: Medea's Revenge on Patriarchy. *Criterion* 16: 83–91.
Euripides. 1963. *Medea and Other Plays*. Translated by Philip Vellacott. London: Penguin Books.
Euripides. 1993. *Medea*. Translated by Rex Warner. Mineola: Dover Publications.
Garber, Marjorie B. 2011. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York: Routledge.
Johnston, Sarah Iles. 1997. Introduction. In *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*. Edited by James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–20.
Kearney, Richard. 2002. *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
Konstantinou, Ariadne. 2012. The Lioness Imagery In Greek Tragedy. *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica* 101: 125–41. Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23347423 (accessed on 6 December 2024).
Levett, Brad. 2010. Verbal Autonomy and Verbal Self-Restraint in Euripides' Medea. *Classical Philology* 105: 54–68. [CrossRef]
Morwood, James. 2016. *The Plays of Euripides*, Vol. Second edition. London: Bloomsbury Academic. Available online: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=e900xww&AN=2298957&site=ehost-live (accessed on 6 December 2024).
Musurillo, Herbert. 1966. Euripides' Medea: A Reconsideration. *The American Journal of Philology* 87: 52–74. [CrossRef]
Ogden, Daniel. 2002. *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Source Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Page, Denys L. 1938. Introduction. In *Euripides: Medea*. Edited by D.L. Page. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Pomeroy, Sarah B. 1995. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books.
Quin, Eilish. 2024. *Medea*. New York: Atria Books.
Reilly, Ian. 2007. "Revenge is Never a Straight Line": Transgressing Heroic Boundaries: Medea and the (Fe)Male Body in "Kill Bill". *Studies in Popular Culture* 30: 27–50. Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23416196 (accessed on 9 December 2024).
Said, Edward. 2018. Orientalism. In *Classic Readings on Monster Theory: Demonstrare, Volume One*. Edited by Asa Simon Mittman and Marcus Hensel. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, pp. 57–66.
Storey, Ian C. 2014. *A Guide to Ancient Greek Drama*. Newark: John Wiley & Sons.

Swift, Laura. 2017. Medea. In *A Companion to Euripides*. Edited by Laura K. McClure. Newark: John Wiley & Sons, *ProQuest Ebook Central*. Available online: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/lander/detail.action?docID=4771484 (accessed on 6 December 2024).
Vellacott, Philip. 1963. Introduction. In *Medea and Other Plays*. London: Penguin Books.
Williams, David A. 1996. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*. Exeter: McGill-Queen's University Press.