THE MEDEA of Ovid's Metamorphoses is the result not only of interaction with the rich tradition of Greek and to a lesser extent Roman literature, but also of interplay with the author's own earlier poetry—with Medea's letter to Jason in Heroides 12 and his lost tragedy Medea.1 His treatment of Medea in Metamorphoses 7.424 represents his third and final attempt to elucidate this complex myth, and here, unlike his major Greek predecessors Euripides and Apollonius of Rhodes, who focus respectively on the mature Medea at Corinth and the young Medea at Colchis, he tells her story in a linear narrative that runs from her first meeting with Jason in Colchis to her final departure in disgrace from Athens.

In the opening essay of this volume, Graf demonstrates the disparate nature of the individual episodes of Medea's life. Ovid's treatment of Medea in the Metamorphoses exacerbates that disparity, for it is neither predictable nor uniform. For instance, while Ovid refers in only four lines to the events at Corinth, including the murder of Medea's children (7.394-97) and the material largely suppressed by Euripides in which Medea's magical powers are central: Aeson's rejuvenation (159-293) and the murder of Pelias (297-349). Furthermore, Ovid's linear narrative lacks the psychological unity that Euripides and Apollonius in book 3 of his Argumenta achieve with their focus on one time and place. Instead, in the Metamorphoses Ovid passes abruptly from a sympathetic portrayal of Medea as love-sick maiden to a tragi-comic account of her character as accomplished pharmastrina (witch) and murderess.2 The Medea of Ovid's Metamorphoses is not a coherent, rounded character. Her role as Jason's wife and the mother of his children is traditionally a powerful and complex one. But the young Medea who bears her soul at the start of Ovid's narrative becomes in her maturity a one-dimensional figure of evil that arouses neither sympathy nor revulsion.

In Metamorphoses 7 Ovid offers an implied contrast to his own procedure in Heroides 12, a poem that takes the form of a retrospective letter written by Medea to Jason on the eve of her slaughter of their children. The epistle skillfully combines the two temporal and spatial frameworks of Euripides and Apollonius—mother and girl, Corinth and Colchis. By giving Medea control over the narrative, Ovid is able to smooth over the inconsistencies in her character.3 The few hints of Medea's dreadful powers in Heroides 12 do little to detract from her self-representation as an unjustly injured wife and lover, the victim of an ungrateful Jason.4 The letter passes upon the notion of rather amusing us by her skill. Except for a momentary conversation between Jason and Medea, we hear nothing of the passionate love which is the theme of 7.9-99, of Apollonius 3 and Euripides' tragedy; here we remain in the make-believe world of marvel-evoked in 7.100.5 For a different view, see Rainey-Singer 1985:221-43. Rainey-Singer divides the myth into three stages, each marked by a change of character and moral deterioration: Medea and Jason, Medea and Aeson, Medea and Pelias. Her interpretation depends upon the hypothesis that Medea's failure to keep Jason's love explains the contrast between the youthful and the mature Medea, but the change in Ovid's Medea relates a single interpretation. Jason is virtually absent from the second half of the myth in which Medea appears as an autonomous figure of supernatural powers and moral questions remain implicit, not explicit.

Thus the discussion of Hor. 12 in Verducci 1985:66-81, who comments: "Medea's epistle to Jason is the only literary artifact preserved from antiquity in which the mature, demonic Medea of Euripides' play speaks with the same voice as the young, sympathetically engaging Medea of Apollonius Rhodes' Argonautica. What is most surprising in this diminutive act of literary history is not that no other author attempted what Ovid did, but rather that Ovid, against so many odds, succeeded. The agency for the reconciliation of the youthful and the mature Medea accomplished in Hor. 12 is memory..." (71). H. Jacobson 1978:109-23 likewise sees the poem as a unified composition, generated by the idea of presenting Medea's entire career from her point of view, but unlike Verducci, he finds the poem played by a dull uniformity. On the authenticity of Hor. 12 as an Ovidian composition see Hinds 1993, esp. 9-21, on the epistle's relationship to Met. 7.

Interestingly, H. Jacobson 1974 and Verducci 1985 have entirely different responses to Medea's letter. Jacobson sees Medea's letter as a futile attempt to cover up her true "contemptible personae" (119). While accepting that Medea does engage in some distortion, Verducci argues that "throughout Heroides 12 we sympathize with Medea, and most sympathize with her because however distorted her memory of the past, she does not seem to lie. She is not hypocritical. She is not covetous. All that she relates with suffused emotion that the narrative of past events is a secondary product of what she tells us she wishes, regrets, or suffers" (79-80).

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1 On Ovid's lost tragedy see Nikolaidis 1989:203-87.
2 Thus Anderson 1987:282 introduces the first story that clearly presents Medea to us as a witch: "The Medea we see here has very little to do with the loving-comrade girl we have watched earlier. Now she is an accomplished witch, delighting in her powers and
Medea as the abandoned woman, a sympathetic elegiac type, and not as pharmacistra.

The humanization of Medea undertaken by Apollonius and continued by Ovid in Heroides 12 does not square well, however, with the strong tradition concerning Medea’s evil supernatural powers. By representing both disparate branches of the tradition in the Metamorphoses, Ovid thus shows that the tradition as a whole is problematic, for how in fact can the love-stricken Medea who cannot control her own nature be reconciled with the Medea who controls and even alters nature with her drugs? How does the trembling maiden become the murderous? Only, it seems, by suppressing one branch of the tradition, as Ovid has his Medea do in Heroides 12. By juxtaposing in the Metamorphoses the two Medes of literary tradition, the sympathetic girl and the wicked sorceress, Ovid invites reflection on the difficulties and dangers involved in the rewriting of myth.

The dissonant structure of the full Medea story has one clear advantage, however. It removes some of the moral pressure from Medea herself. Questions concerning marriage, love, betrayal, and woman’s marginal status tend to be engulfed by the horror of Medea’s act of infanticide. Ovid’s cardboard figure of evil does not invite reflection on such questions, nor does she arouse strong emotions. But Ovid does find a way to explore the urgent moral issues that are involved in the Medea story without the preexisting biases that result from her overdetermination as a figure of evil: the foreign enchantress and the bad mother. He surrounds the myth of Medea with other myths about women and marriage, allowing him to explore in different ways questions of female power that are elicited in the Medea of Metamorphoses 7.

Recurrent themes in the myths of Procris, Philomela, and Tereus (6:624-676), Scylla and Minos (8.1-151), Procis and Cephalus (7.694-862), and Boreas and Orithyia (6.677-721) are direct, marriage, betrayal, the exercise of power through violent crime, and, connected to all these themes, the problem of a woman’s physical and psychological displacement. There are other tales about marriage in the Metamorphoses, but the four I will proceed to discuss are so closely related to the myth of Medea—by means of their structural relationship to one another, the family connections between the protagonists, and their shared thematic concerns—that they can conveniently be called a “marriage group.”

3 The recent study of Met. 2340-435 by Keith 1992 argues for the importance of the structurally and thematically related sequence as a constitutive principle of Ovidian narrative. I obviously derive here from Otto 1966 chap. 6, who groups together the tales

of Procris and Scylla with those of Byblis, Myrrha, and Ceyx and Alcyone because of their generic affiliations with tales of amatory pathos. Otto excludes the tale of Procis and Cephalus from this group because its marital context approximates it to epic; in content, however, a lament for a lost love, is a classic elegiac theme. Cf. Pind. 1959 and below; n. 39. The Ceyx and Alcyone myth (Met. 11:410-78), which Ovid regards as the “resolution” to the tales of amatory pathos, stands structurally and thematically apart from the others. Alcyone is not displaced by marriage and her husband does not betray her trust; his departure from home on a mission unrelated to his love for his wife motivates the tragedy. Conversely, Scylla’s tale does belong; although she does not marry Minos, she desires marriage with him, and her actions and thoughts are directed to that end. I thus classify this myth as a “digression,” (cf. the generic classification of Petitto 1990) but an important variant in the marriage group. Larmour 1990 argues that parts of one story in this group are woven into another because Ovid could not engineer a metamorphosis, or wished to avoid a hackneyed theme, but Ovid shows himself often capable of transforming a well-known myth into something vital and engaging. G. Jacobsen 1986 points out the similarities between the Apollo-Daphne myth and the Tereus-Procis myth. To restate these similarities, however, Ovid also demonstrates the difference between gods and humans: both are aroused by error but only the latter suffers.
in an extremely difficult situation and unable to cope with the new emotions that threaten to overwhelm her:  

concecpt interna validos Aetiae ignes et lacta dis, postquam ratione furor 

vincere non poterat. "Frastra, Medea, repugnas: 

nescio quis deus obstat" ait. 

(9-12)  

Meanwhile, Aetis's daughter harbours burning emotions; she struggled a long time to conquer her mad passion with reason, but finally said, "it is useless, Medea, to fight back:  

some god is against you." 

Medea debates these rival claims of reason and passion, ratio et furor, in her soliloquy without any clear resolution; the chaotic arrangement of lines 19-20, alliisque cupido, / meus alius suader (your desire and your mind urge you in different directions), reflects the inner bind in which she finds herself. Her debate hinges on the fact that she is in love with a foreigner who is, moreover, her father's enemy. To help Jason means to betray her country and her father. Medea makes no claim to special knowledge or powers that can help her cope with an overriding passion; rather her opening remark, frustra, Medea, repugnas (it's useless, Medea, to fight back; 11), draws attention to the theme reiterated throughout this passage: her helplessness in the face of a love that she recognizes is forbidden by duty to her father and her land. 

That same helplessness and vulnerability is projected into her imagined future with Jason. Thus, as she anticipates her fears of the dangerous voyage back to Greece, she consoles herself with the thought that her lover's embraces will drive away her fears: nempe tensi, quid amo, gremioque in Jasonis haeretem / per freta longis fuerit: nihil illum amplexa merebor  

(Of course I shall be carried far across the sea holding what I love / and clinging to Jason's lap: I shall be afraid of nothing when I clasp him to me, 66-67). This from a woman whose task it will be to keep Jason safe from terrors as great or greater than the Argonauts encountered on their voyage! Medea is sympathetically portrayed as she reveals her innermost thoughts. Her comment, odio meliora proboque, detestorius  

6 Text for the Metamorphoses is that of Anderson 1968, commentaries are those of Bömer 1976-77 and Anderson 1972. Translations are my own.  

7 At least, as Anderson 1972 points out in his note on line 11, Medea's attempt to resist her desires, fruitless though it may be, makes her far more sympathetic than the gods, who show no moral compunction when they fall in love.  

separi! I see and approve the better course, / I follow the worse, 20-21), echoes Euripides' Medea, who at lines 1078-79 of the Greek play claims that she recognizes the rational course, but her anger will not let her take it. Euripides makes Medea speak these words before she kills her children; her failure to do what she clearly sees is reasonable and right is therefore appalling. But the transferal of these words to the youthful, unrested Medea makes them disarming, a sign of her love rather than her barbarism. Her irrational passion drives her to help, not to harm. 

Medea emerges in the first part of Metamorphoses 7 not as a being with supernatural powers that can control the universe, but as a struggling young girl who knows what is "right" but is impelled by her passion to act otherwise. In speaking to herself, Medea is also speaking directly to her readers, who are thus invited to engage in her personal dilemma. 

In keeping with Medea's sympathetic portrayal as an innocent and vulnerable young woman, her powers of witchcraft are not mentioned in her soliloquy. Medea is a victim of passion, not the controller of powerful forces. When Medea sees Jason in a seemingly unplanned encounter in Hecate's grove, we are made to see how ironically slender are the inner claims of pietaque pudique (filial duty and modesty, 72) when confronted with a powerful love. Her moral collapse is swiftly conveyed in the appropriate imagery of fire: et iam fortis erat, palusque resederat arder, / cum videt Asonisidn, extinctaque flamma relaxiit  

(And now she was resolute, and the fire of her passion, beaten down, had sunk low, but when she sees Jason, the flame that had been extinguished flared anew, 76-77). Fire, the very element over which Medea will exercise control as she protects Jason from the fire-breathing bulls, is here applied to Medea's psychological state, over which she clearly has no control as she switches suddenly from propriety to passion. 

In the Argonautica, Medea's representation as love-stricken young girl is combined with her superior knowledge of magic; for at her meeting place with Jason, Medea prescribes elaborate magical rituals for him to perform prior to his encounter with the brazen bulls (3.1029-51). In the Metamorphoses Ovid compresses the giving of the important
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(134-38).16 The climax to the quest for the Girden Fleece—the slaying of the dragon and the return voyage to Greece—is passed over in one long sentence (152-58), a sign that love and the exploration of feelings are more important in this narrative than actions and magical powers.

The first half of the Medea story in Metamorphoses 7 does not prepare us for the following parts of the narrative, in which Medea, now Jason's expatriate wife, appears as an accomplished witch and scant attention is paid to her feelings or to motives for her deeds. This second section falls into four episodes: the myth of Aeson's rejuvenation (159-293), the myth of Pallas' murder (297-351), Medea's journey to Corinth and Athens (351-403), and the debacle with Theseus (404-34).

Medea the Witch

The first and longest of these episodes marks an immediate contrast to what has gone before. While admittedly a good deed, the rejuvenation of Aeson is presented in a way that emphasizes Medea's extraordinary powers and her remoteness from ordinary humans. Her reply to Jason's request that she give some of his life span to his father reveals little emotion for her spouse, who was the focus of her previous speeches:

"quod" inquit
"excidit oce tus, conius, w sailor" ergo ego cuquam
posse haec videor spectum traniscribere vestra?
ne sine hac Hecate, nec tuo petit acciprum sed isto,
quod petis, experiar maus dare munus, Jason.
arte mei seors longum temptabimus servum,
non annis renovare tuis, modo diva triformis
adiviut et pressus ingentibus adsum atus." (171-78)

"What criminal words have fallen from your lips, husband?" she said. "Do I appear to have the power to transfer to anyone the span of your life? Hecate would not allow this; besides, you do not make a reasonable request. But I shall try to give a greater gift than you seek, Jason. We shall try to renew your father-in-law's long life.

There is nothing spine-chilling or horrific about Medea's recourse to a supplementary spell and secret arts (137-38). Vague and unspecified, her magical arts here function much as the superstition-muttering of a prayer in moments of crisis.

16 Cf. Buxton 1992:238, who sees this speech as demonstrating Medea's 'mis-guided love.' But Medea says nothing of such here.

17 Cf. Met. 14.405 where, in a rather pat piece stereotyping the witch's craft, Clio (Medea's aunt) summons Hecate (longos...\(\text{ululatibus}\) with lengthy howlings).

Medea speaks for the first time of her art (176) and of her close relationship through magic with Hecate, here called "triple-formed" (177). Her refusal to take away years from Jason's life span seems not to be motivated by love. 18 Having abandoned her own father, she is moved first by Jason's filial piety (169-70). Her reply to him elaborates a second motive, her ambition as witch: she desires to try something even greater, manus...manus (175). Medea wants to test her powers as witch. She is like a heart surgeon who refuses to do a transplant but insists upon the impossible, the rejuvenation of the heart itself.

In this narrative, speech is directed toward the proposal or description of magical ritual, not toward the individualization of feelings. Medea's longest speech here is a ritualistic prayer to various deities to help her with her magical spells (192-219). Attention is focused not upon Medea's thoughts but upon her incantatory words and her superhuman actions. Here, where we see Medea for the first time practicing her supernatural craft, Ovid plays up her new appearance as a witch.

The previous fearful maiden now shows no fear of the dark and silent woods, and she reveals her distance from the world of ordinary mortals by filling the nocturnal silences with ritualistic triplo howlings, \(\text{termine ultratibus}\) (190). Ovid goes into tremendous detail—112 lines in all—in describing the magical rituals involved in Aeson's rejuvenation (179-287). The excess of detail is part of the humor of Ovid's portrayal of Medea as witch. When he comes at last to her cauldron (264-84) and begins to iterimize at length its exotic and horrible ingredients—foreign vegetables, snake skins, deer's liver, and crow's head among them—he indicates that his patience is exhausted with the length and oddity of the list by mockingly concluding that she added a thousand other nameless items (275). This hyperbole establishes his segregation as narrator from Medea. Whereas he previously provided close insight into Medea's feelings, he now preserves an ironic distance tinged with humor. He plays here with the idea of the witch and gives us no further insight into Medea as a person. Through his focus on externals in this second part of the narrative, Ovid pays scant attention to the motives for Medea's
deeds and permits no further glimpses into her inner thoughts. His Medea has become remote and fantastic.

Apart from the speech with which the myth of Aeson’s rejuvenation opens, Medea has no further conversation or interaction with Jason. Although traditionally the mature Medea’s relationship with Jason is of prime importance, in Metamorphoses 7 her relationship with him and his family members disappears from the story. Apart from the brief reference to the infanticide at Corinth (394–97), we hear nothing further of Medea the wife and nothing at all of Medea the mother; she appears exclusively as a witch. Jason plays a very minor role in the entire second part. His speech requesting new life for Aeson is his only one (164–68), and thereafter he drops out of the narrative. Thus in the following story of the murder of Pelias (297–351), Ovid breaks with precedent by excluding Jason from any involvement in the deed. Although other sources, including Heroides 12, insist that in the murder of Pelias Medea was merely the instrument of Jason’s desire for vengeance, no motivation is provided in the Metamorphoses for Medea’s masterminding of Pelias’ murder beyond the weak transitional disclaimer with which Ovid crosses from the story of rejuvenation to that of Pelias’ murder, nescia consent (her purpose was to prevent any lack of treachery, 297). Here then, since Jason plays no part in setting the crime in motion, Medea seemingly acts alone purely for malice’s sake. She is detached from the family context that in Euripides’ Medea plays a crucial role in articulating her moral dilemma.

Medea was moved by Jason’s piety toward Aeson and the thought of her filial devotion, but no such thoughts influence her contrivance of the murder of Pelias by his daughters. Although she is called Aetria for the second time in Metamorphoses 7 (326), a reminder of her disobedience to her father in a story in which she persuades others to violate their filial bonds, the sensitivity with which the question of a daughter’s duty is handled in the first part of the Medea myth is not found here. As Frecciu has pointed out, much of the story focuses on the gullibility of the th. The rejuvenated Aeson’s feelings are perfectly described without reference to feelings of gratitude for Medea or indeed to her emotions (293-94).

The question of filial piety devolves upon them, not upon the one-dimensional Medea, and because of their gnawing comic folly in trusting Medea, the story lacks a tragic dimension and moral complexity. The narrator’s distance from Medea in this act of evil is articulated in the choice of epithets he applies to her. Here for the first time he calls her the “Colchian” (296, 301, 331, 340). The repeated use of this epithet serves to associate Medea with the foreign and outlandish, to distance her from common human experience as she performs her act of malice. Here too for the first time she is called by a clear term of reproach, renifex, “poisoner” (316). The choice of epithets for Medea in the myth of Pelias again serves to remove the reader from any close identification with her. She appears as a foreign barbarian, dissociated from any cultural or familial ties with Greece.

As a witch Medea has clearly undergone a form of metamorphosis. Like many of the metamorphosed characters in Ovid’s Metamorphoses she has lost her human characteristics, but unlike them she has retained her human form. Her flights in her chariot drawn by winged serpents assimilate her to the divine rather than the human world. Like Ovidian divinities, she operates by a different code of behavior from other human beings. Her opening soliloquy debating the rival claims of passion and reason calls upon the reader to judge her in moral terms. But we cannot do so in the second half of the myth, for she increasingly appears as airborn, a sign of her literal and metaphorical removal from another plane of existence. Euripides’ Medea ends with Medea’s removal from the scene of tragedy by an airborne chariot, which appears in the play for the first time as a device providing closure. The appearance of her chariot in Ovid’s narrative of Aeson’s rejuvenation (233–42) is early in the tale, and distances Medea physically and psychologically from the human world with its moral frames of reference. Her psychological metamorphosis is accompanied by her physical removal from the world of land-bound daughters of Pelias, not on the moral failings of Medea.21 The question of filial piety devolves upon them, not upon the one-dimensional Medea, and because of their gnawing comic folly in trusting Medea, the story lacks a tragic dimension and moral complexity. The narrator’s distance from Medea in this act of evil is articulated in the choice of epithets he applies to her. Here for the first time he calls her the “Colchian” (296, 301, 331, 340). The repeated use of this epithet serves to associate Medea with the foreign and outlandish, to distance her from common human experience as she performs her act of malice. Here too for the first time she is called by a clear term of reproach, renifex, “poisoner” (316). The choice of epithets for Medea in the myth of Pelias again serves to remove the reader from any close identification with her. She appears as a foreign barbarian, dissociated from any cultural or familial ties with Greece.

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21 Frecciu 1996:77–74 centers much of his discussion of the myth on the daughters of Pelias rather than on Medea. For him, the story lacks a deep sense of tragedy, for the daughters are not individualized. Instead, the story has a moral that is directed at them, “men n’est si dangereux qu’un ignorant ami” (nothing is as dangerous as an ignorant friend, 74).

22 The first reference occurs in the last line of the brief transitional episode, the rewarding of Bacchus’ nurses (294–96), that articulates the two contrasting tales of Aeson and Medea.

23 The term renifex is used, e.g., by Hyppolyte at Her. 6.19 to describe (and condemn) Medea.
Thus 286. of metamorphosis and Schubert interesting trace each the planation at all given the hero other that in the other of Medea's poisoning no two perspectives, involveditem of the next Medea what the climax of the Medea myth be the part of Medea's girl once fearful the girl once fearful the first_braved sword drenched with children's poisons upon the sea to Greece is now transformed into a witch fearlessly crisscrossing the Mediterranean world. The reversal of the expected order of the journey points to the reversal of Medea's role from vulnerable girl to fearless adventurer. The emphasis in the journey, however, falls not upon Medea but upon the narratives embedded in the peripatetic frame. Ovid's version moves outwards from almost exclusive focus upon Medea and her feelings to a diffuse set of stories in which Medea is chiefly important as an observer, while her infamous crimes are only cursorily described.36

By splitting the Medea of the Metamorphoses into two incompatible types, Ovid suggests the difficulties and inconsistencies involved in the rewriting of tradition. The complex workings of Medea's psyche are replaced by her complex ritualistic activities and journeys. The focus shifts dramatically from internal to external events. The themes of filial and conjugal obligations that are significantly raised in the first part of the myth are not pursued in the second half, where there is virtual silence on Medea's role as wife and mother. We are invited to view Medea from two dramatically opposed perspectives, the first closely involved with her character, the other far removed. Anderson notes that in Ovid's

36 Thus Bömer 1976–77a 286.

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humans. In the second half of the myth, Medea is no longer presented within the same ethical framework as at the beginning.

One-dimensional characters cannot sustain a reader's interest for long. Not surprisingly, Medea as witch becomes of decreasing import her children and attempted killing of her stepson—antiquarian interests are instead preeminent and preclude attention to the thoughts, the motives, and the troubled desires that intimately concern Medea in the myth's first half.

The emphasis upon a fantastic journey at the end of the myth rather than at the beginning marks the disruption of the traditional order of the tale and is in keeping with Medea's own displacement. She has in a sense appropriated the Argonauts' role, but at the wrong time and the wrong place in the story. The journey of the Argonauts was a traditional and important precursor to the myth of Medea's love for Jason, but at the start of book 7 Ovid, intent on pursuing Medea's feelings, rather pointedly passes over their fabulous adventures with the brief words nuncque persessi (having endured many things, 5). In the second part of Ovid's treatment of the myth, Medea herself undertakes a journey to Colchis, outlandish places. The girl once fearful of traveling across the sea to Greece is now transformed into a witch fearlessly crisscrossing the Mediterranean world. The reversal of the expected order of the journey points to the reversal of Medea's role from vulnerable girl to fearless adventurer. The emphasis in the journey, however, falls not upon Medea but upon the narratives embedded in the peripatetic frame. Ovid's version moves outwards from almost exclusive focus upon Medea and her feelings to a diffuse set of stories in which Medea is chiefly important as an observer, while her infamous crimes are only cursorily described.36

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36 Schubert 1989 makes an interesting attempt to trace links between each of the stories of metamorphosis and that of Medea and Jason.
26 Anderson 1963.

Metamorphoses a person’s actual physical change is usually preceded by a psychological transformation, often due to the effects of love. But Ovid does not explain the reason for Medea’s transformation into a sorceress and semi-divine, even though a metamorphosis that occurs well before the drastic events at Corinth. Only the disjunctive narrative mirrors the physical and psychic displacement of Medea herself. Absent from the second half of Ovid’s myth of Medea are the suffering and personal tragedy that mark the life of the Medea who is presented as primarily wife and mother. Ovid’s Medea is a figure of supernatural power for whom conjugal and maternal obligations are minimal. She successfully escapes from her evil deeds. Thus the story of Medea in Metamorphoses 7 does not come to a definite conclusion.

Rath., Medea disappears abruptly from the text as she flees from execution and Athens in one line (424), and the focus of the narrative subsequently shifts to events in that city.

The open-ended nature of Medea’s story invites further reflection on issues that are elided or suppressed in Ovid’s version. As a woman with supernatural powers, Medea is exceptional in her avoidance of physical punishment. Although ultimately she is excluded from human society, the Medea of Metamorphoses 7 eludes human judgment, for she is removed from the complex moral issues that traditionally sustain her story. Far different is the case for the women whose stories surround hers in books 6, 7, and 8. As mere mortals, their assertion of power inevitably leads to personal disaster and loss of identity. The tales that surround the myth of Medea examine the “missing link” in the Medea story, namely the intricate motivating factors that push a woman to violent crime and personal destruction.

Prokne

The first of these interrelated stories is the myth of Prokne, Philomela, and Tereus (6.424-676). Like Medea, Prokne is guilty of infanticide. This crime, which is so cursorily treated in Metamorphoses 7, forms the climax of Prokne’s story. Here in book 6 Ovid explores at length the complex factors that drive to such an extraordinary act a woman who, unlike Medea, possesses no extraordinary powers and has no criminal background. At issue are Prokne’s marriage to a foreigner and his

betrayal of her conjugal trust. Like Medea, Prokne marries a foreigner, the Thracian Tereus, but whereas Medea moves from a barbarian land to civilized Greece, Prokne moves from civilized Greece to a barbarian land. The results of her displacement, however, are equally disastrous. Ironically, although her marriage, unlike Medea’s, is arranged by an approving father (425-28), paternal wisdom and approval do not lead to a happier conclusion.

Like Jason, Tereus betrays his wife for another woman. But he does so in an apparently irredeemable way: Philomela, the woman in question, is his sister-in-law; he rapes her; he mutilates her; he imprisons her in the woods; he then lies to his wife, saying that Philomela died on the voyage. Ovid conveys Tereus early on in the narrative, with the exclamation, pro superi, quantum mortalia petora caecae/mocis habitu! (gods above, how much darkness human hearts contain; 472-73), and Tereus is labeled impious (482) for his violation of the kinship bonds requiring that he honor his father-in-law and sister-in-law as well as his wife. Tereus betrays not only the kinship bonds that should have made rape of his sister-in-law taboo but also the fundamental trust between husband and wife. The breaking of such trust is an important issue in the myth of Medea that Ovid virtually ignores; here in the myth of Prokne he explores its disastrous consequences.

At first justice seems to be all on Prokne’s side, for Tereus is given no excuse for his actions. Unlike Medea, who marries Jason with blood on her hands and betrayal on her conscience, Prokne starts her life with Tereus unblemished. But when Tereus violates the kinship ties that forge a link between Prokne’s new home and her old, Prokne is in a sense displaced. Social categories are confused, as the raped Philomela recognizes when she accuses Tereus of upsetting their fixed family relations with one another: amnia turbasti (you have messed everything up, 537). With the fabric of her marriage rent asunder, Prokne acts out her displacement in the most terrible fashion. A case of obvious right and wrong, with the husband irredeutabty the guilty party, becomes a very different matter with Prokne’s slaying of her own child.

Unlike Euripides’ Medea, Prokne shows little compunction about using her son as the instrument of her vengeance. Ovid merely touches on Prokne’s dilemma between love for her son and love for her sister

27 See the discussion of Joplin 1984, which explores the dynamic between civilized and barbarian in the myth. By marrying Prokne, the barbarian Tereus has successfully “invaded” Athens and appropriated the princess for himself (31-32).
in a short speech in which Proene debates their rival claims (631–35). The collapsing of the social categories that stabilize marriage is demonstrated in her rejection of her maternal previous (629) for a pervasively redefined concept of conjugal duty: acies est pietas in coniuge Terei (for Tereus’ wife, crime is a duty, 635). Conjugal duty here means killing one’s offspring, an exercise of female power that defies the normative nurturing roles of wife and mother. Proene’s paradoxical statement bluntly presents a moral dilemma to which there are no easy answers. The reciprocal obligations of conjugal pietas demand that a crime answer her husband’s crime. But Proene the wronged wife thus becomes guilty of dreadful impiety.

Like Ovid’s Medea, Proene undergoes a drastic metamorphosis of character. The sweet dutiful wife becomes the implacable murderess of her child. But we are at least given an explanation for Proene’s empowerment in terms of Tereus’ destruction of the marital and familial bonds that traditionally constrain her. On learning of her husband’s betrayal Proene drags the lamb of the start of the myth, blandita soro (440), becomes a wild, barbaric woman, terribilis Proene (595). She is likened first to a Bacchante (590–600) and then to a tigress as she drags her own son to death: nec mora, traxit Ibyn, et velati Gangeticæ corae/facientem fenum per silvas tigris opesae (immediately she dragged Iys away, like a tigress by the Ganges dragging / through the imper­etable woods an unwounded fawn, 636–37). The simile is resonant of Tereus’ rape of Philomela, in which he is described as a wolf (520–26) dragging to the dark woods a lamb or dove (527–30), a gentle, vulner­able young creature like the fawn to which Iys is now compared.21 The comparison of Proene to a wild beast implicates Tereus in his wife’s metamorphosis. Once the civilized accord and trust of her marriage is destroyed, she takes on a man’s role and becomes like the barbarian Tereus in her vengeance. Indeed she surpasses Tereus in her impious cruelty, for whereas he mutilates his sister-in-law, she kills her own son. Moreover, whereas he cuts out Philomela’s tongue, a savage enough act, Proene dismembers her son’s body, cooks it, and serves it up to Tereus as a meal in a ghastly inversion of her widely role. In this horrific meal, Tereus’ confusion of social categories reaches its tragic peak. Proene’s brutalization of her husband suggests that she is stiffening in a zone with a criminal record. The moral ambiguities of her infanticide are instead explored in consistently human terms.

21 Anderson 1972 ad 667 points out that the versions of Apollodorus and Hyginus make the metamorphosis of the women the result of the gods’ intervention. Ovid, in contrast, by omitting the gods and by making the crimes they have committed, suggests there is no escape here. Joplin 1984-85 takes this approach further and sees the metamorphosis as insidiously meaning no further change: “in the final tableau all movement is frozen. Tereus will never catch the sisters, but neither will the women ever cease their flight. In such stasis, both order and conflict are preserved, but there is no hope of change.”
Bomer
Tarpeia
the
On
pp.
in
Graf
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similarity
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words
of
resonances
32
1990:138-41
mono-
psychological
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Ovid's
part
to
Ovid's
myth
and
crises,
for
she
claims
that
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is
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Minos
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The
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THE
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OVID'S
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197

Scylla's
calls
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Minos
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Scylla's
betrayal
of
her
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(8.1-151)
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Scylla's
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As
in
the
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the
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Initially
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This
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Through
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Like
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from a Tarpeia to an Ariadne, herself the daughter of Minos, whose story of abandonment directly follows Scylla's (8.169-82). When Scylla addresses Minos directly so he wills away from her, we are invited to view her with some sympathy. She is as frighteningly isolated as if, like Ariadne, she were abandoned on a desert island. She has nowhere to go to, nobody to turn to. Her homeland hates her; the neighboring lands fear her example (113-18). She is cast out, an orphan of the world, expungens orbas/terrarum (117-18). She reveals at last a moral sensibility, for she openly admits her guilt and expresses repentance for her crime (125-30). Like Ariadne's, Scylla's speech is a mixture of special pleading and abuse. Indeed, several of Scylla's complaints against Minos—her abandonment by her lover, her social ostracism and geographical isolation, her ingratitude and inhumanity—are found in Heroides 10, the letter of Ariadne written supposedly as Theseus speeds away from the shore of Naxos. However, Scylla emphasizes to a greater extent her beloved's obligation to her. In this important regard she comes closer to the Medea of Heroides 12, whose letter, a litany of reminders to Jason that his successes are due to her, leads to the expected conclusion that he should not abandon her. Scylla calls herself meritorum auctor, the agent of Minos' success (108), for, in her view, he owes his military conquest of Megara to her. He has exploited her action while expressing the utmost distaste for it. We are thus offered a different, more sympathetic perspective on Scylla when she appears in the role of abandoned heroine, who, through the speech that Ovid gives her, vents her feelings about Minos' departure without her (108-42).

Of course, like the deserted heroines' complaints in the Heroides, Scylla's words are not to be accepted uncritically. Her speech serves to show that her story is not a simple one of right and wrong, however. Ovid prepares the way for the substance of Scylla's complaints by hinting at the moral ambiguity of Minos' own position. Refusing the links of...
up to moral uncertainties a story of a rather conventional type, the girl who
betrayed her country for love. Like Medea, Scylla is both the betrayer of her
father and the betrayed. We find here the same slippage of moral
categories as in the myth of Procne. Ovid thus adds complexity to the
theme of betrayal by woman and by man. Although Scylla betrays her
father, moral perference is by no means all on the side of Minos, who
canvases takes advantage of her betrayal. In Ovid’s hands the theme of
betrayal, like that of infanticide in Metamorphoses 6, resists moral
absolutes.

Lacking special powers and status, Scylla is a more open and poten-
tially a more sympathetic vehicle than Medea for the exploration of
the moral implications of betrayal. Presented at the end as a victim of
her passion and malvolé rather than as a mere traitor, she is a forceful
example of the woman condemned and ostracized for an impious crime
for which society allows no extenuating circumstances. Her metamor-
phosis into a bird is a form of solution to her tragic displacement—at the
expense of her human identity. Like Procne she ends her life as a bird,
hunted by a vengeful male relative, for her father is also transformed
into a bird, the predatory sea eagle (145–47). Scylla’s one powerful act
conduces her to both perpetual victimization and perpetual guilt, for
she becomes a bird that bears its name from the cutting of the fatal
lock (150–51). Scylla is suspended in an endless cycle of pursuit and
flight, without hope of forgiveness from her father or of respite. The
marginализation of the woman who disobeys social norms and attempts
to seize power for herself is here displayed in an extreme and unre-
solved form, with the cycle of paternal vengeance and filial rejection
endlessly repeated.39

Procris

On the surface, the story of Procris and Cephalus, which concludes
book 7, is of a very different type from the three I have discussed thus far.38
The story is told from the male perspective, and it is, to a man, not a
woman, who has lost his object of desire.35 In addition, this story tells of
a marriage that results from a father’s arrangement and the mutual love
of a couple, as the narrator Cephalus is at pains to say: *pater hanc mili
iunxit Erechtiax, hanc mili iunxit amor* (her father Erechtia united her
with me, love united her with me: 697–98). For once, the two
necessary ingredients for a marriage come together. Scylla and Medea
had amor but not the father’s consent; Procne had the father’s consent
but we hear nothing of amor.36

Like the marriages of Medea and Procne, however, the marriage of
Procris and Cephalus is severely tested when Cephalus is abducted
by the dawn goddess Aurora shortly after the wedding (700–713).37
Different versions of this story tell of a series of complications that
result from this abduction, among them Procris’ own sexual liaisons.38
In his account of his married life, Cephalus, presumably respectful of
his royal audience and protective of his wife’s memory, tells only what
modesty permits (687) and emphasizes his wife’s chastity (734–36).
The presence of Procris in the text is carefully controlled by Cephalus’ words,
through which she appears as the honorable object of his desire, not as
the angry, sexually independent woman portrayed by other writers.

Cephalus’ self-representation in his narrative is likewise carefully
controlled. Although he betrayed Procris with Aurora, he argues that
throughout his enforced abduction he remained faithful to Procris in
his heart: *Procris inanabam/ pectoris Procris erat, Procris mili semper in ore*
(I stayed in love with Procris: 707–8). Unlike the marriage of Jason and Medea,
her with me, I always loved Procris: 707–8). Unlike the marriage of Jason and Medea,
whose right to the marriage of Procris and Cephalus survives its first betrayal, the first
assault upon the necessary trust between man and wife, for the couple
are eventually reconciled. This first testing of their trust, however,
leads to a second testing that proves fatal to Procris. After hunting
in the woods, Cephalus calls in a sensually evocative manner upon
a breeze, *aure,* to visit him. Procris’ suspicions are aroused by the
name *aure,* so resonant of Aurora. Like the other women discussed by
Ovid in the “marriage tales,” she decides to act for herself and find
out the truth of her suspicions by spying upon him in the woods. But

37 Anderson 1963:15 shows how Scylla’s metamorphosis as oris, literally “the cutting
bird,” is psychologically related to her desires as lover to plunge down into the Cercet
camp (39–40) and to glide or wings to Minos to冷冷se her as aor (51–52). “When her
metamorphosis takes place, then, her bird-shape commemorates her love and the crime
to which it led (196–99).”

38 Otto 1966:176ff. discusses the story and its departure from Hellenistic sources.
Anderson 1990 discusses its relationship to the version in Am. Am. 3:60ff.

39 Procris 1993:14. Cephalus as narrator to the elegiac love poets, particularly
Proserpina and Catullus in his description of Procris and Cephalus. See also Antoninus
Liberinus in Fl. Lyd. 89. Athena 1972adi Met. 7:67.

40 According to Apollo. 3:15:1, Procris -svives an independence comparable to
Medea’s through her success at sexually ensnaring a royal male and concocting a magical
potion, in this case a beneficial one used to cure Minos of ejaculating deadly serpents.
See also Antonius Liberalis Met. 41; Hylg. 7th 89; Anderson 1972adi Met. 7:67.

41 Ovid 1993:14. In Procris the narrator chooses tene to narrate the story, sitting upon
the pine tree’s trunk, he describes the beauty of his beloved, the shipwreck of
Cephalus, and the subsequent incident. See also Antonius Liberalis Met. 41; Hylg. 7th
89; Anderson 1972adi Met. 7:67.
Aegina for military help against his enemy, King Minos. According to Apollodorus and Antoninus Liberalis, Minos was one of Procris' lovers in Cephalus' absence.41 Ahl has persuasively argued that Ovid's Cephalus cannily suppresses the salacious details about his wife's relationship with Minos because of his diplomatic need to recur from his audience military help against Minos.42 If so, Cephalus' story is shaped not just by his heartbeat and feelings for Procris but by his political needs. While offering a pessimistic view of the course of true love, his story forms a contrast with the surrounding "marriage tales," for Cephalus does not undergo any metamorphosis through sorrow for his wife. His grief remains a private matter that does not impinge upon the public realm, and he is not ostracized for killing his wife. By living on to tell his story and by thus assuming the role of narrator, Cephalus stands in sharp contrast to the marginalized, lovemongers whose independent feelings or actions redound disastrously upon them. Cephalus' violent act has caused him sorrow but has in no way destroyed him. Cephalus continues to live and to thrive after Procris' death; he is not in any way displaced. The difference between his fate as injured lover and that of Procris, Medea, Scylla, and his own wife Procris emphasizes the tragic difference between men and women not only in social standing but also in the experience of love.

**Orythia**

The final tale of this group that I wish to examine, that of Boreas and Orythia (6.675–721), likewise describes the experience of love and

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41. Cf. n. 36 above.
42. See Ahl 1985:204–11. Such a view modifies that of Picioiu 1959, who sees Cephalus as a sufferer in love like Procris.
43. Ars Am.: 1.269–300.
courtship largely from a male perspective. Although generally regarded as a lighthearted appendix to the myth of Procooe, Philomela, and Tereus, it takes a comically subservient look at the major themes that are concentrated in the "marriage tales": the power of the father, the rituals of courtship, conjugal trust, and female victimization. We are invited to read the myth of Boreas and Orythia in relation to the other marriage tales in books 6, 7, and 8 through the explicit connections Ovid makes between this story and that of Procooe and Cephalus as well as that of Procooe. Orythia's father succeeded Procooe's father to the throne (6.675-80); Orythia's sister is Proclos, as we are reminded in both tales (6.681-83, 7.694-97). The marriages of the two sisters, however, run an entirely different course from the start. Cephalus' marriage has the approval of Procoee's father; but fearing all foreign suitors after Procooe's tragic experience, he rejects Boresas' suit for Orythia. The god therefore forcefully abducts Orythia, but instead of abandoning her, as happens with most divine rapes, he makes her wife and mother, consorts and geneesis (6.711-12). The formality of these terms suggests the legality of their arrangement. Together Boresas and Orythia raise two fine sons who become a credit to their parents as Argonautic heroes. Unlike IJys, Procooe and Tereus' son, these children grow into manhood. We are told, moreover, that they resemble both parents (713), a crucial point, for it is IJys' too close resemblance of his father that impels Procooe to murder him (621-22). This then is the only marriage in this cluster of tales that takes a normative course, and yet it does so by dispensing with all the civilized formalities involved in cementing male and female relationships.

Like Cephalus, the male god Boresas is basically in charge of his own story and offers his own perspective on the rituals of courtship. Unlike most of the other gods of Ovid's mythical world, Boresas has attempted to observe the formal etiquette of courtship; with eloquent pleas he has approached the father, not just the girl, before finally resorting to rape. Ovid gives Boresas a long speech in which the god justifies his resort to violence on the grounds that his prayers to Orythia's father and blandishments have gone unheeded (6.687-701).4h His problem lies not with Orythia, whose opinion is never made known and who apparently is never consulted, but rather with Orythia's father, who categorically...

4h See Anderson 1972,237 on the sources and Ovid's treatment of this tale.
4h Anderson 1972,260-70 for comments on the rhetorical skill and wit of Boresas' speech, which he delivers in the role of excursus writer. Although he claims his proper sphere is that of expository speech, he is comically made very articulate here.

T E M E T A M O R P H O S I S O F O V I D ' S M E D E A

Tears and rejects all Northerners (602). Boeras' speech is a sort of comic paralipomenon in which Boresas plays the role of exclamatory savior, the excluded lover. But unlike the unhappy lover of elegiac poetry, Boeresa has the divine power to achieve his goal. The god decides to cut through the red tape of courtship and marriage proposals; he will simply make Erechtheus his father-in-law, not beg him to be one (700-701). His defiance of cultural conventions at the start of the relationship, rather than at its end, leads surprisingly in this case to a stable marriage.

The father's role is here undercut. In the other stories I have considered, the father is a source of familiar if ineffective values, displaced from which the female suffers tragically. Aetes and Niuss seemingly know nothing of their daughters' illicit passions; Orythia's father alone tries actively to oppose the foreign suitor. Nonetheless, he too fails to prevent his daughter marrying a man not of his choosing. Yet in this case his failure ironically results in the children that a father naturally hopes for in a daughter's marriage. The civil protocol of oaths and promises by which fathers hope to sanctify marriage and protect their daughters is here rejected in favor of violent action—with socially normative results! Boresa, in his role of Northern Jason, proves the father's opposition not only ineffective but misguided. He subverts the rituals of courtship, oaths, promises, and patriarchal power that are the usual substance of the institution of marriage. In his comically inflated speech Boeresa spells out here what the other tales imply: passion and force rule in human affairs as in divine ones. He gives humorous voice to what the other myths have shown, the fragility of cultural conventions in the face of the unpredictability of human experience and the strength of human passion. Carefully constructed social institutions and hierarchies are all subject to flux and metamorphosis.

Boresas succeeds, however, not just because Orythia's father is ineffective but because he does not have a Medea to oppose him. Indeed, Orythia is the antitype of Medea. Unlike Medea, Scylla, Prococce, and Procris, she has no voice in this story and takes no independent action. Her passivity ensures her survival, whereas the women who protest male power are socially ostracized, destroyed, or metamorphosed. If power in a woman is generally dangerous and destructive, then it is easy to see why Orythia survives. She does not threaten or subvert male authority, as do Procoee, Medea, and Scylla. From the point of view of Boeras, she is the perfect wife—a silent woman.

Seen in contrast to Orythia, Medea, whose myth directly follows, appears highly vocal. Her inner debate in the first half of the myth...
is replaced in the second half by her incantatory spells, her carminis. Indeed, Medea's incantatory spells serve as the female counterpart of Boreas' physical power. The special powers Boreas gains through force, *vir tristis nubila pello, *ei fera concutitio nudisque robora nerto (by force I drive away the storm clouds; by force I whip up the seas and overturn/ knot clouds; 6.690–91), are achieved by Medea through her verbal charms: *stantia concutito contus fervit, nubila pello/nubilasse induco (I whip up the calm seas, I drive away the clouds; and I embroil the sky with clouds; 7.200–201). Her incantation corresponds to his physical force in its power to uproar/oaks (6.691, 7.204–5) and to agitate the spirits of the dead, the manio (6.699, 7.206). Medea reveals speech as the characteristic source of female power. Yet, as carminis her incantations are connected with poetry, which in the ancient world is primarily a male activity. The female appropriation of carminis is threatening to social order. Thus whereas Boreas' power secures him domestic harmony, Medea's power sets her apart from human society and relationships. 44 Like the story of Procris and Cephalus, the story of Boreas and Creylla illustrates the difference between the male and female experience of love and power.

In the other stories of the "marriage group," too, speech is an important but dangerous aspect of female power. Tereus fears Philomela's speech so he tips out her tongue. She continues to express herself verbally only by weaving her tale into a tapestry that will inflame her sister Procoe to madness. This, like Medea's spells, is called a *carmen (6.582), and Procoe unrolls the horrific story (erudit), like an ancient scroll. Words are also deceptive. Scylla and Medea both talk themselves into pursuing their mad passion; Procris tragically misunderstands the song

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44 Wise 1982:21 argues that "the relation of language to the magician's powers of metamorphosis corrects Medea's incantations with poetic activity." As Ovid emphasizes the destructive aspects of Medea's transforming, magical powers, he shows his awareness of the destructive potential of both types of verse. See O'Higgins in this volume, pp. 105-28, on Medea's function as a kind of Muse in Pindar Pyh. 4. O'Higgins notes that our perspective on Pindar's Medea alters in the course of the poem. But unlike in the Metamorphoses. Medea is presented first as a divinely inspired singer and subsequently as a human and fallible victim of Jason's and Aphrodite's superior arts. 45 Joplin 1984:53, who interprets Philomela's weavmg as a sign of female resistance to male attempts at silencing woman's voice, asks us to celebrate "not Philomela the victim or Philomela waving her bloody head at Tereus" but rather the woman who in the act of weaving uncovers her voice's potential "to transform revenge (violence) into resistance (speech)." Yet unfortunately what we remember in this story is the effect of that weaving upon Procoe and its incitement to violence, not peace. Cf. the remarks of Joplin, n. 30 above.

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The Fractured Woman

In Ovid's rewriting of the myth of Medea, the inconsistencies between the figure of Medea as girl and as which are particularly sharp. Indeed, Ovid plays up the difference between the two figures. Who then is Medea? Ovid offers us not one figure but refracted images that vary according to the different perspectives from which the reader is invited to survey them. Although the cause for Medea's sudden change is nowhere developed, the stories of Procoe, Procris, and Scylla provide us with different standpts from which we can recognize how complex are the motivations and consequences involved in this power struggles between men and women. Medea, Procoe, Procris and Scylla all provide broken, refracted images of one complex verb: the displaced woman who suffers because of the loss or lack of her lover's affection and trust and who actively seeks redress. But only Medea is removed from human experience through divine and magical connections. In the stories that surround the Medea myth Ovid investigates in more consistently human terms the social and moral ambiguities that involve the love-torn woman who chooses to speak and act independently. Ovid then stands in relation to tradition much like a cubist paints who fragment his subject into disparate parts. Otis sees the Metamorphoses in terms of large sections of similar themes enclosed by framin devices. 46 Departing somewhat from this image, I suggest that like cubist painter, Ovid wants to dispel the frame. Rejecting organ form in favor of a certain degree of thematic fragmentation and dislocation, Ovid offers us not one canonical Medea but many perspectives of the central idea of the powerful woman.

In the Metamorphoses Ovid adds complexity to the story of Medea by juxtaposing it with stories that are simultaneously similar and different
Like Medea’s rejuvenating brew, which has different effects depending on the situation in which it is used, myths are elusive, shifting bodies of knowledge that offer partial truths in their particular context. By articulating Ovid’s myth of Medea with the myths of Procne, Scylla, Procris, and Orythia, Ovid uses his awareness of the mutability of myth and tradition to good effect by offering us varying studies of the female as victim and criminal. Her shifting representations in the marriage group call attention to the variety of human experience and the elusiveness of moral and social categories. Ovid thus typically offers no single moral judgment. This complex of stories does clearly display the difference between the female and the male experience of love, however, and it thereby leads to some disturbing implications. The violent man rarely suffers from his acts of violence; indeed, like Boreas, he may benefit from it. The violent woman, however, is ostracized and condemned. Medea is a byword for the unnatural mother. Ovid’s marriage group of tales illustrates how society both denies a woman power and rejects her when she uses it; at the same time these tales illustrate how fragile social conventions are and how ineffective they are to either protect or restrain a woman.

By presenting us with two very different Medeas, who cannot be reconciled except, perhaps, by stepping outside the boundaries of the myth to other similar tales, Ovid reworks the story of Medea into an open-ended form that offers divergent perspectives on the problems of marriage, betrayal, and power. Comedy is juxtaposed with tragedy, and overall Ovid offers compassionate insight into a vilified type of woman. There is however no resolution to this story of sexual and social differences; significantly Medea does not die but simply disappears from Ovid’s text. If judgments are to be made, the onus ultimately falls upon the reader, for Ovid, I believe, would have concurred with the remark of a very different writer, Jane Austen, who concludes Northanger Abbey: “I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience.”

PART III
UNDER PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION
MEDEA
ESSAYS ON MEDEA IN
MYTH, LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY,
AND ART

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