

## Rewriting Medea's Law Case: A Mythological Corporate Reorganization after Betrayal

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**ABSTRACT :** Despite the multiple interpretations of the Euripidean Medea since modern times the figure of the filicidal mother has been studied as an icon of race and gender oppression. This article rewrites Euripides' Medea and offers a detailed business allegorical account of this mythological story to contribute to a mutual insight between mythology and mercantile laws, showing possible junctures of both disciplines. The main purpose is to show how the rich background of human emotions and intrigues featured in Medea's story can be rewritten through contemporary business agreements and, most importantly, how Euripides managed to offer progressive political views to advocate for the reform of human laws by invoking divine or natural justice to protect the figure of the victim, a mistreated ethnic woman.

**KEYWORDS:** Companies' restructuring, Medea, Mercantile Laws, Myth criticism, Natural Laws,

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Mythological stories are not only fiction or literature because myth is always based on fact, on real-life episodes from which literature originates [1]. As Michael Payne argues, myth "is the story of man" [2] –or rather, the story of humankind– and thus it reflects on our own experience. The tragedy of Euripides' *Medea* (431 BC) offers a rich background of human emotions and intrigues that involve arrangements and prearrangements, breaches of contracts, conspiracies, and sophisticated plannings basically triggered by the betrayal of Jason. Even if the alliances and hostilities present throughout the tragedy were created in the fifth century BC, this paper intends to show how the conspiracies present throughout the story can illustrate contemporary commercial partnerships and ruptures, evidencing that myth is the story of humankind that replicates itself along the centuries.

The Euripidean Medea is a barbarian female among the civilised patriarchal Greeks, who is eventually abandoned by Jason and shunned by the Greek society. Although Medea is the paradigm of the anti-daughter, anti-sister, anti-wife, anti-citizen and, most especially anti-mother, she has continued to attract the imagination of many artists to explore multiple forms of struggle against oppression. Euripides did not only pose gender issues but also ethnic dilemmas, showing a pioneering view as further developed, for example, in the studies of Gayatri Spivak's double colonisation [3] or Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectionality [4]. This article rewrites Euripides' *Medea* to offer a legal allegorical account of the story of Medea with a twofold purpose. First, to demonstrate how sophisticated business agreements can paradoxically resonate throughout Medea's ancient story, and second to highlight how Euripides' drama provides radical political views seeking the reform of human laws. In doing this, the play invokes the divine or natural laws as the only means to protect the figure of the mistreated foreign woman. My story is rewritten following the completion of contracts and mercantile reorganizations driven by the literary characters' pursuits, thoughts, actions, and reactions. The focus is on literature whereas the mercantile parallels made herein are limited to general principles applied under western business regulations. After a brief introduction on the gods' rulings in classical mythology, it is offered a rewriting of Medea's law case. This interweaving of the Euripidean Medea and contemporary company's laws is not only based in the Euripides account, but it is also influenced to some extent by Ernest Legouvé's *Medea a Tragedy in Three Acts* (1855) and by Augusta Webster's dramatic monologue "Medea in Athens" (1870), a sequel to the infanticidal episode that follows Medea from Corinth to Athens.

### II. NATURAL LAWS VS. HUMAN LAWS IN CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

As commonplace in classical mythology, the approach to law and justice must necessarily underline the role played by the mythological gods who represent the natural (or divine) laws which is discussed in the legal field as the real justice that must supersede human rules when these are unfair. The contraposition of human and natural laws is the core subject of Sophocles' *Antigone* (441 BC), performed some 10 years before *Medea*. The former raises many legal questions and opens up one of the first known juridical debates about the failures of human rulings.

In Hellenic mythology, justice is a complicated and sometimes inscrutable issue. Certain rules were “held sacred in Greek society, like being hospitable to guests, respecting one’s parents, or avenging a loved one’s murder” [5]. Also, as seen in *Medea*, one fundamental rule to the gods is to fulfil your oaths, that is, to honour solemn sacred promises sworn to gods as a sign of verity. In ancient Greece, religion, morality, and political organization had been linked by the oath and it was believed that, as Lycurgus of Athens (324 BC) said, “the oath held democracy together” [6]. In Greek mythology, oath-breakers were severely punished by the gods; as Luschnig puts it “what happens to oath-breakers is that their family is wiped out” [7], a rule that might explain, in Euripides’ view, Medea’s filicide. However, the poets often rendered different versions and consequences of the gods’ rulings which contributes to the confusion regarding justice since, often, the divine punishment of mortals “far outweigh the crime and lean towards jealous revenge” [5]. This might be the case of Medea who is invariably featured as an ambivalent character moved not only by justice but also by uncontrollable passions. As Matt Cosby notes “[t]he Greeks were not trying to create a consistent moral code or idea of justice with their stories, but instead preferred to heighten the elements of explanation and entertainment” [5], which might explain, to some extent, Medea’s ambivalent behaviour. Despite the god’s will, Medea obviously wants to take revenge against Jason’s betrayal and make him suffer, but she also seeks to save her children from an attack in a later retaliation against her. As she reasons in a given instance, “I have determined to do the deed at once,/ to kill my children and leave this land,/ and not to falter or give my children/ over to let a hand more hostile murder them. They must die and since they must/ I, who brought them into the world, will kill them” [7] (lines 1236– 40).<sup>1</sup> As an example that humankind story is replicated, this approach to infanticide evokes Magda Goebbels’s murder of her six children –after Hitler’s defeat in WWII– seeking to save them from retaliation.

The present legal retelling emphasizes the basic issues posed by Euripides, underlining Medea’s superior right to seek her own justice, after been used and abused by Jason, a practical man who pursues his own interests only, and who does not hesitate to manipulate the truth, even to himself, in order to justify injustice. The focus is on the strategies the mythical woman follows to escape from the symbolic and actual violence exerted upon her by Jason (the man), by the Corinthian (dominant) society, and in sum by the (omnipresent) established power. The sites of struggle imagined by Euripides engages with his outbreaking vision of the Athenian society and this rewriting establishes a dialogue between Euripides’ socio-political context and contemporary mercantile laws.

To establish this dialogical relationship between Euripides’ times and contemporary mercantile laws it must be considered that the story of Jason and Medea is basically a love story that ends up with Jason’s betrayal. Indeed, love affairs are actually a noteworthy subject not to be overlooked by company lawyers. When a romantic conflict blasts, it is many times too late to take control of companies, prey of uncontrollable human passions. Out of a love treachery, for example, resentment, wrath, or jealousy can easily blind the business judgement of the betrayed party. When this party keeps some power in the contractual field, the consequences can swiftly ruin the prospects of the enterprise.

The legal story heavily relies on how natural justice must sometimes correct biased human laws, considering that a patriarchal and xenophobic society builds the laws to its own convenience, to protect those that are subjugating others. While it is true that Medea is an aristocratic semi-goddess, endowed with beauty, intelligence, and magical powers, it is also true that, once in Greece she is made a subaltern, suffering discrimination from society and, most importantly to this reading, from the whole legal system that supported the powerful, embodied by the Greek men. To these purposes, the law becomes a useful instrument for the dominants, who pass laws to protect their hierarchical system by creating a robust legal frame that only could eventually be reformed, either gradually – through extremely slow-moving socio-cultural changes– , or more rapidly, only through rebellion. Medea chooses this latter alternative.

### III. MEDEA’S LAW CASE. A MYTHOLOGICAL CORPORATE REORGANIZATION

#### 1. The marriage and the merger :

The protagonists of this legal allegory are the Greek Jason and the barbarian Colchian Medea. In most Medea’s rewritings, Jason is recurrently depicted as a practical man who looks for his own interests and self-aggrandizement. He is portrayed as a hero, the successful commander- in-chief of the Argonauts; a strong, skilful, and handsome man who, nonetheless, sometimes acts sneakily and even cowardly if useful to his

All references to Euripides’ *Medea* have been taken from the 2006 translation by C.A.E. Luschnig listed in the references. Subsequent parenthetical references in the text will include line numbers only.

purposes. On the contrary, Medea is essentially a passionate character. Also strong, skilled, and beautiful, she is a semigoddess, always portrayed as a magician capable of concocting the most extraordinary potions and who is always accompanied by her gods that unconditionally stand by her side.

When the couple first encounter each other in Colchis, the initial business conducted by Jason is to negotiate with Medea a merger to join their mutual interests and expand his business. On the one hand, Jason gets the golden fleece that, in compliance with his contract with King Pelias, will make Jason King of Iolcus; on the other Medea will be Queen. Jason's major contribution to the company is his vessel, the *Argo* – with which he intends to expand further the company's business– along with his condition of a renown great Greek hero, which is highly appreciated for the joint venture. On the other hand, it is agreed that Medea will contribute with her potions' book and her magical secrets along with some precious robes and jewels inherited from her aristocratic past. Specifically, she vests into the company's share capital some fine garments and a valuable crown. In closing the merger agreement, both solemnly swear to each other that under no circumstances shall they use their mutual contributions to other purposes. Their merger deed is drawn up in the divine temple and is firmly sealed and sworn under oath to the gods, who act as notaries public and keep record of the transaction, along with all its representations, warranties, terms, and conditions. In fine print, the god's rulings are accepted. This is a kind of pre-formulated standard contract, a contract of adhesion, which includes a very clear provision that the break of divine oaths shall entail that the oath-breaker will die without descendance.

*Jason and Medea Ltd* (henceforth *JasMed*), is thus a capital company with limited liability that sets its registered office in Iolcus, Greece. The basic terms of the Memorandum of Incorporation and Memorandum of Association, the latter also known as by-laws, are agreed in the foundational act. The company's social purpose is to develop and enlarge the kingdom of Iolcus, the city where they initially plan to settle. The kingdom is to be run directly by the king and queen. Both are appointed as directors that can act individually in the company's best interests. The company's by-laws also provide that the social purpose may be conducted directly or indirectly by subsidiaries that can continue and enhance the parent company's promising prospects. The initial share capital is composed of various contributions in kind. The primary and most valuable asset is the golden fleece, whose investment into the company's equity is allotted to both partners equally. Likewise, both partners agree to assess their personal contributions equally, that is, Jason's *Argo* and Medea's precious dowery, the book of concocted potions and magical techniques. As a result of these appraisals, each partner holds fifty per cent of the company's share capital. However, Jason has beguiled Medea into accepting that he will be entitled to a privileged share –the golden share– in case the company's general shareholders meeting (GSM), duly convened, does not meet the necessary quorums and votes to reach an agreement. Trusting his judgment, Medea relies on her partner's criterion and does not hesitate to sign in. Nevertheless, Medea succeeds in negotiating the booking of a long-term liability in her favour, as the company has to repay her somehow the huge sacrifice she made when abandoning her homeland Colchis, betraying her father, and killing her brother just for *JasMed*'s sake. Therefore, the company's initial balance sheet shows a significant liability, a long-term debt in favour of Medea who incurred a very costly expenditure to get the valuable golden fleece. Their intention is to have the debt capitalised into the company as soon as possible or provide for special allocations in Medea's favour, but time will prove that the company's crisis outbursts before the liability can be definitively written off or paid up.

At the beginning, the partnership's future is promising. As *JasMed* transfers its office from Colchis, transporting both shareholders on board of the *Argo*, the company faces many dangers. In the middle of their escape across the Bosphorus, Jason recalls the “notched rock-islands” and “the steep Symplegades and the sound of waters crashing at their base” [8]. They had just overcome another danger when Medea, relying on the stability of their joint venture, speaks: “love steers” (62). Carelessly “she laughed” (61), “tossed her head back, while her brown hair streamed / Gold in the wind and sun” (68-69) and cried “‘what of woes,’ [...] ‘if only they leave time for love enough?’” (70-71). In a climax of fleeting happiness, Medea feels that the company's momentum and stamina will lead them to an extremely successful business.

Following their agreement, *JasMed* founds two unipersonal subsidiaries *Melanthe Ltd* and *Lycaon Ltd* with the prospect of expanding their projected business. As provided by the company by-laws, *JasMed* has planned to grow its industry through new entities created from their union. Born from the new merged couple, these newcos are meant to be their most successful enterprise. They want them to somehow perpetuate their entrepreneurial beings by projecting their own selves to the future, thus accomplishing an ideal that any ambitious entrepreneur bears in mind, to leave behind an indelible imprint in the business world, a record of their own existence. Consequently, the newcos are provided with educational assets to face new and unknown challenges. To this purpose, a pedagogue is employed. Trusting the future trends of their business, such an

educational investment is capitalised to be depreciated in the future once the subsidiaries *Melanthe* and *Lycaon* are profitable enough to distribute dividends. This is done in compliance with the accounting criteria that claims the matching of income and expenses, but against the principle of prudence which, time will prove, should have prevailed over any other accounting criteria. As it happens, the kingdom of Iolcus will never be achieved thus frustrating their initial and unique social purpose. After Pelias' death, victim of Medea's concocted poisons, they must run away again and decide to transfer *JasMed's* registered office to Corinth, Greece. Now, their business future holds uncertain.

## 2. The domestic problems and the business crisis

As Jason retrospectively recognises, he begins to doubt of their joint venture together at the sight of the white Greek women as reinterpreted by Legouvé: “[w]hen I once more viewed, oh Greece, thy heaven's eternal blue and saw upon thy shore this soft-eyed virgin, with her spotless brow—when, fancy led, by this pure maiden's side, I evoked the ruthless image of Medea” [10]. After the Iolcus experience, Jason's stream of consciousness recalls Medea's fearful acts “at every port at which we touched, the affrighted populace fled panic-stricken” [10]. In this account, Jason directly acknowledges that he shuns her because of her racial difference. While on barbarian soil, he “could endure this fatal union” [10], but after his return to Greece, Jason's gaze becomes the Greeks' gaze, a prejudiced contemplation that unmasks Medea's difference. The partner for his business was hitherto convenient for his purposes. Now the circumstances seem to have changed, and in his mind he is soon offered new prospective businesses that might not involve his until now steadfast partner.

*JasMed's* has another significant employee on its payroll, the nurse, who cares for the well-being of the parent company and the two subsidiaries. The nurse has been with Medea since she was a child and they trust her fully. Once in Corinth, the nurse witnesses and fears the outbreak of *JasMed's* serious domestic problems, as seen in the opening in Euripides' tragedy, when she declaims: “How I wish the Argo's sails had never swept through / the dark blue Clashing Rocks into the land of the Colchians” (1-2). This famous beginning has been rewritten many times, in many ways, as seen for example in Lord Byron's business-like verses “Oh, how I wish that an embargo/Had kept in port the good ship *Argo* [...] / “But, now I fear her trip will be/ Damn'd business for my Miss Medea” [9]. The Euripidean nurse's initial speech summarises the crisis' blasts: “It has all gone sour now, affection turned to hatred. / Jason has cast aside his children and my mistress, / and now goes to bed in a royal marriage/ with the daughter of Creon who governs this land.” (15-18). Also the nurse notices Medea's threatening shouts that run across the city and says, “[a]nd Medea, in despair, rejected by her husband,/ howls out 'the oaths he swore' and calls upon the right hand.” (15-20)

When the Euripidean tragedy outbreaks, Jason has already gone to visit Creon, the king that rules the city of Corinth –and represents the law and power, to ask his permission to marry his daughter, Creusa, and join their mutual business interests. *Creon Ltd* is the parent company of *Creusa Ltd*. Not only has Jason requested the sole shareholder's authorization to merge with its subsidiary, but also he wants the king to previously authorise him to separate from *JasMed*, allowing the prior spinoff and direct contribution of his branch of activity, namely his own business as hero and the *Argo's* commander into the subsidiary. *Creon Ltd* wants *Jason Ltd's* valuable heroic assets to protect his city and seeks to incorporate them into the royal family's group of companies, in which he holds total control. The first impulse of *Creon Ltd* is to approve the spin off and subsequent merger subjected to the compulsory GMA's agreement and the publication of the merger project, needed to protect third parties with legitimate interest. However, Creon has heard Medea's business threats to the royal family and her invocation of the divine contractual rules. Creon is afraid of both, the gods and Medea, and does hesitate. Finally, he accepts Jason's proposed corporate restructuring under the condition precedent, *sine qua non*, that the demerged *Medea* is first expatriated along with her filiation and her whole branch of activity –namely her magical powers–. This is a suspensory condition that is deemed indispensable to neutralise her threats of divine justice.

Actually, the city of Corinth is bursting with the news and Medea is not all alone. She counts with the counselling of the Greek chorus, a group of local females that renders her sorority support, psychologically and business wise. Medea addresses the women of Corinth: “for me this unexpected disaster/ has wrecked my life. I am cast adrift. I have lost/ all pleasure in living and I want to die, my friends./ The man who was everything to me, try to understand this,/ has turned out to be the vilest man alive, my own husband.” (224-28). However, Medea's moral ambiguity becomes patent from the beginning. Her sudden theatrical transitions from one emotion to another are abruptly achieved. Somehow becoming “the soul sister of the implacable Furies of classical mythology” [11] Medea is suddenly metamorphosed into a wild woman driven insane by jealousy and impotence. Far beyond the god's rulings, the enraged Medea howls her *ad hoc* decision to the chorus, “I will

turn three of my enemies into/ corpses, the father, the daughter, and my husband./ I have many ways to kill them.” (373-75). Not only does she announce her intentions to dissolve and liquidate Jason's company, once separated, but also threatens her rival company *Creusa Ltd* and its parent co., *Creon Ltd*. The Corinthian women listen to her and lament her fortune, “she cries out shrill sad sounds of mourning/ at the betrayer of her marriage-bed, her evil husband.” (204-05), and proceed to deliberate, considering the applicable divine laws, “[f]or the injustice she suffers, she invokes/ Themis keeper of oaths, daughter of Zeus” (206-07). The chorus tries to assuage the scope of her daunting threats, in fear of the consequences for their client, advising that she should bear the burden with dignity. With one voice, unanimously, they surmise, “[i]f your husband/ services a new bed/ that is his affair. Do not fret.” (154-56). You must trust the god's justice “— Zeus will set this right.” (157). But Medea would not listen. Calmly, she continues her legal contention wielding the credit she holds against *JasMed*, the significant liability that served to finance the most valuable asset of the company, the golden fleece. As she reasons with her choral consultants, “[y]ou have this city and your father's home, / enjoyment of life, and the companionship of friends, / but, alone and without a city, I am abused by my husband, carried off as plunder from a foreign land, / I have no mother, no brother, no relative/ to offer me a safe haven from this disaster.” (252-55). She emphasizes her losses and, as a result, her subaltern position as a foreign woman who has been uprooted from her motherland, used, abused, and left with her two children at her own devices.

### 3.- The banishment and Medea's determination

The meeting between Medea and her consultants is suddenly interrupted by Creon who, as the chorus announces, appears as “a messenger of some new proclamation” (269). In fact, the King of Corinth has passed an urgent royal decree who is to be executed at once. Creon bluntly commands Medea “to leave this land, / taking your two children with you./ Do not delay. Of this sentence of banishment I am both judge and jury” (271-273). Creon arrogates to himself all power and orders to cast the company and its two subsidiaries out of the “borders of [his] country” (275) and force her to immediately move their registered office out of Corinth. Creon openly discloses the *ratio legis* of his decree, “I am afraid of you” (281) says Creon, “— no need to cover my reasons—” (280), “I hear that you are making threats: —against the father of the bride, /the bridegroom, and the bride, to do us some injury” (286-87). Creon does not hesitate to expel the three companies with no other argument than his fear of Medea, oblivious to the fact that the gods, as the story shows, exert superior laws far above Creon's.

After the banishment decree, Medea uses persuasive arguments to stall for time and negotiate a solution. She argues that she suffers from incomprehension due to his otherness, “this is not the first time, Creon, but over and over again,/ people's opinion has injured me and done me great harm” (291-92). Appealing to divine justice she prays “Oh Zeus, never forget who is responsible for this” (332) while Creon appeals to his political power and sentences, “soon you will be forced out at the hands of my guards” (336). Nevertheless, Medea does not surrender and initiates a persuasive speech. Appealing to Creon's good judgement, Medea argues soothingly “what harm can you suffer from me?/ It is not in my power — don't be afraid of me, Creon —/ to do wrong to the royal family.” (305-07). After a long and emotional discussion in which Medea ends at her knees begging his pardon, Medea cries “I will go into exile. It was not for that that I supplicated you” (337) to which Creon replies “[w]hy then are you trying to coerce me? Let go of my hand!” (338). “Just one day” (339), replies Medea. “Let me stay for one day/ to make plans how we will manage in exile,/ and find resources for my children, since their father/ does not put his children's welfare first./ [...] it breaks my heart if they are to suffer deprivation.” (339-42). After these emotive words, Creon, proleptically states “[y]our words are cajoling to my ears, but inside my heart/ I am afraid you are forming some evil new plan” (315-16). Even so, he consents to bend his ruling, “[m]y nature is not at all tyrannical,/ and on many occasions in showing respect I have suffered for it/ and even now I see that I am making a mistake, madam,/ but still I will grant you this.” (347-50). Still, he sentences that if she does not leave his land after that day, capital punishment will apply and “[y]ou will die” (353).

Once Creon is gone, the female consultants offer their legal view on her situation. Creon is executing human laws that do not sufficiently protect foreign women, wailing “poor woman, now an exile from this land/ you are driven away without rights” (435-36). Medea, however, is confident. She has one day to design a plan. Medea's soliloquy that follows invokes her gods to help her. “By the mistress I worship/ most of all and have chosen as my helpmate,/ Hecate, dwelling in the inmost recesses of my hearth,/ no one will bruise and batter my heart and get away with it.” (398-40). She knows that strength is needed and proceeds to encourage herself, “[b]ut come. Spare nothing of what you know, Medea, planning and/ scheming./ Go now to the edge. This is a contest for heroes. [...] you who are born of a noble father, son of the Sun god. [...] And besides we are/ women, most helpless for the good,/ but skilled craftsmen of all that is evil.” (400-08). The latter sentence clearly anticipates

that Medea would not spare any possible means to achieve her purpose, as it actually happens. She has one day only to arrange every single detail and achieve her own justice, and the first step is to call for *Jasmed's* GSM to discuss all details and approve the course of action.

### 3. The divorce and the spinoff. Jason's patriarchal arguments

*JasMed's* universal and extraordinary meeting is held almost immediately, being present all shareholders who formally agree to hold it. In the famous *agon*, the sole item on the agenda is their divorce and the need of spinning off their businesses. In this meeting, Jason's arguments are put sharply and business like. Their joint venture has proved to be a failure along with their plans. The golden fleece, which is their most significant foundational capital, has proved useless. Its service life is definitely expired and has to be fully depreciated and written off, thus recognising the accounting loss that leads their company to bankruptcy. In order to save their remaining business, the company is inexorably bound to be divided into different branches of activity which need to be properly settled into different companies. The reorganization envisaged by Jason is simple. Their common subsidiaries, *Melanthe Ltd* and *Lycaon Ltd*, must remain in Medea's company along with other assets and liabilities attributable to her economic unit, basically her magical potions and her fine robes and jewellery, along with some liabilities to be allotted that he dares not to mention. Within the same company's operation, Jason is to vest into *Creusa Ltd* his most valuable assets, namely the *Argo* and his condition of a renown Greek hero, an intangible asset highly praised by the recipient company and by the whole royal family. After this, the resulting company will be renamed *JasCreu Ltd*. The demerged co.– to be renamed *Medea Ltd*.– will reduce capital, as the hero's ship and value is to be removed from the balance sheet and transferred to *JasCreu*. As Jason and Creusa are to be married, he has been advised that transfer pricing rules apply and, to avoid any tax liability, the recipient co. should book Jason's contribution at arms' length basis and issue fresh shares in exchange accordingly. As his vessel and hero's values are outstanding for the royal family and for the city of Corinth, the market value assigned is high enough to allow Jason to take full control of *JasCreu*. After this restructuring, no capital gains should arise in *JasMed Ltd*. as he can demonstrate that the *Argo's* and his value as hero have dramatically decreased –for which he blames to Medea's outrageous past behaviour– so there is no need for tax planning nor is there need to request tax deferral.

In his well-designed plan, Jason commits himself to use his reasonable, or even his best, endeavours to provide for economic compensation if any inconveniences are caused. Indeed, Jason presents himself as a supporter of Medea's residual business, as "a great benefactor/ to you and my children" (548-49). As he puts it during the meeting, the proposed reorganization is thought in their family's best interests. In his manipulative speech, he is perfectly aware that he had better not to mention that he is infatuated with Creusa. Jason knows that Medea's jealousy was going to be appeased if he stresses that it is not love what moves him. Thus, he claims that his approach to the wedding with the princess, and the need of the subsequent fusion of their business, is strictly guided by reason, and reason alone. As he speaks, "[w]hen I arrived here from the land of Iolcus/ dragging with me many useless encumbrances,/ what luckier opportunity could I have found/ than, as a refugee, to marry the king's daughter?" (550-53). The burdens and encumbrances he refers to are obviously their preceding criminal fame for which he blames Medea.

Jason, the powerful hero, still thinks he is unilaterally allowed to breach the contract seeking his one-sided interests. He tries to beguile Medea by disguising his actions into apparently good actions, insisting in his swaying speech "[y]ou may be certain of this: it was not because of the woman/ that I made the marriage into the royal family which I now enjoy,/ but just as I said before, wanting to give you/ security and to father royal brothers/ for my children, a support for my house." (592-96). As he contends, after the failure of the Iolcus royal business, his immediate concern was to provide for her and for her children. "This is the point — we might live well" (558), continues Jason, "and not be in need. I am well aware that/ even a friend shuns a poor man and stays out of his way,/ and I wanted to bring up children worthily of my house,/ and father brothers to your children/ and put them on an equal footing and join the families" (559-64). However, now, as he sees it, all these plans are ruined because of Medea's irrational behaviour. "You had the chance to stay in this country and keep your home/ by patiently putting up with what your betters decide,/ but now you have had your say and for it you are to be deported." (447-49). Her "betters" are obviously the men ruling her destiny.

But Medea bursts out in fury and shouts, "you, the vilest man alive, / you have betrayed me, and you have made a new marriage, / though you already have children" (487-89). In her continuous transitions. she then gets calmer and counterargues Jason's persuasive discourse, explaining "in many ways I am different from most people./ For in my estimation anyone who is dishonest / but speaks well deserves the greatest censure./ In his confidence that he can conceal his injustice with rhetoric,/ he has the heart for any wrong. But he is not so very

clever" (578-82). Medea is thus presented by Euripides as the "noble savage" who speaks truth to power, not corrupted by civilization. In this latter idea, Euripides was possibly alluding to some Sophists and teachers of rhetoric of his time, and pointing an accusatory finger to manipulative Jason. Medea continues, "do not try your specious argument / on me. For one word will lay you flat:/ you should, if you were not despicable, have made this marriage/ only after convincing me, and not in secret from your loved ones." (583-586). The key point of the legal reading lies in this juncture. Medea believes that unless previously negotiated and amended by both parties in mutual understanding, their contract is executable and enforceable by the divine courts. Jason's breach of the contract must be penalised with the wiping out of his family. After underlying his intentional violation of their merger agreement, Medea's admonitory legal warnings are clear and straightforward, "[g]one is the faith of oaths./ I cannot understand/ whether you believe the old gods are no longer in power/ or that new covenants are established for men today,/ since you must know that you have not kept your oath to me." (491-494). Thus, she claims the execution of the contract with all its consequences. Medea faces a situation in which her legal rights are betrayed without any previous attempt to counterbalance their original arrangement. As a result, she is left with nothing, with no homeland, surrounded by enemies and most importantly with no human court to turn to, while Jason intends to start a new business afresh.

In Medea's view this is unacceptable, most especially when she sacrificed all her previous life for him. First, she tries to stick to the contract. Using their merging agreement, Medea strongly opposes to the demerger proposal, by exhibiting the significant credit she holds against the company, which cannot be repaid if the spinoff takes place, since *JasMed*'s liability in her favour is absolutely linked to the survival of their common business. Now, Medea starts detailing what he owes to her: "I saved your skin, as all the Greeks know/ who boarded the Argo with you" (475-476); I killed "the dragon who guarded the golden fleece" (479); I betrayed "my father and my home" (482); "I killed Pelias" (485). "In helping you I have enemies" (507), and after your betrayal "I must go into exile, cast out of this country/ without friends, a lonely mother with two lonely children," (511-12) who will become "homeless beggars" (514). Jason, very cunningly, argues against this stating "since you make such a mountain of it/ I think that Kyprius, god of love, [not you] was the savior/ of my expedition" (525-27), and trying to swap the liability he goes on, "much you have benefitted me, all well and good. But you certainly got more out of saving me/ than you put in, as I will demonstrate./ First you make your home in Greece instead of/ an alien land and you experience justice/ and the rule of law, not merely brute force." (532-40).

In his discourse, Jason was portraying the Athenian's view of the polarity between the civilised Greeks and the savage barbarians, through which Euripides points at Medea's ethnic otherness. As Jason follows, "[a]ll the Greeks are aware that you are a wise woman/ and you have fame. If you still lived/ at the ends of the earth, no one would know your story." (539-40). Thus, in his counterargument, he stresses that it is thanks to him that she will leave an indelible imprint to posterity. Then, Jason turns to set on her the responsibility contending that it was her rage and stubbornness that leads her to exile "[d]on't blame anyone but yourself" [since you] "uttered curses against the royal house" (606). In trying to convince her, Jason puts forward once more his offer to close the demerger amicably "if you want to take me up on my offer/ of money for the children or your own exile/ say so. I am ready to be generous to you" (608-611). Medea proudly rejects his offer, "don't give me anything./ The gift of a bad man brings no pleasure." (617-18). Jason's patience runs out and, before he definitively closes the meeting, he says, "I will not carry on this quarrel any longer" (608). Then he proceeds to use his golden share to deblock the meeting's dead-end and officially approves *JasMed Ltd*'s spinoff, as required by Creon's ruling. Medea, though, keeps accurate record in the meeting's minutes that she does not waive her rights to challenge the meeting resolution. In awareness of his delicate situation, Jason seeks a legal balance between the execution of the separation and the deed's provision for oath-breakers, and solemnly invokes the divine justice, "I call the gods to witness/ that I want to help you and the children in every way I can". (618-19). There being no other matters to discuss, the meeting is called off and Jason leaves. His determination has bent the divine law, while human law, possibly biased, wins over Medea's rights.

Once Jason is gone, Medea whispers "[g]et on with your marriage. Perhaps with gods' help it will be said / you have made a marriage that you will soon regret." (624-25). Although it may appear clear that no party should be forced into an unwanted relationship, whether commercial or romantic, human pride does also play a role in business and love relationships. As Medea says to Jason, at the closing of the play, [y]ou were not going to disrespect your marriage to me and lead a happy life, ridiculing me" (1354-56). Medea's mythological character epitomises pride, she is proud of her origins, of her own self, and is not affected by the prejudiced environment she is in. She is determined to find a way to have her dignity restored. Being aware that she has no place to go, Medea must devise an exit strategy. But first, she wants retaliation. She is resolute to take revenge on Jason. First, she has to ruin his business plan altogether. *Jason* cannot merge with *Creusa* and he has to lose all his

business credibility as a hero to prevent him from further business success. Therefore, he must be left alone with no *Argo* or market to develop, not even through his subsidiaries *Melanthe Ltd* and *Lycaon Ltd*. This is Medea's targeted restructuring. Collateral damages are inevitable. While she strongly hesitates about what to do with their subsidiaries, she also deeply feels that their destiny is doomed and that their liquidation, a most appalling event for her, is bound to happen. The newcos cannot survive without the company that created them. Concurrently, the god's ruling is inexorable.

#### 4.- The gods' intervention and the natural justice

While Medea starts to scheme a plan, the gods start to work their magic and "*Aigeus, king of Athens, enters with a royal entourage*" (662). The king has arrived in Corinth following the god's advice, the oracular Phoebus Apollo, god of sun. The Athenian King is childless and is desperately seeking for filiation to leave trace of his life and business. Though seemingly by chance, Medea and Aegeus's encounter has been arranged by the divine justice. The god's oracle told him to visit some wise man in Corinth to decipher his riddles, "[w]ords wiser than a man can understand" (674). Basically the king of Athens wants to know how to incorporate new subsidiaries.

During their informal meeting, Aegeus notices, "why do I see your face and complexion so wasted?" (689). Medea then tells him about her troubles with Jason, "[h]e has fallen in love with marrying into a royal family", pointing at Jason's ambition and lack of honour. She also tells him about her upcoming exile having only one day left to arrange for everything, especially her destination. While speaking, she suddenly realises that Aegeus has been driven towards her by Apollo and begs him, "pity, pity me in my despair/ and do not let be driven out destitute/ but take me in to share your home and country" (710-13). Back on her best business, she continues "I will put an end to your childlessness and help you/ become a father. I know how to concoct a potent elixir" (716-17). Aegeus, a prudent man but in "utter despair over" (721) filiation sets the first terms of this prearrangement; "[i]f you come to my land/ I will do my best as a man of honor to receive you as my guest./ This much I will promise you, Medea:/ I am not prepared to give you escort from this place, but if on your own you come to my home,/ you will remain there under protection and I will not deliver you up to anyone." (722-27). Aegeus adds then one important condition upon which his commitment is being subjected: "But, you must make your way from this country/ for I want to be free from blame in the eyes of my hosts here." (728-29).

Medea accepts Aegeus's conditions, "Yes, I will do that"(730), but she negotiates further, "[b]ut if there could be a pledge to me/ of these things, I will have everything I need from you" (731). She wants a warranty to neutralise the structures of power. Although she trusts Aegeus, she is clever enough to fear their powerful enemies, fundamentally the house of Pelias and king Creon who have "all the wealth and royal power." (739). Thus she proposes a further clause. She wants the contract to be sealed by the gods. As she prudently argues, "if you come to terms in words only, without an oath to the gods,/ you could become [my royal enemies'] friend and you might yield to their heralds" (736-37). Despite Jason's betrayal, Medea still believes in the gods' justice. She does not want to reach an agreement without their intervention and sanctification. She wants the gods to act as notaries public and to witness the completion of the contract. "Bring on the gods" (744), says Aegeus. Medea then kindly requests "[s]wear by the plain of Earth, and Helios the Sun, father/ of my father, and add the whole race of gods" (746-47); "what? put it into words"(748), asks Aegeus anxiously. To what Medea solemnly replies, that you compromise "[n]ever yourself to cast me out of your country/ nor if anyone else of my enemies desires/ to take me away, ever to give me up of your own free will" (748-50). Now therefore, the parties enter into the contract and sign it in the gods' presence including these representations and warranties. Aegean swears and they complete the transaction. Medea still wants to make it crystal clear and solemnly asks: "and if you do not keep your word, what will you suffer? (753). "What happens to all men who break their oaths" (754), responds Aegean. This consequence, in Medea's view, shall be enough deterrent for Aegeus, whose main target is his desired offspring. Before Aegeus leaves, Medea speaks, "[a]ll is well/ I will come to your city as soon as possible,/ when I have done what I intend to do and achieve what I desire" (755-58). Now, Medea has settled her business exit strategy. In fact, she even knows how to reach Athens. As she later tells the chorus "this man/ appeared as a safe haven of my plans:/ to him I shall attach a cable to guide me there,/ going to the city and fortress of Pallas Athena." (767-70). The demerged *Medea Ltd*. is back on business. With her supernatural powers, she will be guided to Pallas Athena with an invisible and magical cable that she will attach to Aegeus. Determined to seek justice and leave her ex-partner with nothing, she calmly reflects on a possible planning that takes him by surprise, a corporate reorganization that suits her purposes. Now, she must dissolve and liquidate her rival company, *Creusa Ltd*.



### 5.- The execution of Medea's reorganisation

The present legal allegory now deviates from Euripides and uses Legouvé's tragedy to inspire Medea's first ideas for a corporate restructuring addressed to take over *Creusa Ltd.* In Legouvé's version, Creon and Creusa are organising a large and public party for the marriage [10] and intend to raise funds to finance the wedding festivities. To this purpose, that very same day it has been proclaimed that all Corinthians can make their contributions to *Creusa Ltd.* The simplest one is financial crowdfunding which does not require many formalities. Following the call provisions, the call price of the bonds is set higher than the face value of the issue, and they can be redeemed on short notice within a year. With her magical powers, the Corinthian women's assistance, and most especially with the gods' help, she would have no problems to trespass the regulatory threshold of the acquisition and take over the targeted company. She considers other possibilities, but *Creusa's* directors and employees are too loyal to the royal family and she knows that it would be really difficult to attempt either a leverage buy out or other financial acquisitions based on *Creusa's* equity or governance. She however finally discards all these sophisticated mercantile operations because she has only one day left. She must find a more straightforward way to dissolve and liquidate *Creusa Ltd.*

Medea finally sets up her mind to carry out a simple business reorganization. As she explains to the chorus "now, I shall tell you all my plans" (771). First, she must correct the minutes of the last GSM and waive any rights to object *JasMed's* general meeting on the spinoff resolution. She will persuade his partner that, on second reflection, she has come to terms with everything he proposed earlier, including his projected merger with *Creusa*. Now, she would tell him, such a resolution seems to be "advantageous and sensible" (778). She perfectly knows how to regain Jason's confidence as she understands his ways. In her reasoning, if she reappears humble, asking for their children's protection and acting in apparent good faith, she will be able to approach the royal family business without raising suspicion.

Thereafter, once Jason trusts her, she will offer a significant contribution in kind to *Creusa Ltd* for her new venture with Jason. She is going to facilitate the wedding plans they are so happily preparing and for which they need to raise public funds. For this purpose, she will use the precious dowry vested into *Jasmed's* foundational capital. She will offer *Creusa Ltd* "ornaments which Helios, the Sun,/ father of my father gave to his descendants" (953-54), which definitely are not available in the market. These ornaments are "[a] finely woven dress and a tiara of beaten gold" (785) that come from her glorious past as a princess of Corinth. As Medea knows, Creusa shall not refuse these precious assets for the wedding that will be donated to the company for its marriage business. However, as she discloses to her female neighbours, these assets will be poisoned and will become very dangerous, with hidden flaws not seen by the human eye. She is not worried about possible lawsuits for the flawed contribution because, when it is discovered it will be too late and she will be gone. When Creusa "takes them in her hands and puts them on flesh,/ she and anyone who touches her will die a horrible death,/ so potent are the poisons I will smear on the gifts" (786-87). To carry out such mission, she will use her children.

She proceeds to call a general meeting of *JasMed* to which Jason promptly appears, eager to cease the legal contention. In the corporate meeting, Medea agrees to the projected merger, already published and proclaimed, as long as he accepts a new configuration of their individual economic units. Jason must accept to keep their subsidiaries in his branch of activity and include them in his new business with Creusa. She argues that their subsidiaries will be better off if they keep their registered address in Corinth. The children, negotiates Medea, "should be raised by your hand./ Ask Creon not to exile them from his territory" (938-39). Hesitantly, Jason replies "I'm not sure I can convince him, but still it is worth a try" (940). Subtly Medea introduces Creusa as a possible mediator and tells Jason about the gifts that could be delivered by their children to get Creusa's favour. Jason reacts "But why, you foolish woman, do you deprive yourself of these?/ Do you think the king's house is in need of dresses/ or gold? Keep them. Don't give them away." (959-59). Wisely, Medea appeals to the gods, "[t]he saying goes 'gifts persuade the gods./ And 'gold is stronger than ten thousand words among men.'" (963-64). Determinedly she addresses her children "go into the wealthy house/ to your father's new wife, my mistress,/ supplicate her, beg her not to send you into exile,/ hand her the ornaments — this is very important — / make sure that she take these gifts into her own hands." The meeting is over and Medea's plan starts implementation. "After this" is accomplished, she says to the chorus "it is a brand new story" (789). According to C.A.E. Luschnig, when Euripides wrote these words, he was aware that he was building a new story, "not in the traditional legends" (2006, 38). As Luschnig explains "it is very likely that Euripides invented the story that she killed her children. In earlier versions the children were killed by the relatives of Creon, by the Corinthian women, or accidentally by Medea when she tried to make them immortal" [7]. Following Euripides' tragedy, Medea grieves over the deed she must do and says,

"I shall kill my children./ There is no one who will rescue them" (792). A messenger then appears to tell Medea what happened to the royal family. He addresses her, "(t)he royal princess is dead just now/ a victim of your poisons and her father Creon, is dead too" (1124-25). Medea's first step is accomplished, and most conveniently, she also has succeeded in liquidating the parent company. Medea wants to know every detail. Euripides' account does indeed describe horrible deaths. As the messenger reports when Creusa "saw the fine garments did not resist" (1255) and put on the dress and fitted the golden crown. Right away, "white foam/ [was] streaming from her mouth and from her eyes/ the pupils turned back; and the blood was drained from her skin [and] / the crown of gold around her head/ was spewing out an eerie stream of ravenous fire" (1172-74, 1186). As the messenger continues, "her poor father in ignorance of the tragedy/ suddenly bursts into the room and throws himself on the body." (1203-04). The parent company, hurrying up to help its legacy, tries to suffocate the fire. As the messenger proceeds, Creusa "held him fast. If he tried to use force/ she tore the aged flesh from his bones./ After a time he was exhausted and the poor man/ let go of life. He was not strong enough to fight the disaster./ They lied together, child and aged father/ beside her."(1215-20). After the news, Medea addresses the chorus "[m]y friends. I have determined to do the deed at once/ to kill my children and leave this land" (1236-37). She, however, must encourage herself whispering "[c]ome unhappy hand of mine, take the sword/ take it, move to the dismal turning point of life./ Do not be a coward." (1243- 45). Medea knows that her children's fate is doomed by the gods.

After *Creon Ltd* and *Creusa Ltd.*'s liquidation, confusion reigns in the Palace, the royal firm's head office. The regal house is aware that Medea vested into the company the flawed assets on purpose, that she used the gifts to dissolve Creusa's company and, incidentally, her parent's too. Jason appears in Medea's house and shouts at the chorus, "is she still in the house [...] or has she taken flight" (1293-94) [or], does she trust that after killing the rulers of this country/ she will still escape their kinsmen unpunished?" (1298). Worried about his offspring, he rushes into the house to "save [his] children's lives/ in case Creon's relatives try to do something to them/ exacting vengeance for their mother's godless murders." (1302-04). But it is too late. "Your children are dead, killed by their mother's hand" (1308) reports the chorus. At this climatic moment, Medea appears "in a dragon-drawn chariot on the rooftop", a transport given to her by "the Sun god, father of [her] father [...], a defense against the hand of [her]enemies" which is invisibly attached to Aegeus. She holds the corpses of her two sons in her arms to bury them in the sanctuary of Hera Akraia.

Before she "*flies off into the air toward Athens*" (1403), Medea has to take another step to wind up her corporate restructuring. Addressing Jason, she prophesies his company's dissolution and liquidation, which is to be carried out by the remains of his only tangible asset, the *Argo*. She shouts, "you, a coward, you will die a coward's death as you deserve./ struck on your head by a remnant of the wreck of the *Argo*/ seeing a bitter end to your [merger with] me."(1385- 86). Jason reacts screaming "[j]ustice [...] haunts murderers."(1388- 89), to what calmly Medea replies, before flying away, "[w]hat god or divine spirit would listen to you/ an oath-breaker" (1391-92). The *exodos*, or chorus recessional, highlights the inscrutable ways of the mythological gods, by singing along, "[o]f many things Zeus in Olympus is keeper./ many are the things the gods bring about against all reason [finding] a way for the unexpected." (1414-17).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Mythological gods can certainly go against all human reason, most especially when mythological writers were seeking both entertainment and didacticism. Possibly, Euripides imagined Medea's executory hand of the divine filicidal laws to heighten the dramatic pathos of his tragedy, but he also achieved one important goal that has endured down through the ages: the creation of an iconic ethnic woman winning over the powerful white man. As Irene Vallejo-Moreu has recently put it "Antigone, Oedipus and Medea – these beings made of ink and papyrus threatened by oblivion–" have travelled throughout the centuries to inspire our revolutions [12].

Ancient mythological stories can become fascinating examples of sites of struggle, stories that are replicated throughout the centuries both in fiction and in all fields of human experience. Romantic relationships or marriages that involve joint investments into capital companies may indeed be bound to economic disaster when the romantic affair fails. In her story, Medea transforms from one stereotype to another: from the alluring helper maiden, who makes Jason hero at the cost of her personal life, to a wife and mother, who merges her business with his to have new entrepreneurial projects, including newcos, and then, to the wronged woman, who ends up ruining Jason, his new partners' business prospects and more importantly his filiation. Drawing on Euripides' perception of the ancient Athenian society, her story is rewritten in detail to illustrate possible developments of marriage ruptures within business restructurings with the purpose of enhancing a mutual understanding of Hellenic mythology and corporate reorganizations, but also to compare the evolution of human and natural laws

over the centuries. As shown in most western constitutional principles, natural laws are being gradually incorporated into earthly laws to protect fundamental human rights. Yet, to be effective, these constitutional principles should not remain only on paper, as if they were fictionalised stories, but they must be internalised by all social agents through socio-cultural transformation. Human appetites, however, whether ancient or contemporary, still hinder such an idealistic objective.

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