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Dramatic Space: Translating Euripides' *Medea* into Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian

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Summary. This article analyzes the translations of Euripides' *Medea* into Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian languages. It investigates how translators convey or adapt the original space of ancient theatre and drama in the meta-discourse and discourse of tragedy. The article has three main parts devoted to Benediktas Kazlauskas' Lithuanian translation, Augusts Ģiezens' Latvian translation, and Tiit Palu's Estonian adaptation. Each part is divided into subsections, where the mimetic and diegetic space of ancient drama,

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stage directions, and objects of space: house, bed, and door are analyzed. The meta-discourse of Kazlauskas and Ģiezens is compared to the English translation by David Kovacs. The study examines what new symbolic meanings Euripides assigns to spatial objects and how he reinterprets the meanings of home as a place of security and family, giving it new connotations. The article concludes that the translations of Euripides' *Medea* from the three Baltic countries represent the dramatic space differently because the translators adhere to different ideologies.

The philological translations of Kazlauskas and Ģiezens are similar due to the rendering of the ancient meter and are focused on the reader, while Tiit Palu's adaptation is made for the theatre. Kazlauskas calls Medea's house a "palace", giving the space epicness, solemnity and formality. It can also be seen that his euphemistic language reflects the censorship of the Soviet era – not to translate words denoting the sexual sphere. Ģiezens' translation into Latvian emphasizes the personal and intimate aspects of the drama. Tiit Palu's Estonian adaptation focuses on the psychological depth of the drama, partially preserving the spatial and architectural integrity of the original while contextualizing ancient myth in the contemporary situation to make it more accessible for a modern audience. Each translator adapts the dramatic space to suit cultural contexts, balancing fidelity to Euripides' original with accessibility to modern readers and audiences.

Keywords: Euripides, Medea, ideology in translation, space in translation, Greek tragedy

Introduction

Translations are a complex interplay of choices; the information and meaning of the source text are always richer than what can be fully conveyed in translation (Tymoczko 2012: 166). Translators, in their quest to prioritize, are often faced with the difficult task of sacrificing one code or element for another.

In the realm of literary translation, the ideological dimension, often overlooked, holds significant sway, yet it is a terrain less frequently explored by translators, making it more susceptible to various manipulations. The ideological level is influenced by lexical and grammatical means (such as word choices, use of pronouns, replacing active voice with passive voice; see Schäffner 2003: 23, Puurtinen 2003: 54–55). On the other hand, the ideological level can also be influenced by the choice of textual devices. When

translating elements that construct the ideological code, techniques such as omission, addition, substitution, permutation, mitigation, intensification, and other forms of textual manipulation can be applied (see, e.g., Delabastita 1993). The translator can also ignore the ideological structure or transform it to align with their attitudes and worldview, the attitudes of their era or society.

Analysis of the ideological structure of theatrical texts requires special attention to the concept of space. Space in theatre is not just a physical dimension but a symbolic one that conveys deeper meanings and cultural expressions, that is, in Cassirer's terms, abstract or symbolic space (Cassirer 1944: 42–44). Thus, the geographical location, the movement trajectories and directions of the characters, as well as the distinctions between interior and exterior spaces, crossing or not crossing the boundaries, etc. may carry significant meaning. Various oppositions such as own vs other, culture vs wilderness, civilization vs nature, rich vs poor, etc., can be established within such spatial systems. Space can be intrinsically linked to identity (see Blommaert 2005: 221–224), social relationships (e.g. Lefebvre 1974, Sorokin 1964, Bourdieu 1998), and cultural domain (e.g., Lotman 2005); these dimensions are effectively utilized in theatre texts as well.

Particular attention should also be given to the concept of displacement, which is especially important in the context of *Medea*. Displacement refers to a character being forced out of the community for not sharing the societal norms; however, to be displaced, the person must be first placed into the system (see Randviir 2002: 141–142). Medea is a perfect example of such character: as a person who is first exiled from her homeland, she is compelled to experience a series of exiles, being thus a perpetual outcast. As a result, she dwells in a mental space that is shared with no one else, governed by her own personal values and norms.

Consequently, in any translation or production of *Medea*, already on the verbal level, the spatial elements inevitably contribute to the themes and conflicts of the tragedy. By delving into these spatial dynamics, we can gain a deeper understanding of the intricate in-

terplay between space and ideology in this text. As for the theatrical productions, the staging, set design, and use of physical space are important as well from the aspect of spatial structure of the drama, reinforcing the ideological layers of a tragedy.

This article aims to study the dramatic space in Euripides' tragedy *Medea* and its translations into Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian languages[1]. According to Michael Issacharoff, there can be three types of space in fiction and theatre: architectural, scenographic, and dramatic (Issacharoff 1981: 211). The architectural space was closely related to the dramatic performance space in the ancient Greek theatre. In the fifth century BC, tragic dramatists had at their disposal five spaces determined by the architecture of the theatre building: 1) the *orchēstra*, the performance area immediately in front of the *skēnē*, 2) the invisible area behind the *skēnē* and, 3) that above it and, 4) two invisible areas – the entrances to the *orchēstra* for the actors and the chorus, located on the right of the stage and on the left side, so-called *eisodoi*. The *skēnē* was a house or scenic wall, with entrances and exits directly to the *orchēstra*. The areas (*eisodoi*) were neutral and discrete until activated by verbal description and their relationships to each other defined (Gredley 1987: 27).

David Kovacs, the translator of Euripides' *Medea* into English, described the space of the tragedy *Medea* in this way:

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[1] This is our continued analysis of Baltic translations of Euripides' *Medea*. We published an article about how Euripides brought the theme of xenophobia to the conflict between man and woman in *Medea*, constructed a strong opposition between Greeks (own) and barbarians (foreign), West and East, showing the barbarians as cruel and vengeful people who do not obey the law (Bodniece, Dikmonienė, Lotman 2023).
This article focuses on space analysis: how Euripides, constructing oppositions between house (closed) and public space (open), near and far, gives unexpected and unusual meanings to the concepts of space. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the anonymous referees for their meticulous review and expert feedback, which were of great help in shaping the final version of this paper. We are also grateful to Tiit Palu for providing us with the valuable insight regarding the conception of his production of *Medea*.

> *"Eisodos A leads to the countryside and roads away from Corinth, Eisodos B to the royal palace. The* skene *represents Medea's house. At the end of the play the* mechane *or stage crane is used to transport Medea and her children upon a winged chariot from an imagined spot in the courtyard of her house to the roof above the central door and from there away to her imagined destination in Athens"* (Kovacs 1994: 283).

Translating ancient texts, particularly those of Euripides, is a complex task. Unlike modern plays, Euripides' works were not designed for a reading audience, but for the actors and chorus who would perform them under the poet's guidance (Kovacs 2005: 392). From the discourse of Euripides' tragedies, only verbal dialogical and lyrical parts have survived, while the translators usually translate the verbal parts and supplement it with stage directions or meta-discourse. Both modes of discourse connect with the dramatic space but differ in their functions. Meta-discourse refers only to what the director intends to make visible to the audience. Discourse refers to both the visible and the invisible, such as the space described but not shown on stage (Issacharoff 1981: 214).

Michael Issacharoff has pointed out that two forms of dramatic space are distinguished in discourse: mimetic and diegetic. In theatre, mimetic space becomes visible to the audience and is represented on stage; diegetic space, though invisible, is described and indicated by the characters (Issacharoff 1981: 215). This article analyzes the translations, and their meta-discourse created by the translators, paying attention to the mimetic and diegetic space mentioned in the discourse, especially the translation of different spatial relations and objects (house, bed, door, threshold).

According to Juri Lotman:

> *"Even on the level of supra-textual, purely ideational modelling, the language of spatial relations turns out to be one of the basic means for comprehending reality. The concepts "high-low," "right-left," "near-far," "open-closed," "demarcated-not demarcated" and "discrete-continuous" prove to be the material for constructing cultural models with completely non-spatial content and come to mean "valuable-not valuable," "good-bad," "one's*

own-another's," "accessible-inaccessible," "mortal-immortal," and so on" (Lotman 1977: 218).

In this article, we analyze how the objects in the space allow the creation of cultural models unrelated to the space and how, for example, the concept of interior space acquires new meanings and associations.

1. Space in Lithuanian translation of *Medea* by Euripides

Euripides' *Medea* was first translated from ancient Greek into Lithuanian by Benediktas Kazlauskas in 1960. This translation was fully published for the second time in the collection *Antikinės tragedijos* [Ancient tragedies] in 1988[2]. Kazlauskas turned the original quantitative iambic trimeter and anapestic meters into a syllabo-tonic equivalent. All ancient Greek and Roman tragedies were translated into Lithuanian using the same principle. This translation is philological, with brief comments explaining the myth of the Argonauts and antique names and place names. In his explanations, Kazlauskas did not indicate what the stage of the ancient theatre looked like and how this space is related to the discourse of drama. Kazlauskas' translation of Euripides' *Medea* has never been staged in the Lithuanian theatre by professional actors and directors[3].

[2] Excerpts from the translation of Euripides' *Medea* by Kazlauskas were republished two more times in *Graikų literatūros chrestomatija* [Chrestomathy of Greek literature] in 1963 and 2008.

[3] However, Euripides' *Medea* was staged by director Linas Marijus Zaikauskas in Vilnius at the Lithuanian Russian Drama Theatre in 1994, using a Russian translation by Innokenty Annensky (Иннокентий Анненский). Theatre lovers in Lithuanian have staged *Medea* several times, using the translation by Benediktas Kazlauskas (director-student Ramunė Markevičiūtė at the Vilnius University Theatre in 2011 and amateur director Jonas Buziliauskas at the Anykščiai Cultural Center Theatre in 2019).

A. Meta-discourse

Translators usually explain what the audience would expect to see on stage, where the characters come from, and where they exit from. In Greek tragedy, entrances and exits are usually signaled by the character's dialogue in the text. Kazlauskas wrote a short meta-discourse (stage directions) about the space of this play. Meta-discourses of this type were usually written when translating ancient tragedies into Lithuanian. Let us compare it with David Kovacs' meta-discourse of Euripides' *Medea*.

In the prologue of Euripides' *Medea*, Kazlauskas commented: "The action takes place in the city of Corinth in front of Medea's house. The Nurse comes out of it through the middle door" (*Med*. before 1 line). According to Kovacs, *Eisodos* A leads to the countryside and roads away from Corinth, *Eisodos* B to the royal palace, and the *skēnē* represents Medea's house (Kovacs 1994: 283). Before Nurse's monologue, Kovacs wrote: "Enter Nurse from the house" (*Med*. before 1 line). After the Nurse's monologue, Kazlauskas explains: "The Tutor enters with Medea's two sons" (*Med*. after 49), while Kovacs' stage direction also identifies the entrance of the Tutor: "Enter Tutor by *Eisodos* A, escorting the two sons of Jason and Medea" (*Med*. after 45). The Lithuanian translator never writes which *Eisodos* the characters go from to the *orchēstra* but emphasizes whether they go from the house or the palace.

Thus, Kovacs specifies that the Tutor, accompanied by Medea's children, enters through *Eisodos* A. Aegeus also enters or exits through this same entrance. The *skēnē* represents Medea's house, from which she exits to the *orchēstra* to address the Corinthian women, Creon, Jason, the Nurse, and Aegeus. Creon's palace is located beyond *Eisodos* B. The Corinthian women's chorus, Creon, Jason, the Messenger, and the children, bearing gifts for Glauce, enter and leave through *Eisodos* B.

Kovacs does not specify which side (to the audience's right or left) each *Eisodos* was on. However, according to Christel Stalpaert,

the use of opposites in Greek philosophy is clearly connected with masculinity and femininity and spatial concepts; and every Greek tragedy created a coherent topography framed around a binary east/west and left/right opposition (Stalpaert 2002: 167). According to Ch. Stalpaert, in the theatre of Dionysus (where Euripides directed *Medea*), the actors faced north, like seers who interpreted omens faced north. The audience consequently faced south: the east was on the audience's left-hand side, the west on the audience's right-hand side (Stalpaert 2002: 168). The sense of natural left-to-right progression must have been reinforced by the fact that the Dionysiac procession entered the sanctuary of Dionysus, and the chorus would probably have gathered in the Odeon from the left" (Stalpaert 2002: 168). Thus, it can be assumed that the chorus of Corinthian women entered the *orchēstra* from the left side at the beginning of the *Medea* performance, so *Eisodos* A probably was the left side for the audience, and Creon's palace stood on the right side, so *Eisodos* B was the right side for the audience. (As mentioned, according to Kovacs, the Corinthian women's chorus enters the *orchēstra* through *Eisodos* B (*Med*. after 130), that is, from the side of Creon's palace). According to Ch. Stalpaert, the left side was associated with the east, femininity, nature, and home, and the right side with the west, masculinity, culture, and the agora (Stalpaert 2002: 167–168). Therefore, the entrance of the female chorus would be more logical from the left side (*Eisodos* A). According to David Wiles, the spatial dynamics of Greek tragedy took the form of binary oppositions that converged or collided at the center where the altar (*thymelē*) stood in the *orchēstra* (Wiles 1997: 66).

Kazlauskas mentions only once in his meta-discourse that the Nurse left Medea's house (*Med*. before 1 line). In other directions of the stage, Kazlauskas incorrectly uses the word "palace" instead of "house", referring to Medea's house: Medea's lament is heard "from the palace" (*Med*. after lines 95, 110, 143, 159); "The Nurse goes to the palace" (*Med*. after 204); "Medea comes from the palace, accompanied by the Nurse" (*Med*. after 212); "Medea's children leave the palace" (*Med*. after 893); "Children leave the palace" (*Med*.

after 1069); "Medea, taking a dagger, goes to the palace" (*Med*. after 1250); "The cries of Medea's children are heard from the palace" (*Med*. before 1271). Kazlauskas correctly uses the word "palace", referring to Creon's palace: "The Tutor leaves the palace with both children" (*Med*. after 1001).

Kazlauskas' imprecise definition of the three entrances on the stage and their destinations in the meta-discourse leads to an inaccurate image of the stage space. The stage directions in the Lithuanian translation suggest that Medea and Creon's family reside in the same palace, implying that the conflicting sides should converge in one inner space. This, however, contradicts the established logic of the dramatic space in this play. Kazlauskas offered stage directions on setting (information about the location), emotions and movements of the characters, but the most important emphasis in his meta-discourse is the character's entrance or exit from the stage.

B. Discourse

In Euripides' *Medea*, space is more diegetic than mimetic, creating a dichotomy. There is a stark opposition between the tangible presence of Medea's house, visible on the stage, and the intangible, offstage presence of Creon's palace. From the discourse of the characters, we glean numerous references to the unseen (diegetic) places: the holy spring of Peirene; the house of Medea's father in Colchis; Symplegades – a pair of rocks at the Bosphorus; the Black Sea; the house of Pelias in Iolcus, where Medea persuaded Pelias' daughters to kill their father; Delphi, from which Aegeus comes to Corinth; and Troizen, where he is heading, and Athens, where Medea prepares to fly after killing her children. Medea indirectly mentions the house of Hades and addresses the sky gods. Though not physically represented on stage, these spaces play a significant role in the narrative. This underscores the unique nature of Greek theatre in the fifth BC, which was more oriented towards verbal than visual expression of space.

Kazlauskas mentioned the mimetic space and its objects in *Medea's* meta-discourse: the courtyard of Medea's house, the door of the house, and the chariot with winged dragons. Kazlauskas calls Medea's house "a palace" in meta-discourse synonymously, creating the image that Medea lives in the same palace as Creon. Kazlauskas, while writing the stage directions, does not indicate precisely where Medea's chariot is. He wrote: "In a chariot harnessed by winged dragons, Medea appears with her murdered children" (*Med*. after 1316). Kovacs describes this place more precisely in the meta-discourse, emphasizing that there is another space – above the stage of Medea's house: "Medea appears aloft in a winged chariot upon the *mechane*, which rises from behind the *skene*" (*Med*. after 1316a).

The dramatic discourse refers to the mimetic space of Euripides' *Medea*, such as Medea's house, the door, and the courtyard, where the Nurse, the Tutor with the children, and the Chorus first appear. Medea meets Creon, Jason, Aegeus, the Messenger, the Nurse, the Tutor, and the children in the courtyard – all mimetic characters. "It is essential to realize too that "space" can include any or all of the following: decor, properties, costumes and/or the body of the actor" (Issacharoff 1981: 216).

The dramatic discourse refers to the diegetic space of the house as the rooms of Medea's house (in one of them, Medea cries loudly, and there is Medea's bed, which she previously shared with Jason; in the other, Medea's children with the Tutor). As an antithesis, Euripides creates the dramatic discourse that refers to the diegetic space of Creon's palace. According to Rush Rehm, this is a unique case among Greek tragedies when the poet creates such a strong connection between the scenic and the extra-scenic space – Medea's house and its counterpart in Creon's palace; few tragedies create such a vivid picture of an interior space located in the distance (Rehm 2002: 255). The diegetic character Glauce changes her clothes in her bedroom; sees herself in the mirror, there is Glauce's bed, which she will share with Jason, the door of the palace, Jason's

room, Creon's room, from which he comes to rescue his daughter Glauce, who is dying from poisoned clothes. Medea's house and Creon's palace are implied rooms for servants and other purposes.

C. Internal and exterior spaces. House, bed, and door

According to Juri Lotman:

> *"The essential feature which organizes the spatial structure of a text is the opposition "closed vs. open." Closed space is interpreted in texts in terms of various common spatial images – a house, a city, one's motherland – and is endowed with certain features: "kinship," "warmth," "security," and so on. It stands in opposition to open-ended, "outer" space and its features: "strangeness," "enmity," "cold," and so on. Opposite interpretations of "open" and "closed" are also possible. In this case the boundary becomes the most important topological feature of space. The boundary divides the entire space of the text into two mutually non-intersecting subspaces"* (Lotman 1977: 229).

The house and the door are essential spatial objects in *Medea* play. A house symbolizes a closed, private space protected by walls. The door represents the connection to the public and the outside world while preserving the home from external threats. House, hearth, and bed are symbols of peace and family. Euripides mentions the word δόμος more than 40 times in *Medea*, thus creating a tragedy in which the most critical events are related to the home.

Some scholars point out that Euripides presents the "other" – the barbarian Medea – as a recognizable fifth-century Athenian woman in a domestic environment (Rehm 2002: 252). Such an impression is created by the domestic tone of the play, which begins with a scene between the servants of the house (1–95) and another plays the role of messenger later (1116–1230). Such scenes are closer to Attic comedy than tragedy, where conflicts were often related to an external threat (war, plague, dire oracle prophecies). Euripides sets the drama against Medea's house in Corinth, formerly shared with her husband Jason, their children, and domestic slaves.

The beginning of the conflict arises at home, within the family, where there should be peace, love, and shelter from the troubles of the outside world. First, the Nurse comes to the *orchēstra* in front of Medea's house. She is the first to report that there is no love in the house now, only tears and pain because Jason has betrayed Medea and is marrying the king's daughter, Glauce. The Chorus enters the *orchēstra* to mention that even the women of Corinth beyond their double gates have heard Medea weeping loudly in her house (*Med*. 131–137).

The significance of doors in Euripides' *Medea* has been well analyzed by Rush Rehm (Rehm 2002: 253–267). Jason has come to his former home thrice; he, like Creon, never crosses the threshold of Medea's house. Medea never crosses the threshold of Creon's palace. When Medea was killing her children, the children called for the Chorus to come and save them from Medea, but the Chorus did not cross the threshold of Medea's house. The Chorus, supporting Medea, does not intervene in the events of the action. Thus, we can see that in Euripides' tragedy, the door and gates are the boundary that separates strangers – "others" from "one's own".

Euripides indicates another house in the diegetic space that is friendly to Medea. As mentioned, Kovacs explains in metadiscourse that the women of Corinth come from the same side as Creon's palace. However, Creon is hostile to Medea, and the women of Corinth are very friendly to the Medea, so these women's house could have been on the left side of the stage, opposite Creon's palace.

Kazlauskas interpreted the Choral parts of *Medea* in anapestic meter. He translated that the Chorus sings: "Mes čia prie durų girdėjom / Namuos jos raudojimą graudų [We here at the door heard / her mournful cry in the house]" (*Med*. 134–135). Kazlauskas incorrectly indicates the space. This translation assumes that the Chorus heard Medea's cry at the door of Medea's house. However, the women come from their house to see what has happened, for they heard Medea's loud cries while in their home.

On the other hand, Kazlauskas translated the beginning of the tragedy as accurately as the poetic translation allows. Unlike in the meta-discourse, he did not use the word "palace" as a synonym for Medea's "house" in the discourse, but only "house" and "home". He even inserted the word "home" to reinforce the significance of the home space in the beginning. Kazlauskas translated: "Didžiausia juk palaima būna namuose, / Kada žmona gražiai su vyru sutaria. / Dabar – vieni vaidai, o meilė dingo jų. [The greatest blessing is at home, / When a wife gets along beautifully with her husband. / Now there are only feuds, and their love is gone]" (*Med*. 14–16). Kovacs translated the same lines as follows: „This it is that most keeps a life free of trouble, when a woman is not at variance with her husband. But now all is enmity, and closest ties are diseased."

These lines indicate the space of the house behind the *skēnē*. The Nurse notices that Medea often cries and remembers her beloved father and his home in Colchis. Medea regrets that she killed her brother, left her homeland, and came to her husband in a foreign land. Thus, Medea's current home is "strange" to her, and her father's home and native land from which she is separated is "beloved" (*Med*. 16–35). The Nurse is afraid that Medea will sneak into Creon's palace, where Glauce's bed is, and kill her (*Med*. 41). Euripides repeats the word "bed" (λέχος) 12 times in the tragedy, using it in its original sense and figuratively to mean marriage and sex (*Med*. 41, 380, 491, 555, 568, 571, 591, 672, 697, 1291, 1338, 1367). In Euripides' tragedy, the "bed" is an object in diegetic space that unites man and woman and sustains the home. The house breaks out in tears after Jason leaves Medea alone in bed and moves into Creon's palace, sharing a bed with Glauce.

When Creon tells Medea to leave her home in Corinth, Medea wants to kill Glauce in the bed (*Med*. 41, 380). However, she sends her children to the palace with poisonous gifts that kill Glauce and Creon in their palace. Finally, Medea kills her children in her house and locks the door of the house. Euripides underscores the

public exposure of personal conversations, heightening the sense of vulnerability and lack of privacy at home. The characters do not speak at home. From Medea's house, the audience should hear only Medea's complaints and cries, conversations with herself (*Med*. 96–97; 111–114; 144–147; 160–167), and the cries of the children (*Med*. 1273–1277). All the personal conversations between the characters occur in the public space in front of Medea's house. Home in tragedy no longer fulfils its primary function of protecting family, love, and intimacy. According to Juri Lotman:

> *"What is more important is that the boundary which divides space into two parts must be impenetrable, and the internal structure of each of the subspaces must be different. For example, the space of a fairy tale is clearly divided into "home" and "forest." The border between them is clear-cut-the edge of the forest, or sometimes a river (the battle with the snake almost always takes place on a bridge). The personae of the forest cannot enter the home; they are allowed a definite space. Only in the forest can terrible and miraculous events take place"* (Lotman 1977: 230).

Upon comparing the space in Euripides' tragedy with the fairy tale, a profound reversal becomes apparent: the open space in Euripides' tragedy usurps the function of home security. In this open space, characters can communicate without causing harm, creating a sense of safety. In stark contrast, the house, typically a symbol of security, becomes a threat. Without the faithfully guarded marital bed, the house loses its security and love and acquires the opposite connotations of a threatening open space in the tragedy *Medea*.

Kazlauskas translated the word "bed" into Lithuanian in two ways: leaving the original meaning of furniture or changing it to the definition of marriage and spouses' bed. Euripides uses the word "bed" several times in the sense of "sex" (*Med*. 568, 1338). Kazlauskas always used euphemisms to soften the unpleasant sensations that the reader would experience if it were named literally. Let's compare how Kovacs and Kazlauskas translated verse 568. The Lithuanian translator wrote: "Taip nekalbėtum, jei nedegtum

pavydu" [You wouldn't speak like that if you weren't burning with jealousy]. Kovacs translated: "Not even you would say so if you were not galled by the matter of sex" (εἴ σε μὴ κνίζοι λέχος).

Kazlauskas translated inaccurately and did not specify in the explanations what the prophecy of the oracle, which Aegeus tells Medea (679–681), is about, what is "the wineskin's salient foot" (679). Kovacs explains this line: "Aegeus is bidden in the oracle's riddling terms not to have sexual intercourse before he reaches home". Thus, we can say that in Kazlauskas' translation, expressions of a sexual nature were translated with euphemisms, omissions, or inaccuracies due to the censorship of the Soviet era, thereby diminishing the impact of these elements on the narrative. We may only speculate here, as in the case of the Estonian translator Karl Reitav, who inaccurately translated *True Stories* by Lucian of Samosata, where sexuality is discussed, due to censorship (Näripä 2024: 319). It remains uncertain whether the euphemisms and omissions used by Kazlauskas are the result of imposed censorship or self-censorship shaped by tradition or the cultural context of the Soviet Union.

2. Space in Latvian translation of *Medea* by Euripides

Euripides' *Medea* has been translated into Latvian by Augusts Ģiezens, the most prominent ancient Greek translator in Latvia in the first half of the 20th century. The first publication of the translation was a fragment of the end of the drama – lines 1116–1420 – included in the ancient literature anthology (1951). The translation is close to the source text. Following the established Latvian tradition of ancient literature translation, Ģiezens has rendered the original quantitative iambic trimeter into a syllabo-tonic equivalent and, to the extent that is possible, variations of other rhymes in the choral parts.

The full-length translation of the drama, with corrections to the previously published excerpt, was included in the collection of ancient Greek tragedies (1975), alongside works by Aeschylus and

Sophocles. It was later reprinted with some editorial corrections in the edition of a selection of Euripides' dramas (1984) alongside Ābrams Feldhūns' translations. Both editions were edited and commentated on by Feldhūns. The commentary of each drama provides detailed information about its staging, as well as an account of the myth, telling what happened before the events described in the drama. It also explains the proper names, ethnonyms, mythological terms, as well as artistic expression – epithets, metaphors.

Both editions are accompanied by a bibliography of source texts, introductions to the history, structure, and reception of ancient drama, as well as information on the authors of the dramas and analyses of their works. Ģiezens' translation has never been staged in the Latvian theatre[4].

A. Meta-discourse

At the beginning of the Latvian translation there is a one-sentence introduction to the setting of the stage. It states that the drama takes place in front of Medea's house in Corinth. The meta-discourse is created providing references to the entrances and exits of the characters. Ģiezens does not specify where the characters are going and where they are coming from. Ancient theatre terms like *skēnē, orchēstra, eisodoi* are absent from descriptions. These resemble modern play descriptions, not tailored to specific theatres, simply clarifying characters' stage actions, disregarding the architecture of the theatre.

Unlike Kazlauskas in the Lithuanian translation, Ģiezens calls Medea's house a house (latv. *māja*), not palace (latv. *pils*). For example, at the beginning of the drama "Medea's old nurse comes out of the house" (*Med*. before 1); the first monologue of Medea "behind the stage[5]" (*Med*. before 96); "Medea comes out of the

[4] However, director Vladislavs Nastavševs staged Euripides' *Medea* at the Mikhail Chekhov Riga Russian Theatre in 2016 using a Russian translation by Innokenty Annensky (Иннокентий Анненский).

[5] Ģiezens uses a contemporary theatre term "stage" (latv. *skatuve*).

house" (*Med*. before 214); "children enter the house" (*Med*. before 1078); "children's voices in the house" (*Med*. after 1270); "[boy] from the inside of the house" (*Med*. before 1273, 1274).

The entrances and exits of characters are described without any reference to space. For example, "a chorus of Corinthian women enters" (*Med*. before 133); "Jason enters" (*Med*. after 445); "Jason leaves" (*Med*. after 622); "Jason arrives with Nurse" (*Med*. after 865); "Tutor takes children away" (*Med*. before 899); "Jason with children and Tutor goes away" (*Med*. after 975); "Tutor returns with children" (*Med*. before 1002).

The Greek text does not mention guards or court people accompanying Creon or Aegeus when they meet with Medea. But the Latvian translation reads: "Creon arrives accompanied by guards" (*Med*. after 270); "Creon leaves accompanied by guards" (*Med*. after 356); "Aegeus arrives with companions" (*Med*. after 661). These characters are the translator's invention. Moreover, the king's guards and Medea's servants are listed with the other characters in the last publication of the drama in 1984.

Ģiezens tends to highlight the dynamics of the stage action by adding emotional tone to the descriptions. For example, he describes the last entrance of Jason at the end of the drama as running in (*Med*. after 1292) to emphasize his despair after realizing Medea's evil deeds. Running Jason is not mentioned in the spoken text of the drama. When Medea mentions in her speech that the Messenger is running, the translator notes that in the description of the entrance of the Messenger (*Med*. after 1120).

Sometimes the descriptions reveal characters' attitudes. For example, at the beginning of the drama, "[Nurse] sees the Tutor approaching with children" (*Med*. before 46); when Jason tries to convince Medea that his marriage to Creusa will benefit them all including Medea: "Medea makes a gesture of indignation" (*Med*. after 550).

The instructions to actors usually come from the spoken text, for example: "Medea grasps Creon's knees" (*Med*. before 324); "[Medea speaks] throwing herself at Aegeus feet" (*Med*. 708); or

they are implied from the text: "[Medea] turning to house and inviting children to come to her" (*Med*. before 894); "Servant brings the diadem and the dress. Medea hands them to children" (*Med*. after 955); "Medea appears with children's corpses sitting in the winged dragon chariot" (*Med*. after 1316); "Medea drives away in the dragon's chariot" (*Med*. after 1404). The translator uses the addresses of the part of speech to divide long monologues and choral parts. These descriptions serve more like explanatory notes to readers or stage directors.

Ģiezens' translation follows an established tradition. It is intended for the philological translation (see Nord 2018: 47) of ancient texts into Latvian. So, his approach to the dramatic space in the Latvian translation is text-explanatory. It does not try to replicate the setting of ancient theatre. Instead, it adjusts it to modern audiences.

The translation reduces the meta-discourse to two spaces. The main one is in front of Medea's house. It is visible to the public; however, the other space – inside the house – is not visible to the audience but can be heard.

B. Discourse

As discussed in the previous section, meta-discourse does not expand mimetic space. This is because the stage movement descriptions lack details. They only repeat what is in the spoken text. The drama's diegetic space is large. This is because the characters' dialogues and monologues reveal the plot and past events.

The Latvian translation of the drama is philological. It has all the places from the source text mentioned and ancient place names rendered into Latvian, reflecting the vast geography of the drama. For example, we know that the drama is set in Corinth. From the characters' conversations, we learn more about the city. They mention a spring and the temple of Hera Akraia. We also learn about Colchis – Medea's homeland. In the opening monologue of the drama, the Nurse speaks about the origins of the ship Argo. She came from Pelion Mountain and journeyed through Symplegades.

Aegeus is the king of Athens. He tells Medea about his recent visit to the oracle at Delphi and his plan to see Pittheus, the ruler of Troizen. He also promises Medea to shelter her in Athens if she manages to get there on her own.

The commentaries on the translation are extensive. They reveal the locations of places mentioned in the text, also explaining how those places are referred to now. The commentaries also explain the meaning of these places and some related facts. These facts help to understand the world of the drama. Places not stated outright are conveyed metaphorically, such as "salty gateway" in *Med.* 212 instead of the Bosphorus. The commentaries are a useful tool for better understanding of the diegetic space.

The 1975 Latvian translation reveals that the source text came from Teubner's 1921 edition. The Greek text in this edition lacks meta-discourse. However, two hypotheses[6] introduce the drama. One is anonymous. The other comes from Aristophanes of Byzantium, an Alexandrian scholar from the 3rd to 2nd century. The commentary section does not provide a summary of Euripides' plot. Instead, there is a synopsis of events that preceded the drama – conflict between Jason's father Aeson and his half-brother Pelias over the rule of Iolcus; the escape of Phrixus and Helle to Colchis on a golden ram; Jason's journey on the ship Argo and his meeting with Medea. It also tells of the events that led them to Corinth. Since no other sources are indicated, it can be assumed that this synopsis was created by Feldhūns.

C. Internal and exterior spaces. House, door, bed, and the boundaries between them

The text's spatial structure shows oppositions between inside and outside spaces, defining the boundaries between them. A house represents a character's inner world and integrity. Euripides uses

6 In its ancient usage, hypothesis is a summary of the plot often printed as a preface to the text in the editions of ancient dramas.

δόμος to cover all this idea. However, the Latvian translation has different takes. Medea's house and the palace where Creon, Creusa, and Jason live are separate. There are different translations of δόμος depending on context. Medea lives in the house (latv. *māja*) and Creon lives in the palace (latv. *pils*). For example, Creon says: "es pilī neatgriezīšos" [I won't return to the palace] (*Med.* 275); Medea says: "liesmām pili aprīt ļaut, kur jaunie guļ" [let the flames swallow the palace where the young couple sleep] (*Med.* 378) and "kad pilī ielavos, lai viņiem atriebtos" [when I sneak in the palace to get revenge on them] (*Med.* 382); "nu, maziņie, uz pili grezno steidzieties" [go on, little ones, hurry to the palace] (*Med.* 969); "dēlēni ar tēvu pilī atnāca" [sons came to the palace with their father] (*Med.* 1135). In some places Medea's house is translated as room "istaba" (*Med.* 40) or "kambaris" (*Med.* 1939). The word "nams" has a broader meaning: house, realm, dynasty. It is used for Medea's household. For example, in "Lai bojā aiziet viss šis nams!" [Let this whole house perish!] (*Med.* 115); "Tu varētu šai namā dzīvot mierīgi" [You could live peacefully in this house] (*Med.* 448) and palace as household "tikko viņš [Jāsons] ar taviem abiem bērniem namu atstājis" [as soon as he has left the house with both of your children] (*Med.* 1158). These examples show how different translations of the same Greek word serve to create nuanced notions of space in Latvian translation.

This is even more clear in translating semantically loaded notions, like the concept of bed (λέχος) in Euripides' *Medea*. First, it is a piece of furniture. But, in the drama, the word's meaning expands to include marriage, wife, and sex. The original metaphors cannot be translated word-for-word. So, the metaphorical use of the word λέχος is not translated directly. Instead, it is replaced with a Latvian metaphor. A bed is an object of internal space, see *Med.* 591, 672, and 1291 representing not just a place to sleep. It also symbolizes the unity of a husband and wife. So, it can be translated as marriage, see *Med.* 206, 436, 571, 887, and sex. Yet, the Latvian translations of λέχος in the sense of sex are usually obscure and figurative. For example, "Tu esi man apnikusi" [I got tired of you] (*Med.* 555), or

is omitted entirely: "tu teiktu "jā", ja greizisrdīga nebūtu" [you would have said "yes" if you were not jealous] (*Med.* 568) and "šos aiz greizsirdības nokāvi" [you killed them out of jealousy] (*Med.* 1338). Kovac translates it as: "you killed them because of sex and the marriage-bed". A euphemism for the word "bed" in Latvian translation is used due to censorship, which reveals the ideological restrictions of the Soviet period and their influence on the translation (see Lange 2012; Veisbergs 2022; Zauberga 2001).

The Latvian translation introduces a metaphor of bed in line 240: ὅπως ἄριστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτῃ [how she must best deal with her co-sleeper], Latvian translation reads as: "ar kādu vīru viņai gulta dalāma" [what husband does she share a bed with]. This example shows how the poetics of target text is created by rendering the poetics of the source text.

A door is a physical object. It represents the division of inside and outside space. This division is both physical and emotional. Thus, the door is a border that nobody can cross. For example, at the start of the drama, Tutor asks Nurse why she is standing next to the door and speaking to herself (*Med.* 50), Corinthian women hear Medea's despair through the door (*Med.* 135). Even when they hear desperate children being killed inside the house, they never go in (*Med.* 1270–1275).

Medea's house is her universe. There she can be her own mistress even when the outside world becomes more hostile and dismissive towards her. For instance, realized that she will be evicted from Corinth, Medea plots revenge and refers to her sacred guardian: "Es zvēru, minot valdnieci Hekati, [...] kas svēti sargā manu mājas pavardu". [I swear invoking mistress Hecate [...] who sacredly protects my hearth] (*Med*. 395–397). Corinthian women know Medea's plan to kill-her children. However, they do not intervene praying to the Sun god instead, asking him to expel Medea from her home: "Projām no mājām dzen slepkavu asiņu kāro" [chase the bloodlust murderer out of home] (*Med.* 1259). The door protects Medea's power and resilience.

3. Space in Estonian translation of *Medea* by Euripides

Euripides' *Medea* has never been translated to Estonian directly from the original text. Yet it has been produced in Vanemuine Theatre by Estonian stage director and actor Tiit Palu (2018), who himself translated the text into Estonian, with the English translation by Cecelia Luschnig and the German translation by Johann Hartung as a basis[7]. As his version is made for the theatre (for more details on the distinction between theatre- and reader-oriented drama translations see Aaltonen 2000: 33–38), he significantly adjusted the text to fit his conception, interpreting the tragedy in the context of the European refugee crisis in 2015–2016. Such an approach is quite characteristic of Palu's directorial style: he has similarly staged works from both Estonian and world classics. However, in the case of *Medea*, Palu did not know ancient Greek and had to rely on translations. He selected quite randomly two freely available translations from the internet but conducted thorough background research using various materials on *Medea*, including different encyclopedic and popular writings, as well as other interpretations of the play.[8] Therefore, it is essentially an adaptation that sometimes tends to a free interpretation.

The tragedy has also been published: Palu included it in his collection of plays released in 2022. In addition to *Medea*, this collection contains two other plays: *Põlenud mägi* (The Burnt Mountain) and *Lugusid loomadest* (Stories of Animals). The collection is not thematically connected, and it does not include other works based on antiquity.

Tiit Palu's *Medea* is in prose form, with iambic passages incorporated into the text. There are four characters in the play: Medea, Jason, Creon and finally, the Chorus as a separate character. All the

7 Previously, *Medea* has been staged in Estonia in 1930 at the Estonia Theatre, but the stage work was based on an adaptation by Franz Grillparzer (1821).

8 Tiit Palu to Maria-Kristiina Lotman (04.03.2018).

parts were played by women – the stage director himself justified this by wanting to explore what can happen to traditional divisions of the sexes, thought patterns, contradictions, when not a man and a woman, but just two persons are facing each other on the stage, and whether new human sore points can arise here (Hanson 2018).

A. Meta-discourse

As part of the minimalistic design of the play (no stage decoration, no props), the script has no stage directions either, neither concerning the space nor that of the movements of actors. The meta-discourse is also absent from the published version of the tragedy: unlike the other plays in the collection, which include stage directions, *Medea* is distinctive in its lack of any metatextual remarks. In a certain sense, the chorus fulfils this role by introducing the past and predicting the future, while the characters themselves provide considerable background information and introspection.

However, the space plays central role in the staging, as the director himself has explained[9] that spatial structuring was the basis for the entire concept: it was not before the space was designed by the director and the set designer Eugen Tamberg that the work on the stage text began. The notional place where the events start to unfold is the street in front of Medea's house and everything is centered around the wind chimes, which has a special meaning as weather reports permeate the text and which is placed in the middle of the stage. The backdrop (*skēnē*) is black, while the *orchēstra* is white (see also Oruaas 2018). The structure of the text supports the movement between inner and outer worlds: with the monologues, everything shifts to the inner room and inner speech, while the dialogues mark the movement to the shared here-and-now space.[10]

9 Tiit Palu to Maria-Kristiina Lotman (12.06.2024).
10 Tiit Palu to Maria-Kristiina Lotman (12.06.2024).

B. Discourse

Due to the concept of the production, the Estonian version of *Medea* lacks a mimetic space almost entirely; everything is notional. The diegetic space is revealed to us only through the monologues and dialogues of the characters: these mention both interior spaces and various exterior environments, both near and far. Palaces and rooms, ships and ports, forests and the sea, foreign and familiar spaces are all mentioned. More explicit are the place names: Colchis and Corinth, but also Athens, Iolcus, Delphi. However, place names that the director presumably considered too burdensome for the Estonian audience are omitted, such as Peirene, Troizen, and the Bosporus. Still, some more exotic place names add color to the text, among them Symplegades. Of the abodes of the gods, Olympus is mentioned, but not Hades – Medea does not explicitly name the realm of death, instead describing it simply as an eternally dark and silent place.

C. Internal and exterior spaces

As already mentioned, in the Estonian version of the tragedy, speech acquires a kind of spatial meaning: each character's words create their own space. Thus, the theme of interior and exterior spaces is intricately organized in the tragedy: each monologue is a turn inward, while dialogues are directed outward. At the same time, each character's inner world has its own conceptual spatial structure.

Medea is a double exile: in her inner world, her childhood land holds a special place, which she recalls in her memories as her real home where she was very young and full of expectations and hopes. The chorus also recalls this as the place where Medea and Jason first met and fell in love. Conversely, the palace of Corinth, which is presently the home for her and her children but from which she must leave, also holds an important place in her inner world. A special significance, however, is attached to her native language, which is a space of its own that Medea longs to return to

with all her heart. The space of her native language is in a distant land, in a forest thick with images, where fledglings' wings are not yet strong, where flowers are covered with the first snow, and where wolves wander on the mountains (Palu 2022: 104). Here we see again how the traditional opposition – wilderness as foreign and dangerous and domestic as guarded and secure – is reversed in the text. In this safe place, protected from strangers, a song in her native language is situated into which Medea takes her children at the end of the tragedy (Palu 2022: 111): "Täna õhtul laulan unelaulu oma poegadele, laulan nende emakeeles, viin nad lauldes endaga kaugele maale. Ma laulan neile linnupoegadest, kelle tiivad ei kanna. Laulan lilledest, millele sajab esimene lumi. Laulan huntidest mägedes, kes ei tea iial, mida toob homme. Laulu lõpust saab alguse vaikus. Selles vaikuses ei kuule sa endagi häält." [Tonight, I will sing a lullaby to my sons, I will sing in their mother tongue, I will take them with me to a distant country. I sing to them about the baby birds who are not yet carried by their wings. I sing about flowers on which the first snow falls. I sing about wolves in the mountains who never know what tomorrow will bring. Silence begins at the end of the song. You can't even hear your own voice in this silence.]

Jason's inner monologue in his opening monologue already shows that his hopes and dreams are tied to what lies outside the palace: he longs to build a ship and sail to the ends of the world, away from these oppressive rooms, because only becoming a hero offers the faint possibility of escaping death (Palu 2022: 77). Moreover, the sea symbolizes love for him, with himself as a ship sailing on it and the islands as different women he must reach and leave behind, even if it causes pain (Palu 2022: 100). Jason's axis is horizontal and directed toward the skyline, his path is linear, and while Medea's direction is backward-oriented, Jason only looks ahead.

Creon's axis, on the other hand, is vertical: he constantly looks towards the clouds gathering heavily in the sky, so that the cloudless sky is only a memory at this point, being also a memory of a

time when there were no barbarians threatening the kingdom on the horizon. During Creon's reign, the palace has become a sad place, as illustrated by his description (Palu 2022: 80): "Kui tahan kuulda oma lossis naeru, pean selleks palkama näitlejad ja neid enne jootma. See joobnute naer on kunagiste pilvitute õhtute aheraine." [If I want to hear laughter in my palace, I must hire actors and get them drunk first. This drunken laughter is the remnant of once cloudless evenings.] The palace is stuffy and hot, and it is impossible for Creon to sleep there: thus, he longs to retreat to the palace cellar, which is cool and quiet, so that after Jason comes to power, he can withdraw there and thoroughly rest – the downward direction symbolizes retreating from the vertical axis of power (Palu 2022: 78–79).

D. Boundaries

As we have seen, the Estonian adaptation also presents a strong contrast between interior and exterior spaces, supported by the structure of the work itself: with the beginning of a monologue, we enter the character's inner world, while in dialogue, external worlds meet. However, each character also has their own space, which is equally delineated. Creon's space is his palace, where he moves, as he himself puts it, between the throne and the bed. From above, he is pressed down by clouds that already outline his own boundaries (Palu 2022: 80). His space is closed: although he talks about moving between different points within it, he never mentions leaving it. The outside world is dangerous and aggressive, increasingly closing in on him.

Jason has two spaces: the palace, which oppresses him, and the open sea, which awaits him. In his monologues, the port functions as a door: it is the place that connects the two spaces, and passing through it is every man's dream. However, his dream does not come true: when Medea kills his new family, he is forced, as manners dictate, to stay in the palace to bury and mourn them – accompanied by Medea's wish that this lasts as long as possible

until Jason becomes old and dies abandoned by all (Palu 2022: 111).

Medea also has two spaces: the oppressive foreign-language space and the longed-for native-language space. On their border is the silence of a secret tomb, where true power is hidden (Palu 2022: 97). Only through this can she return to her native-language space.

In conclusion, Tiit Palu's loose adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* does not adhere to the original's spatial meanings but creates an entirely new, uniquely interesting structure where each character has their own complex spatial world, a personal interplay between familiar and foreign. The ideological markers that are significant in the original text are absent from Palu's version. In the stage design, there are no doors, palaces, courtyards, or bedrooms with associated objects. This choice entirely deconstructs the mimetic space of the original work. The diegetic space is also reorganized, but not randomly; it is done within a very specific ideological framework, where the internal and external worlds of the characters are clearly distinguished, highlighting the dichotomy between the own and the other. While Creon and Medea are closely connected with their own worlds, Jason stands apart due to his attraction to the foreign, and this ultimately proves to be his downfall – after all, he is the one who caused Medea's transgression and brought her away from her homeland, setting the entire tragedy in motion. The ideological structure of the work must also be considered in the context of the refugee crisis that erupted in Europe during the time of the play's production: in particular, Creon's xenophobic monologues should be interpreted against this backdrop.

Conclusions

In the tragedy *Medea*, Euripides constructs the dramatic space through the dichotomy of closed (house, palace) and open (courtyard in front of Medea's house, roads leading to Greek cities), mimetic (visible) and diegetic (invisible) space. In *Medea*, the house, bed, and door symbolize domesticity, security, and familial bonds, contrasted with the hostile external world. Euripides' repetition

of the word δόμος (house) underscores the centrality of domestic space, and significant events are tied to the home, emphasizing the tragedy's intimate, domestic conflicts. The main space is the courtyard of Medea's house in Corinth, which is the scene of most of the action. Although not shown from the inside, the house is a significant interior space representing Medea's personal realm and psychological state. This spatial arrangement emphasizes her themes of exile, domesticity, and power dynamics. The house is a fortress of Medea's inner anxiety and revenge plans, which her enemies cannot enter, and the outside world symbolizes the norms of society. Medea's home is not a place of safety but of revenge and killing.

The spatial structure of the play also highlights boundaries, primarily through the symbolic use of doors. This door separates Medea's private world from her public world. The Greek words δόμος (house) and λέχος (bed) have multiple layers of meaning, referring to physical spaces and symbolic concepts such as family, marriage, love, sex, and personal sanctuary. Euripides uses these spaces to explore themes of betrayal, revenge, and the clash of individual desires and societal expectations.

The Lithuanian meta-discourse of Benediktas Kazlauskas tends to elevate the status of Medea's house to a "palace", thereby strengthening the narrative's royal and tragic dimension. This choice emphasizes the formality of the setting and the translator's desire to bring out the grandeur of the dramatic space. Kazlauskas' translation of *Medea* into Lithuanian exhibits differences in spatial meta-discourse and dramatic discourse compared to translations like that of Kovacs. Kazlauskas' imprecise stage directions and simplified spatial references contrast with the more detailed and contextually grounded directions in Kovacs' translation. A euphemism for the word "bed" is used due to censorship, which reveals the ideological restrictions of the Soviet period.

The Lithuanian version maintains a balance between fidelity to the original text and the story's accessibility for modern readers. Kazlauskas' translation is not free, but it cannot be concluded that

it strictly corresponds to the original. It is a poetic and philological translation with comments. It preserves the cultural specificity of the original.

Augustus Ģiezens' translation into Latvian is characterized by philological accuracy and adherence to the tradition of translating ancient Greek literature in Latvia. The translation prefers "house" (māja) to "palace" (pils), thus focusing on the intimate, personal aspects of the drama rather than royal grandeur. This choice makes Medea's struggles and emotions more relatable to the audience, emphasizing the human rather than the epic scale of the tragedy. He also adds emotional tones and dynamics in the meta-discourse, such as indicating that Jason "runs" into the scene, which is not present in the original text. These choices indicate an effort to make the narrative more emotional and accessible to the audience, while maintaining philological accuracy in the discourse. Ģiezens' translation includes extensive commentaries that provide readers with the necessary context to understand the mythological and historical references, enhancing the text's educational value.

The Estonian adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* also emphasizes the architectural and spatial elements of the original play. It retains the original Greek terms or their equivalents, preserving the cultural and historical context of the drama. However, Tiit Palu's adaptation of *Medea* diverges from the original's spatial meanings, creating a unique structure where each character's complex spatial world reflects their inner and outer struggles. While Jason dreams of the foreign, Medea yearns to return home, and Creon fears the encroachment of the outside world. Tiit Palu's adaptation pays special attention to the boundaries between interior and exterior spaces, highlighting the psychological and emotional states of the characters. It also reflects the universality of the play's themes: its ideological conception, although timeless, had direct relations to the political situation in the years of production in Estonia and the whole Europe.

In the translations of Euripides' *Medea* into Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian languages, efforts are made to maintain the dramatic

space of the original, adapting it to the linguistic and cultural context of the target audiences. Each translation reflects a different ideological approach. Lithuanian translation emphasizes grandeur and formality, is closer to the epic narrative style, and preserves the historical names of places. Translation into Latvian emphasizes intimate, personal aspects and increases philological and educational value by providing detailed comments. The Estonian adaptation, which also preserves the original terms, focuses on the psychological depth of the play. These translations balance between being faithful to Euripides' original play and making it accessible to the Baltic audience.

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