Neophron and Euripides' Medeia 1056-80

Ann N. Michelini

Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-), Volume 119 (1989), 115-135.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0360-5949%281989%29119%3C115%3ANAEM1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-) is published by The Johns Hopkins University Press. Please contact the publisher for further permissions regarding the use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/journals/jhup.html.

Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)
©1989 American Philological Association

JSTOR and the JSTOR logo are trademarks of JSTOR, and are Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. For more information on JSTOR contact jstor-info@umich.edu.

©2003 JSTOR

http://www.jstor.org/
Tue Mar 4 14:27:49 2003

Transactions of the American Philological Association 119 (1989) 115–135

NEOPHRON AND EURIPIDES' *MEDEIA* 1056–80

ANN N. MICHELINI
The University of Cincinnati

In 1938 Denys Page attempted to dismiss ancient evidence indicating that the obscure playwright Neophron had produced a direct literary predecessor of the Euripidean *Medeia*. Page's arguments were soundly refuted in 1944 by E. A. Thompson, who pointed to the highly reliable fourth century sources that confirm a fifth century date for a *Medeia* by Neophron.[1] The supposition that a contemporary forgery or mistake could have imposed upon Aristotle or his pupils seems little short of preposterous.[2] Page also raised objections to the language of the fragments attributed to Neophron. While there are a few oddities,[3] none of them offers proof of a later date or is altogether impossible for a fifth century poet. The most striking, φεῦ in the final syllable of the trimeter, can be corrected by a simple emendation.[4] Page's complaints about the quality of Neophron's poetry are, as Thompson remarked,[5] irrelevant, since we are in no position to estimate the general level of the competitors of the great playwrights whose work has survived.

[1] Materials cited frequently will be found in the Reference List at the end of this article. The hypothesis to the Euripidean play cites both Dikaiarchos and the *Hypomnemata* of Aristotle (see the following note). Whatever doubts may be raised about the authorship of the second work, it was undoubtedly a product of Aristotle's school; see Thompson, 10. As for Dikaiarchos, he carried forward Aristotelian work on the didascalic records of tragic performances and would thus have known precisely whether a Neophron was active in the fifth century and whether his version of Medeia's story antedated Euripides'. Such authorities we are bound to respect, if we regard any ancient evidence as valid (see Manuwald, 51; Thompson, 10–11).

[2] Page himself (xxxii) advances this suggestion with considerable caution: "The authorities quoted...are not absolutely binding...[Contrary evidence] incline[s] the balance of probability slightly toward rejection of the story, but not more than slightly." For Thompson's remarks see 10; and cf. Manuwald, 50–51. The precise citation in Dikaiarchos is missing from the hypothesis, which reads ὡς Δικαίαρχος...τοῦ τῆς Ἑλλάδος βίου καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ὑπομνήμασι (see Neophron *TrGF* 15, T2); but it is evident that not much more than the citation (e.g. ἐν α′) can reasonably be supposed to be lacking, see Page, xxx n. 5.

[3] Πρὶν ἢ 'ξαμαρτεῖν is rightly dismissed by Thompson as "nothing more than...a false transliteration" (12). Page objected to ἤλυθον, but Thompson cited *Kresphontes* (Fr. 451N), datable to the early 420s. Other usages—such as μέγας modifying θυμός or the adjective βροχωτός—that struck Page as tasteless or unusual prove little for the date either way. (For the text of the Neophron fragments, see notes 47 and 51, below.)

[4] See Thompson, 13 n. 1. Manuwald remarks that this "unbestrittene Anomalie" proves nothing for the date (52).

[5] P. 12: "Page...appears to assume that the fact that Neophron's poetry is bad is sufficient indication that he cannot have written in the middle of the fifth century B.C...[but] there is no reason for supposing that bad technique, bombast, and other poetic vices were unknown in the Periclean or any other age."

Thompson's article was largely ignored; and, partly because of the wide use and great prestige of Page's commentary, the evidence about Neophron continued to be neglected. In 1983, however, Bernd Manuwald, recapitulating Thompson's arguments, demonstrated again the strong probability that the theme of Medeia's infanticide was not introduced to Athenian tragedy by Euripides.[6] The way would now seem open for a reconsideration of the two plays and of their interconnection. But Manuwald's acceptance of the Neophron fragments has contributed only marginally to the interpretation of the Euripidean *Medeia*,[7] since he, like an increasing number of scholars recently, believes that the portion of the Euripidean play that overlaps with the major fragment of Neophron (*TrGF* 15.2) is an interpolation.[8] If the second half of Medeia's great soliloquy (1021–80), is no longer considered as Euripidean, then the major evidence of the interrelation between the two plays has disappeared. It may not be wholly accidental that Neophron's rehabilitation coincides with the current dominance of those who would excise. Excisions from received texts have often helped to solve literary problems by eliminating the texts that produced them. In this case, an unvoiced awareness of the distasteful link between Euripides and a lesser playwright may have led some scholars to ignore the evidence about Neophron, as it did others to distrust the text of the Euripidean speech.

Scholars have differed as to how much of Medeia's long speech must be shorn away. Ulrich Hübner has recently followed up the hints of M. D. Reeve by cutting back as far as 1039, thus removing all Medeia's changes of mind with one stroke.[9] Others have been content to remove only two or three lines;[10]

[6] Manuwald, Anhang 1, 50–56. A few earlier scholars accepted the evidence on Neophron, particularly K. von Fritz and B. Snell in *Szenen aus griechischen Dramen* (Berlin 1971) 199–205. Von Fritz ("Die Entwicklung der Iason-Medea-Sage und die *Medea* des Euripides," *A & A* 8 [1959] 41–42) scouted Wilamowitz' attempt to dismiss Neophron as the product of a Peloponnesian conspiracy (U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, "Excurse zu Euripides' *Medeia*," *Hermes* 15 [1880] 487).

[7] Manuwald does point out that the complex treatment of Medeia's motivation, as well as the hints in the prologue, would be ineffective, if a play in which Medeia murders her children were a complete innovation (40–41).

[8] Manuwald, Anhang 2, 56–61. Reviving sporadic earlier suggestions, Gerhard Müller attacked the passage, along with numerous others in the play, in 1951. E. Bethe's 1918 article ("Medea-Probleme" *Berichte* über die Verhandlgn. der sächs. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig, Philol.-histor. Kl., 70.1) has often been cited by excisers; but Bethe, following a bizarre literary theory popular at the time, was attempting to trace any irregularities in the work to a fanciful reconstruction of the artist's compositional techniques (2). In fact, Bethe's account, by showing how deeply the illogic at 1059–61 is rooted in other parts of the play, tends to undermine the arguments for excision; see note 63, below. Albin Lesky's conclusion in 1972 (*Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* [Göttingen] 311) that Müller had found few supporters was not to stand. In response to H-D. Voigtländer (1957), M. D. Reeve took up the cudgels (1972). His arguments, concentrating only on this passage, were more effective and have led to the bracketing of the passage in the new Oxford edition of Diggle (1984), cf. also O. Zwierlein (1978). For recent defenses, see below, note 16.

[9] Hübner, "Zum fünften Epeisodion der *Medea* des Euripides," *Hermes* 112 (1984) 401–18. Reeve, 60; cf. 61 n. 1 and the comments of Erbse (1981) 67.

[10] G. A. Seeck felt that excision of 1060–61 would be sufficient ("Euripides, *Medea* 1059–68: A Problem of Interpretation," *GRBS* 9 [1968] 291–307); Lloyd-Jones removed 1059–61. Both also excise 1062–63, see note 12, below.

and recently David Kovacs has argued for "minor surgery," the removal of some seven lines.[11] In this paper I will make a case for the retention of the transmitted text of the speech[12] and will then consider the relation of the whole speech to the Neophronian model. The second argument should strengthen and explicate the first.

Certain qualities in the great speech, and in the scene that contains it, have both provoked and facilitated critical adventurism. Remarkably in such a tightly plotted drama, the scene presents no material necessary to plot developments: even the news that the fatal gift has been accepted will be recapitulated later by the messenger. Surgery will not cause much obvious damage. Medea's speech too is very long and quite repetitive in structure: it is tempting to conclude that part of it will not be missed. A final factor is the unparalleled form of the speech; it involves a number of unexampled stage actions that have provoked critical suspicion.[13] But oddity in itself cannot be sufficient to prove inauthenticity, especially since shortening the scene further only makes it more anomalous. At about eighty lines, this is among the shortest scenes in Euripides, if we define a scene as a portion of trimeter dialogue enclosed between two major choral interludes.[14] Since the great speech is really the only reason for the scene's existence, the monumental extension of the speech seems appropriate to its setting.

The differing assumptions of textual critics and literary critics—we might call them "surgeons" and "internists"—become evident in the influential article of Reeve,[15] who argued that interpretation of the play as a whole is out of place in discussions of textual authenticity: the only adequate way of countering an attack on the text "is to go through the speech line by line and dispose of each difficulty as it arises."[16] But this attempt to dictate techniques cannot be

[11] 1986, 352. Kovacs would also remove 1062–63; but these lines have not been accepted by most editors and commentators, see the following note.

[12] With the exception of lines 1062–63, which have been excised by almost all commentators who believe the passage to be otherwise intact; see discussion by Diller (270 n. 1) and Erbse (1981, 73–74) of the type of interpolation here, in which lines have been transferred from another location (1240–41). Those who propose retention of 1062–63 have generally done so as part of an argument for excision of larger areas, e.g., Müller (76), Reeve (52–53), Kovacs (347).

[13] Medeia first addresses the children exclusively, then turns away to the chorus, then commands the children inside, then (apparently) addresses herself, then states (apparently to the chorus) a determination to readdress the children. Objections to the staging have been countered by Steidle (163–64) and Erbse (1981, 67–69).

[14] *Alk.* has two short scenes (136–212; 476–567); but it might be a special case. The *Med.* scene ends, not with an antistrophic ode, but with a piece unique in Euripides. Elsewhere (e.g., *Med.* 357–63, 759–63), brief anapaestic or lyric interludes mark a scene-change, without setting off a separate episode. But these anapaests extend for 34 lines, creating a pause equivalent to any choral ode in the play, see Walther Kranz, *Stasimon: Untersuchungen zu Form und Gehalt der griechischen Tragödie*: (Berlin 1933) 202. We may compare the parodos of *Hec.*, which consists of a long choral anapaestic sequence (98–152).

[15] Reeve reinforced Müller's original proposal for excision by eliminating some of the latter's less-persuasive arguments (57), arguments based on an interpretation of the play as a whole.

[16] P. 57. Reeve's article exemplifies the powerful negative effects of the method he recommends: he lists objections line by line and then repeats the process in his refutation of Voigtländer's reply to Müller. Note that Dyson (1987, 23)

accepted. It is easy enough to raise a number of more-or-less persuasive objections to a difficult passage; and any defense of the received text is clearly weakened, if opponents are barred from showing the interconnections that make "sense" out of a passage. Worse yet, Reeve's principle would prevent discussion of the interpretive assumptions and real critical problems that often underlie doubts about the text.[17]

The assumption that a number of lines can simply be trimmed away, allowing the original text of Euripides to "emerge"[18] is naive, given the obvious motivation for any interpolator to modify the text so that changes will fit in smoothly. Considered as complete without the transmitted ending, and even aside from the peculiar brevity of the scene in which it would appear, the curtailed speech would present a very odd appearance. A pathetic mood, originating in the chorus at 856–65 has been sustained by Medeia's tears in the succeeding scene (922–31), amplified in the choral ode preceding this scene (996–1001), renewed at the opening by the Paidagogos' surprise at Medeia's downcast mood (1012), and sustained through the first thirty lines of the current speech. Suddenly, the Medeia of the last scene but one reemerges; with stern rhetorical questions and exclamatory figures, she counsels herself against weakness and, firmly ordering the children inside the house, states her unalterable determination to proceed with the infanticide.[19] In the absence of 1056–80, the speech and the scene would end abruptly, without the rhetorical development necessary to reestablish the earlier heroic mood and tone.

In such a reconstruction, there is no communication between the two Medeias: the pathetic mother and the stern revenger simply appear in sequence. The revenger seems to have won out, but we have no way to tell why.[20] It is apparent that, if lines 1056–1080 are interpolated, the change must also have involved destruction of the original ending of the speech. The resulting lacuna

accepts Reeve's advice and structures his defense accordingly. B. Seidensticker, who also argues for authenticity in a forthcoming Festschrift for T. G. Rosenmeyer ("Euripides, *Medea* 1056–80, an Interpolation?") adopts a somewhat similar format; but Seidensticker does present a broader view of the play.

[17]See the formulation of this problem in Christmann's dissertation, an extended reply to Müller (1). He argues that the real stumbling block is usually not linguistic or metrical irregularity, but intuitions that the text in question lacks meaning or coherency. An example of this would be Müller's original article, which was intended to create an uncomplicated view of Medeia as a standard heroic figure (72 n. 1; 74). M. closed his article by recommending an end to the practice of attributing poorly written passages to an artist whose "art is so well known to us" (82, my trans.). Cf. the remark of August Boeckh in his *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (ed., E. Bratuscheck; Leipzig 1877.): "Das kritische Scheintalent besteht in der Spitzfindigkeit und Naseweisheit, die statt der Erfordernisse des Objekts die eigenen subjektiven Einfälle setzt und zu kritisieren beginnt ohne hermeneutisch in das Verständniss selbst einzudringen" (173–74).

[18] Reeve's article ended with the claim that, once the structures of *Geistesgeschichte* built around the end of the speech have been "left to crumble," Euripides will be "allowed to emerge from the ruins" (61). Müller's stated aim, as much "as possible to clean the spots off a masterpiece [ein Meisterwerk möglichst von Flecken zu reinigen]" (82), involves the same hopeful archaeological metaphor.

[19] Χεῖρα δ' οὐ διαφθερῶ, 1055. See Diller (269): Medeia "verwünscht ihre Feigheit und weist die Kinder brüsk von sich."

[20] See Voigtländer, 224–25.

would then have to be reconstructed by extrapolating from the parts of the play that remain. If we look to the end of the next scene, when the theme of the children's death is again presented, we find that the bracing tone is recapitulated in Medeia's addresses to her heart and hand (1242–44) and in her warnings against cowardice (1246). But the single-minded sternness of 1049–55 is tempered by pathos; and the roles of heroic avenger and pathetic mother, severed in the 1049–55, are here curiously overlaid. Medeia urges herself "not to remember" that she loves the children she bore: she must forget the children "for this brief day," and later mourn them. The coda sounds the same note: "Though you will kill them, still they are dear in nature [φίλοι γ' ἔφυσαν]—and I am an unlucky woman" (1249–50). Presumably this, or something near it, was the point that had to be reached by the end of the great speech.

Clearly there are severe problems in unifying Medeia's love of her children with her need for revenge; but it is equally clear that some synthesis must have taken place. The extant text does satisfy the main requirements for such an ending: maternal feelings are strongly evident, and Medeia does not remain locked in the heroic and hortatory mood of 1049–55. A great deal has been written around 1056–80, and I believe that the mass of the contending voices will indicate that the focus of doubt and confusion about the passage is 1059–61.[21] Concerns derived from other parts of the speech, whether related to staging, language, or questions of logic, would not be strong enough to label another passage as excisable.[22] Several critics have proposed excisions centering on or confined to this area.

Hugh Lloyd-Jones' proposal, among the most economical, removes only 1059–61;[23] but it has found few adherents. 1064 is then left to bear the entire brunt of the third and final change of mood, a task to which it is clearly inadequate.[24] Kovacs has recently made a more plausible alteration by cutting both the last two reversals, 1056–64. In his curtailed version, after boasting of her firmness and commanding the children to go inside, Medeia (in 1065) muses that her revenge is already on foot and turns to say farewell to her sons. While this version does eliminate some puzzles about the staging of the children's exit, Medeia's decision to address the children directly would contradict her orders three lines earlier; and there is no motivation for the switch to a pathetic tone in the final lines. Finally, it is hard to see why after 1066 Medeia speaks to the children as though it is their fate, not to remain in Corinth while she goes into exile, but to embark on a hard journey to another place, telling them that they must find happiness "there, since your father has taken away what was

[21] Lloyd-Jones (54–55). See also Kovacs (343): "No measures to eliminate [the contradictions in 1059–61] less drastic than excision of 1056–80 have thus far succeeded."

[22] See the defenses of the second part of the speech in Lloyd-Jones (57–58) and Kovacs (348), who praises the poetic quality of 1065–80. For replies to objections to the staging, see note 13, above.

[23] As well as 1062–63, see note 12, above.

[24] Note the apologetic remarks of Lloyd-Jones (57 n. 13): "But if one imagines the speech delivered without 1059–63 and with a pause before 1064, the audience will have no difficulty in seeing that the implication of 1064f. must be 'too late.'" But it is hard to see how any audience could interpret the line as expressing opposition to 1058. L-J. calls the imagined pause into service to excuse the asyndeton as well (56).

here" (1073–74).[25] Removal of the most refractory part of the passage does not solve enough problems. Our best course may be to try to understand the text that we have.

There is in fact ancient support for the passage. 1078–80 was frequently quoted; and, if interpolated, can hardly postdate the end of the fourth century, a generation or two before the arrival of the Stoic Chrysippos in Athens.[26] If, with Kovacs, we retain the ending but attempt to remove 1056–64, there is an apparent parody of these lines in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* that has been too easily dismissed by proponents of excision.[27] As Dikaiopolis, in his Euripidean beggar's outfit, sets off for the agora, he attempts to screw up his courage by addressing his *thymos* twice. Since the character speaks of having "swallowed Euripides whole [καταπιών]," it is plain that Aristophanes presents this piece of verse as a Euripidean parody. The source appears to be two places in *Medeia*, here and in 1242–50, where the heroine addresses her *thymos* and *kardia*.,[28] since, except in this passage of *Medeia* and in the corresponding passage by Neophron, no character in extant tragedy uses an address to the *thymos*.[29]

Objections raised against the text of 1056–64 are not strong,[30] and Michael Dyson has recently (1987) removed the grounds for persistent misunderstanding of ἐκφεύξεται in 1064.[31] The prime reason for excision is and always has been

[25] This problem has been well stated by Reeve (54–55), who cites F. A. Paley's commentary on line 1073 (2nd ed., vol. 1; London 1872).

[26] On this reference, which comes to us through Galen, see the article of Christopher Gill, "Did Chrysippus Understand Medea?" *Phronesis* 28 (1983) 136–49. Note that time is required for an interpolated version to become accepted. Theories that place the composition of an interpolated passage in the same time period as its acceptance and citation are inherently implausible, cf. the bizarre literary conspiracy imagined by U. von Wilamowitz to support his dating of Neophron (see note 6, above).

[27] Dihle points out the connection (1977, 20 and notes 41–42); Manuwald (57–58) argues against its relevance.

[28] *Acharnians* 480, 483–85, 489: ὦ θύμ', ἄνευ σκάνδικος ἐμπορευτέα... Πρόβαινέ νυν, ὦ θυμέ· γραμμὴ δ' αὑτηί. ἕστηκας; Οὐκ εἶ καταπιὼν Εὐριπίδην; 'Επῄνεσ'· ἄγε νυν, ὦ τάλαινα καρδία,... Τόλμησον ἴθι χώρησον, ἄγαμαι καρδίας. Besides the speeches to θυμέ, compare the imagery of the starting line (γραμμὴ δ' αὑτηί.) and the "cheering on" idiom at the end of 488 with *Med*. 1245 and 1242. Medeia never says ὦ τάλαινα καρδία, although she addresses her hand in this way (1244); but she frequently speaks of herself as ἡ τάλαιν' or τάλαιν' ἐγώ (277, 511, 902, 1016).

[29] The vocative is not used by any of the three major tragedians except Euripides in *Med*.; and the form does not appear in the index of *TrGF* (vol. 2), except in reference to the Neophron fragment. It should not surprise that the address to the *thymos* is associated with Euripides rather than with his predecessor: Neophron's play may not have been very recent, and in any case popular memory is imprecise and tends to cling to more prominent figures. For Neophron's obscurity in later times, see Christmann, 158 n. 42. On the "marked elaboration in the language of self-address and in psychological ingenuity" of 1056–64, see Christopher Gill, "Two Monologues of Self-Division: Euripides, *Medea* 1021–80 and Seneca, *Medea* 893–977" (27), in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*; Michael Whitby et al., ed.; Bristol, U. K. & Oak Park, IL 1987. (I owe this reference to Julia Annas.)

[30] Kovacs admits that, aside from 1064 and the obvious problems with 1062–63, "other points are less weighty" (347).

[31] The word is used in Demosthenes in the needed meaning of "go awry," "fall outside one's aim," see Dyson, 27. Πέπρακται presents no real difficulty,

the difficulty in interpreting 1059–61. In 1058, Medeia again plans to take the children with her out of Corinth; but in 1059 she utters an oath: "No! By the underworld avengers of Hades, it will never be that I will allow my children to be insulted by my enemies!" The tone is one of strong contradiction; but it is hard to see where the contradiction lies. If Medeia can save herself by fleeing, the children too ought to be safe from their enemies.[32] The illogic, emphasized by the direct juxtaposition of the two lines, is hard to overlook.

The problems in logic, however, should not obscure the rhetorical effect of the passage, especially since rhetoric is essential to a speech so full of contradictory voices. We have already witnessed and are thus able to identify the two personae into which Medeia's utterance divides itself. After two reversals, from "soft" to "hard" and back again, we have been trained to expect the reemergence of the "hard" voice. And this is just the voice that we do hear: the angry, moralizing, hortatory tones of 1059–61 reproduce those of 1049–55. Like the Medeia of earlier scenes, this strong persona represents the heroic code of honor and talks of insults from enemies. 1060–61 echo 1049–50 quite closely, both in tone and in language.[33] In addition 1059, while not in logical opposition to 1058, is in clear rhetorical opposition to the preceding line. There, we heard of the children as "living [ζῶντες]," while here we have a strong negative and an oath by underworld divinities: the contrast between life for the children and their death is clearly implied.

Lloyd-Jones (55–56) points out that nowhere else in the play is the idea of danger to the children from the Corinthians developed in a way that is coherent

although it is an evident exaggeration. Medeia begins with "It is done," continues with (a qualifying and epexegetic) "it will not go astray," and continues to explicate in the following two lines. The backwards shape of the passage is related to the self-convincing form of the rhetoric. The connection between 1064 and 1065 does not appear to be faulty. Denniston (*The Greek Particles*, 252) refers to this usage of καὶ δή as "non-connective," citing 1065 with other tragic examples in which these particles follow a command, statement, or question and mean "And here it is, already done!"

[32] Attempts to solve this problem with extra-dramatic casuistry, suggesting that Medeia may have fears about her children's ability to stand the trip, (see Steidle [159–60], Erbse [1981, 67]) have not been convincing. They violate the criterion proposed by T. von Wilamowitz (*Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles*, Philol. Unters. 22, 1917) and generally observed by most contemporary critics, that psychological and motivational explanations must have a solid basis in the text (see the comments of Christmann, 2–3). The same objection applies to Dyson's insistence that 1060–61 can be understood as applying to the perils of exile in Athens (24–26). Medeia could easily have alluded to such perils in less misleading terms; but she does not. Seidensticker (above, note 16) does not attempt to explain away the oddities of 1059–61. He considers the incongruity a minor "blemish" that leaves the poetic value of the speech intact.

[33] (Note that this resemblance can be treated as a literary device to generate meaning, as I do here, or as a sign of interpolation. Because of this ambiguity questions of authenticity cannot be decided either way on such evidence.) Compare 1049–50: ...βούλομαι γέλωτ' ὀφλεῖν ἐχθροὺς μεθεῖσα τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἀζημίους... with 1060–61: οὔτοι...ἐχθροῖς ἐγὼ παῖδας παρήσω τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι... The grammatical frame is similar, underscoring the equivalency of the content: letting one's enemies go unpunished is as bad as permitting them to harm one's friends. Of course, there is also a significant change of tone, from aggressive to defensive, a move to morally higher ground. (Revenge was an honorable motive; but the claim to be acting in self-defense was, for instance, a defense under Attic law, as revenge was not.)

with 1059–61. That is true; but the theme of danger to the children from the Corinthians is presented again and again, each time in a slightly differing form. Only here is there evident illogic; but only here does the theme receive direct emphasis. Either we have here the work of a clever and sensitive interpolator, or Euripides took care to provide preliminary preparation and subsequent support for this abruptly-introduced and undeveloped theme.

In 782, Medeia remarks that she would never permit her children to remain in Corinth to be insulted by their enemies: οὐχ ὡς λιποῦσ' ἂν πολεμίας ἐπὶ χθονὸς / ἐχθροῖσι παῖδας τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι. 782 is a virtual doublet of 1061, where Medeia expresses similar fears. Later, at 1238–41, as Reeve points out (60), the theme is attached to the current situation, in which the angry Corinthians may arrive at any moment: if Medeia waits, the children may be killed by "another, more hostile hand." But she goes on to develop the theme in a somewhat less logical direction: "In any case (πάντως) they must die. Since that is so, we will kill, who gave them birth." The first sentence could conceivably be stretched to mean, "Since both I and the Corinthians have decided that they must die"; but what it strongly suggests is that the death of the children is determined by factors other than the will of Medeia. The implication is the same as that at 1059: Medeia must kill her children to save them from the Corinthians. Finally, at 1380, as Medeia flies off in her chariot with the corpses of her sons, she informs Iason that she will bury them in Hera's precinct, "So that no enemy may insult them (ὡς μή τις αὐτοὺς πολεμίων καθυβρίσῃ)." Here, the language recalls 782 and 1061.

The logical connection to the Corinthian theme is different at each stage of the plot;[34] the mythical tradition behind *Medeia* could induce the audience to accept such a theme, even in the absence of logical development, since in a common form of the story Medeia's children were murdered by the Corinthians.[35] The existence of such an alternate version cannot "explain" its emergence in this or any ancient text. There are reasons why this theme works well in this spot; and the familiarity of the parallel story, which can be introduced allusively and without direct ties to plot events, helps to disguise Medea's bad logic.

The false contradiction in 1058–59 creates confusion for interpreters who are excessively sophisticated or very naive. The theater audience, caught up in the play of switching moods, cannot fail to identify what Medeia means. Commentators, however, who read slowly, raising questions about the text as they go, are notoriously prone to find logical difficulties. This tendency, already marked in ancient scholarship, provides a sufficient explanation for the interpolation of 1240–41 at 1062–63, since these lines remove any ambiguity.[36] Medeia's children, who are fooled by her fairly transparent veiling of the infanticide, may misinterpret 1059–61 quite differently, to mean that Medeia will indeed take them with her. If we retain the extant text, it is quite clear that Medeia frequently speaks over the children's heads. She drops many hints that ought to alarm them, if they fully understood her; and this is not out of line with the normal interrelation, or lack of it, between adults and children, in tragedy or in

[34] The formal coherence among lines that allude to danger from the Corinthians is a further point against Dyson's suggestion (24–26) that 1060–61 can be referring to the sorrows of exile, a theme that evokes quite different language in the play.

[35] See Page xxiii–xxiv.

[36] See Christmann's remarks (136), with which I would agree, except that I would not see the difficulty in interpretation as proceeding from a lacuna.

real life.[37] The last lines of the speech work perfectly for the children, provided that we accept their complete innocence of Medeia's intent to murder them.

The children will understand that, at 1045, their mother drops her plan to leave them behind as she goes into exile. At 1049, when Medeia reverses herself, the children will miss the threat of infanticide; but they will presumably understand that, if Medeia does decide for revenge, she will leave them behind. The third reversal at 1056 will be understood the same way: Medeia has again dropped revenge and will not leave her children. Up to this point successful revenge and separation from the children are connected; but in 1059 the revenge theme is suddenly blended with Medeia's maternal concern, as she angrily denies that she will leave the children at the mercy of her enemies. To the audience and the adults on stage this implies a further reason for their deaths, but the children can interpret her vehemence as confirming that she will take them with her.

The last lines support this misinterpretation. The children hear that their future happiness lies elsewhere,[38] since nothing is left for them in Corinth. This matches the implication at 1059–61 that they will be in danger if they remain. The "most miserable [τλημονεστάτην] journey" upon which Medeia embarks and the "even more miserable one" on which she will send the children are easily interpreted by the children as being one and the same journey, into exile. Medeia no longer speaks of being separated from the children; and her tears can be understood, by them, as sorrow for the hard life that lies ahead. Euripides has evidently been quite careful about arranging the psychological aspect of the children's role in this scene, so that, once Medeia has turned aside from her introspection, the speech can again function as a deception for the children. The fact that, without 1059–61, we cannot explain the switch in Medeia's deceptive rhetoric, is a further indication that the last part of the speech is integrally connected to that difficult passage.

An imagined reconstruction of a more straight-forward presentation may help to show the uses of Euripides' trick. Medeia could simply have restated the prime motivation—to avoid humiliation at the hands of her enemies—while maintaining a keen awareness of her love for the children. The effect, however, would have been to draw a strong line between the tragic choices, at some risk to audience sympathy. It is one thing for a woman to espouse the heroic ethic;[39] it is another for her to do so at the moment when she expresses her most intense maternal feelings. At that point, for any audience not accustomed to expect pride or self-regard from women, the conflict might begin to seem trivial or even absurd. As it is, 1059–61 and its correlative passages give the matricide a different color, assuring that it does not amount to a cold choice between honor and human feeling. By providing a needed synthesis of Medeia's conflicting personas, 1059–61 exactly suits what is required at this point. When this theme emerges, as it does here and at 1236–50, the only places where Medeia speaks with resignation of her final decision to commit murder, the two voices are for once in harmony, maternal love no longer conflicting with heroic morality.

[37] See Erbse on the "smiling faces" of the children, a proof of their incomprehension of the first part of the speech (1981, 67).

[38] 'Ἐκεῖ, also used at 1058, must of course mean the same thing to the children both times, while to the audience it means something very different at its second appearance.

[39] For the close assimilation of Medeia to norms of heroic conduct, see note 55, below.

At 1241, Medeia's desire to kill her children lest they should die "by another, more hostile hand," is expanded into a remarkable perversity: "We who gave them birth will kill them." Like Aeschylus' equally perverse Klytaimestra, she insists on tending to the corpses of her victims, perverting a role traditional for women in family funerals. Medeia intends to bury her children "with this hand" (1378), denying them both to their enemies the Corinthians and to Iason, who longs to touch and caress their bodies (1399–1403), as Medeia did earlier in 1069–75. Her revenge appropriates the children wholly to herself: in her view, it is Iason, not she, who has rejected them (1397). As P. E. Easterling has pointed out, there is considerable psychological verisimilitude in Medeia's stance: infanticides and other intimate murderers often justify themselves in this way.[40] While the correlation with psychological realism is clearly not a sufficient explanation of Medeia's perverse and non-logical association of maternal love with infanticide, it helps to explain the effectiveness of Euripides' deceptive technique.

But we still must admit that the use of this illogical motivation, especially at this particular point, is a trick or an inconsistency of the most blatant sort. The alternate version, in which the Corinthians kill the children, is used to induce acceptance of a major *non sequitur* in Medeia's self-persuasion, one that is obvious enough to generate some confusion and doubt in the response of the audience. Why should Euripides treat his audience in this unprincipled fashion? To answer this will require a broader analysis of the play as a whole and of its relation to its preexisting artistic model, the *Medeia* of Neophron.

II.

Arguments over textual details have obscured the fact that, once the probable authenticity both of Neophron's text and of Medea's great speech have been established, something quite remarkable becomes possible. We have the opportunity to compare two closely related versions of the same literary theme, and to understand the literary development that led from the one to the other. Elsewhere, when parallel treatments of the same material appear, the possible range of background, in epic, lyric, and the hundreds of lost tragic plays is too immense for us to assume a direct and determining relationship between model and imitation. Here, however, where we know the story to have been a rare one and where the relation between the two texts is so clearly established, a study of the parallels can yield more.

We have three fragments from Neophron's *Medeia* that show both close imitation by Euripides of his model and variations between the two versions. Other evidence about Neophron is slight, but interesting. He was prolific, and thus not without a certain reputation.[41] He was said to have introduced the use of *paidagogoi* and the torture of slaves to the tragic stage.[42] The trend toward lowering the elaborate diction and formal behavior of the Aeschylean theater had begun with Sophokles, but Euripides carried it further. Scenes of lyrical

[40] Easterling, "The Infanticide in Euripides' *Medea*," *YCS* 25 (1977) 189.

[41] The Suda (= *TrGF* 1.92, 15.T1) states that he produced a huge output, 120 plays. The number may be inexact, but it does suggest that Neophron was frequently awarded a chorus by the archon and that his *Medeia* production was not a fluke.

[42] See the Suda entry (note 41, above); Christmann argues that, in spite of confusion in the entry, this information is dependable (157 n. 42).

sweeping and dust-sprinkling are common in his work, and Aristophanes parodied the Euripidean tendency to elevate the domestic into the tragic sphere.[43] Neophron clearly belongs in the same artistic camp; but his practice may have been more radical. Domestic chores presumably had to be performed in any era, but Neophron's use of contemporary Athenian customs approaches real anachronism.

The plot of Neophron's play seems appropriate for an untraditional playwright who emphasized domestic themes. The story of Medeia as infanticide deals with a familiar social situation, the resentment of a supplanted woman; but it links this common situation with an appalling and apparently disproportionate revenge. Sophokles, and probably other playwrights as well,[44] used the story of Prokne's revenge; but the provocation in Medeia's case is much less grave.[45] Medeia's crime seems at first glance so aberrant as to fall outside the realm of the acceptable in classical tragedy. More strikingly, however, evidence suggests that Neophron's treatment of Medeia was a sympathetic one, ending with some sort of vindication for her acts.

Our testimony for this comes from the fragment in which Medeia predicts the death of Iason (*TrGF* 15.F3). This variant also indicates Neophron's tendency to innovate; as the scholiast remarks, it is ξενικώτερον.[46] Predicting Iason's "shameful" suicide by hanging, Medeia concludes, "Such is the portion that awaits you for your evil deeds, a lesson for others to the end of time that mortals should never raise themselves above the gods."[47] The tone is dismissive and magisterial: Medeia seems to be at rest, perhaps because her revenge has already been accomplished, as she sums up Iason, giving his role a moral stamp that will stand as final. If we did not know otherwise, we would take the speaker to be a *deus ex machina*, who, like Artemis at the end of *Hippolytos*, has the moral authority to make such final judgments.[48] The untraditional death is clearly intended to diminish Iason: hanging is an appropriate fate for women in heroic myth, but no male figure ends that way.[49] Iason may have been depicted

[43] *Frogs* 1331–63. For miming of domestic tasks in Euripidean lyric, see A. N. Michelini, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison 1987) 98 n. 15.

[44] Note the allusions to the myth of Itys in *Agamemnon* 1140–49, an indication that this theme was not unknown to the earlier tragic stage.

[45] For the parallel with the Itys myth and its treatment in Sophokles' *Tereus*, see Zwierlein (50 n. 60; 60), Knox (220), Manuwald (45–46). *TrGF* 4.583 has strong parallels with *Med.* 230–47, although its tone seems more resigned and less argumentative. For the absence of actual references to the Itys myth in this play, see Newton (below, note 91).

[46] Σ B 1386 (= *TrGF* 1.15, p. 93 n. 3). See also Page (xxxiv): "a remarkable innovation."

[47] τέλος φ⟨θ⟩ερεῖς γὰρ αὐτὸν αἰσχίστῳ μόρῳ / δέρῃ βροχωτὸν ἀγχόνην ἐπισπάσας. / τοία σε μοῖρα σῶν κακῶν ἔργων μένει, / δίδαξις ἄλλοις μυρίας ἐφ' ἡμέρας / θεῶν ὕπερθε μήποτ' αἴρεσθαι βροτούς. The first line is textually corrupt, since γάρ is in the wrong position.

[48] Iason's crime against the gods would presumably be his breaking of the oaths that he made to Medeia. Note that in 1351 Euripides' Medeia refuses a direct reply to Iason's long denunciation of her. She uses a formula familiar in tragedy as a reference to speech length; see A. N. Michelini, "ΜΑΚΡΑΝ ΓΑΡ ΕΧΕΤΕΙΝΑΣ," *Hermes* 102 (1974) 533. This draws attention to the pattern of balanced speeches in the rest of the play, but it also may reflect the presence of a long denunciation by Medeia in Neophron's last scene.

[49] For suicide by hanging as a shameful, polluting, and unmanly death, see N. Loraux, *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme* (Paris 1985) 31–43.

by Neophron in so negative a light as almost to extenuate Medeia's crime. Neophron's play, then, represented a daring and innovative attempt to introduce a new kind of tragic hero, a woman in a familiar domestic plight, who, like such Sophoclean heroes as Aias, commands sympathy even though she commits acts usually labeled criminal. How Neophron presented Medeia's motivation we can deduce from the fragment of Medeia's internal debate, the original to 1021–80.[50]

The segment from Neophron's play quoted in Stobaios is fifteen lines long.[51] It appears to be part of a longer speech and to be the final segment, since it ends with the sort of summarizing couplet that often closes tragic rheseis. The body of the passage is structured as a simple tri-colon of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. In the first part, the speaker addresses the *thymos* in terms of the morality of *sôphrosynê*, urging it to restrain its "ungodly strength." This is the voice usually given to the chorus and other admonishers of the hero in Sophoclean tragedy.[52] In the first segment there is a considerable distance between the "soft" voice and the *thymos* that it reproves,[53] while in the second segment, the speaker uses a voice that is more in tune with the *thymos*, since the *thymos* is characterized as strong (4), and this voice is one that repudiates weakness (7).

The emergence of the second voice (5) is marked by a switch to first person, "And why do I mourn for this, when I see my soul (ψυχὴν ἐμήν) deserted and neglected by those who least should do so?" The use of the term *psychê* on the one hand suggests an exterior view that facilitates pity for the suffering self,[54] while on the other it permits the second voice to distance itself from this suffering, as it mockingly repudiates tears (πρὸς τί ταῦτα δύρομαι). Instead, the *thymos*, again addressed in the second person, is encouraged in its natural

[50] Note that the priority of one passage to another cannot be established on internal stylistic grounds and thus could not help to solve the question of whether 1056–80 are interpolated. The argument must proceed in the other direction: the authenticity of 1056–80 confirms the relation between the two speeches, a relation established by dependable external evidence.

[51] *TrGF* 15.2: εἶέν· τί δράσεις, θυμέ; βούλευσαι καλῶς / πρὶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν καὶ τὰ προσφιλέστατα / ἔχθιστα θέσθαι. ποῖ ποτ' ἐξῇξας τάλας; / κάτισχε λῆμα καὶ σθένος θεοστυγές. / καὶ πρὸς τί ταῦτα δύρομαι, ψυχὴν ἐμήν / ὁρῶσ' ἔρημον καὶ παρημελημένην / πρὸς ὧν ἐχρῆν ἥκιστα; μαλθακοὶ δὲ δή / τοιαῦτα γιγνόμεσθα πάσχοντες κακά; / οὐ μὴ προδώσεις, θυμέ, σαυτὸν ἐν κακοῖς; / οἴμοι, δέδοκται· παῖδες, ἐκτὸς ὀμμάτων / ἀπέλθετ'· ἤδη γάρ με φοινία μέγαν / δέδυκε λύσσα θυμόν. ὦ χέρες χέρες, / πρὸς οἷον ἔργον ἐξοπλιζόμεσθα· φεῦ, / τάλαινα τόλμης, ἣ πολὺν πόνον βραχεῖ / διαφθεροῦσα τὸν ἐμὸν ἔρχομαι χρόνῳ.

[52] A parallel point is made by Knox (199–201), who shows the same split between the heroic and admonitory voices of the Euripidean Medeia.

[53] Note that the advice of the "soft" voice to the *thymos*, to restrain its "ungodly strength (σθένος θεοστυγές)," helps to underscore the division between strength and weakness. Cf. Euripides' *Med.* 1052. *Thymos* is traditionally an emotive force underlying action, see W. G. Thalmann, "Aeschylus' Physiology of the Emotions" (*AJP* 107 [1986]), 498–99. Both Thalmann (499) and F. Dirlmeier, "Vom Monolog der Dichtung zum 'inneren' Logos bei Platon und Aristoteles," *Gymnasium* 67 (1960) 30, point out that the *thymos* growls or howls like an animal and that, though often addressed, it seldom itself speaks with a human voice.

[54] The contradictions involved in "self-pity" are well analysed by Pietro Pucci, *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea* (Ithaca 1980) 31–32 and 70–75.

tendency toward anger and warned against "softness" (7) and self-betrayal (9). The ethic here is the heroic one, identified by A. W. H. Adkins as suitable to fighting males, for whom cowardice and weakness are the worst of failings.[55] In the last segment, the struggle has been resolved (οἴμοι, δέδοκται); and there is no more internal address to the *thymos*. Medeia orders the children out of her sight, remarking that "already bloody Rage has entered my great *thymos*." Apparently because the *thymos* can no longer hear, Medeia now addresses instead her hands, the agents of the deed. She ends with a sad and resigned coda, "Alas for my daring, I go to destroy my long labor in a little time."

This segment of Neophron's play confirms our earlier impression of his innovative bent. The speech rings the changes on a quite varied repertory of soliloquy forms, and it makes an ingenious attempt to portray an internal struggle. In using the mechanism of an address to the *thymos*, it follows familiar models in epic and elegiac/iambic poetry, both of which use this form for self-exhortation.[56] It is not relevant to object to illogic in such self-address: self-address is itself illogical and contradictory. The device used by Neophron to clarify this mode is the interchange of two recognizably separate voices, embodying a familiar split in the Hellenic ethical code, between social obligation and personal honor.

If we consider that this passage is the original of Euripides' speech, it is evident that Euripides' adapted the switch in voices from Neophron. Both Medeias express an heroic ethic, and it is probable that both opposed this ethic to maternal feeling. The latter principle is largely absent in the Neophron fragment; but the summarizing end couplet indicates that it probably appeared earlier in the speech. The couplet refers to the death of the children as the loss of Medeia's effort (πόνος), a familiar trope that is strongly presented in the Euripidean version.[57] The reversals here are the model for the multiple reversals in Euripides' version; and Page (xxxiii) has noted a number of parallels in diction between the Neophron passage and various places in the Euripidean play. Above all, the address to the *thymos*, familiar from moralizing and hortatory poetry but otherwise unexampled in tragedy, is a mark of derivation from Neophron. The length of Euripides' speech and the rather mannered duplication of the reversals, even its singular position in a scene to itself, draw attention to its source.

[55] *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford 1960) 30–37. Commentary on the male heroic values expressed by the Euripidean Medeia applies equally well to Neophron's protagonist: Müller (70–72), Knox (196–99), Dihle (1976, 182); see also E. B. Bongie, "Heroic Elements in the *Medea* of Euripides," *TAPA* 107 (1977) 27–56. On this theme note also the recent articles of Helene Foley ("Medea's Divided Self," forthcoming in *CA* 8, 1989) and GailAnn Rickert (1987). Scholars, however, have persisted in assuming that Neophron's play was a *Leidenschaft* drama, see Dihle (1977, 18), Manuwald (44).

[56] A survey of these is to be found in Diller, 271–72. Self-addresses to the *thymos*, which occur in epic and in elegiac poetry (e.g., Archilochos 128W) are best seen as an internalization of the traditional rebuke, which occurs in epic (see Bernard Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad*; Hermes Einzelschr. 21, 1968; 205–10) and in the elegiac war poetry of Kallinos and Tyrtaios.

[57] The parent or nurse deplores the toils required to nurture an infant, who then may fail to repay the efforts, either because of ingratitude, early death, or some other vicissitude. For other examples see Aischylos (*Choephoroi* 749–763) and A. F. Garvie's note on these lines in his edition (Oxford 1986, p. 249). Garvie cites the Sophoclean and Euripidean *Elektras*, 1143–45 and 507–8 respectively; cf. also *Tro.* 757–60, discussed below.

The ending of Euripides' speech again makes use of the technique of duplication, this time creating a contrast with its original. When Neophron's Medeia orders her children to go "out of my sight," her command seems to stem from a last protective impulse: now that *thymos* has become enraged, she can no longer trust herself to be near them.[58] The self-awareness of Neophron's heroine is somewhat muted by her lack of control over the *thymos*, once Rage or Madness (Λύσσα) has entered into it;[59] but Euripides' Medeia makes no easy escape into madness. The paradox of the loving murder is sharpened and exaggerated by a repetition of the motif. While at 1053 she simply dismisses the children, expressing a firm resolve to murder them, at 1076, when Medeia gives her final order for them to depart, her motivation has changed. She is not able to look at the children any longer, not because of her rage, but because of her love and longing for them.[60]

Having now compared the speech of Euripides to its model, we cannot any longer credit its author with blazing originality; that credit belongs to Neophron. And this conclusion should not surprise: one of the most familiar features of Euripidean style is its fascination with literary tradition and its interest in reworking literary forms. Wolfgang Schadewaldt and others, intrigued by the use of soliloquy forms in this play, attempted to characterize Euripidean tragedy as focused upon introspective psychological analysis;[61] but the introspective qualities unique to *Medeia* are attributable to its imitation of and reworking of Neophron, who may have found such devices helpful in procuring audience sympathy and identification with his remarkable heroine. What did Euripides gain by reworking Neophron's play? With this question, we may return to the central problem of 1056–80, the illogic or trickery in 1059–61. This relates on the one side to other Euripidean modifications of the Neophronian model and on the other to more general contradictions and conflicts that derive from that model. These dissonances are not flaws that Euripides struggled to overcome in composing his play; rather they represent the knot of a problem around which the Euripidean play is built.

Reeve, in the process of demolishing the credibility of 1059–61, commends Christmann for at least making the attempt to imagine a missing passage that, by filling a lacuna after 1061, would obviate the illogic of the passage and offer some grounds for Medeia's fears about the hostility of the Corinthians.[62] This is an interesting suggestion, because any attempt to follow it up will immediately show why references to this theme could not be more explicit without baldly contradicting the final scene of the play. Medeia's means of escape lies at the end of a network of illogic that begins with the entrance of Aigeus at 663, that extends widely beyond 1059, and that cannot be eliminated without further

[58] See Manuwald, 43 n. 36.

[59] Note that Lyssa is a goddess, personified on stage in Euripides' *Her.*; δέδυκε (see *Her.* 874, where Lyssa uses the verb of her entry into the house) faintly suggests a personification, strengthening the hint that Medeia is possessed. Echoes of epic usage may also create associations with heroic valor (see *Il.* 9.239, a reference that I owe to Bernard Williams).

[60] Steidle (164).

[61] *Monolog und Selbstgeschpräch: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der Griechischen Tragödie*, Neue Philol. Unters. 2 (1926) 200–201. He admitted that Medeia is not replicated in the extant plays (206). See Dihle on the tendency to treat the Euripidean *Medeia* as a drama of passion (*Leidenschaft* [1977, 18–20]).

[62] Reeve (59 n. 1); Christmann (133–36).

excisions.[63] The Aigeus scene has puzzled scholars and has been much discussed.[64] We do not know when or how Aigeus appeared in Neophron's play, but we do know that his appearance was convincingly and organically motivated: he came to get Medeia's advice on the oracle he had received in Delphi.[65] Presumably Medeia's reward for interpreting the oracle was her rescue by Aigeus. This could occur most conveniently at the end of the play, when the children were already dead. If Medeia was vindicated at the end, Aigeus could have been the source of that vindication, as well as of the protection that permitted her to give her final condemnation of Iason.

As in the story about Iason's death, Euripides drops the unorthodox mythical version found in Neophron, in which Aigeus, instead of seeking Pittheus to interpret the oracle he has received, comes to Medeia for advice.[66] The resulting lack of direct motivation for Aigeus' presence is underlined by the retention of the theme of oracular interpretation, which is introduced, only to be left hanging, uncompleted.[67] This phenomenon, noted above, in which the reworking of an original results in ambiguous and complex plot lines, should not be viewed as a sign of "primitive" style,[68] but rather as a technique available to a denser literary tradition than our own. The reuse of a previous version reminds the audience of the literary tradition behind the work, while permitting the artist to have his story both ways, reducing the limitations produced by a choice among conflicting versions.

[63] The best analysis of the interconnection is Bethe's (see note 8, above). While his explanation of no help, because he cannot find a sufficient reason for the insertion of the Aigeus episode, he effectively traces a number of problems to this source (14–15). Christmann's attempt to correct 1059–61 with an assumed lacuna after line 1061 was partially dependent on his earlier arguments for excision of line 729, which emphasizes the illogicalities in the use of Aigeus (pp. 118–21). He is also forced to explain away the astounding surprise of Medeia's appearance on the Sun chariot (123). In doing this, Christmann contradicted his own good advice (1–2) that problems of interpretation should not be solved by excision.

[64] It is unclear whether Aristotle was referring to it at *Poetics* 1461b19–21; for negative indications see Van Looy, "Medea-problemen," *Handel* Zuidnederl. Maatsch voor Taal- & Letterkunde & Geschiedenis 37 (1983) 179. For discussion and bibliography on the scene see Erbse (1966), Knox (194–95 n. 7), Dihle (1977, 22–24 n. 9).

[65] Σ *Med.* 666 (= *TrGF* 15, p. 92 n. 1) ἕνεκα τοῦ σαφηνισθῆναι αὐτῷ τὸν χρησμὸν ὑπ' αὐτῆς τῆς Μηδείας. *Pace* Erbse (1966, 129; see also Knox, 195 n. 7), there is no inherent conflict between having Medeia interpret the oracle correctly and having Aigeus forget himself later at Pittheus' house.

[66] Dihle points out (1977, 24) that tradition probably made Pittheus the interpreter of the oracle. But, from a dramatic point of view, the presence of Aigeus in this play is arbitrary, unless he has a coherent motive for being in Corinth. Thus Neophron's version is an innovation *vis-à-vis* the Aigeus myth; but Euripides' return to the traditional version is an innovation *vis-à-vis* the dramatic tradition.

[67] See Christmann (102–04, 110–112) on the blend of two versions in the scene. 1) Aigeus seeks Medeia to interpret the oracle. She begs him for protection and he accedes. 2) Aigeus, on his way to Pittheus, pays a visit to his friend Medeia. She offers to cure his childlessness with drugs. The former is Neophron's; the latter is a Euripidean overlay, elaborating and supplementing the original.

[68] As Erbse claims (1966, 128). See the excellent treatment by Christmann, who traces Euripides' use of this method elsewhere (102–6 and n. 39, pp. 155–56).

Aigeus' presence in the play is disjointed from the plot in two ways: his appearance is undermotivated, and his role as rescuer turns out to be largely otiose.[69] The way in which Aigeus is introduced points to his function in Neophron's play, but this reference is made teasingly ambiguous. Aigeus' offer of asylum is explicitly divorced from any promise of rescue (729), and the audience cannot guess how Medeia will escape. That question is never otherwise addressed, until line 1321, when we see and hear of the Sun's chariot, a completely unexpected device. That a human being should appear as gods usually do is a violation of normal convention that seems to beg for careful preparation and explanation; but there is none.[70] Neophron's ending, which presented Medeia in a judgmental role resembling that of a *deus ex machina*, is both exaggerated and distorted by Euripides' version, in which she appears more divine and more monstrous than she does human.[71] The reuse of Aigeus as a signpost to nothing emphasizes the arbitrariness of the final resolution. Because the trick at 1059–61 depends upon an unstated hint of danger to the children in the escape from Corinth, it is an integral part of a series of tricks leading up to the astounding surprise of the final entrance.

Like the play of Neophron, Euripides' play revolves around a conflict between Medeia's heroic ethic and her role as mother. We have seen that, at 1236–50, as well as in the great speech, these roles are not so much severed as paradoxically superimposed or merged by sleight of hand. But this is only one of the Euripidean Medeia's complexities: paradox is natural to her role as rebel and figure of exception. As commentators have pointed out,[72] she is set apart from the chorus by her heroic temperament and values, her foreign birth, her royal and divine family connections, as well as her special knowledge and skills. Medeia first establishes solidarity with the chorus by describing and deploring the social arrangements to which women were subjected in marriage but which Medeia herself has already repudiated.[73] This contradiction is not merely an

[69] Aigeus, of course, functions in other, collateral ways. By providing a male outsider's view of the quarrel, he justifies Medeia; his appearance offers a link to the theme of Athens, a citadel of civilized and intellectual life that will offer asylum to the perpetrator of a bestial crime; and the theme of childlessness, which lacks plot attachments, prepares us to view infanticide as a source of revenge, see T. V. Buttrey ("Accident and Design in Euripides' *Medea*," *AJP* 79 [1958] 12–15); B. also points out the central structural position of the scene (6), which coincides with a high point of sympathy for Medeia.

[70] The repeated references to Medeia's descent from Helios (see Knox, 205) do not create any expectation that she will escape on a magic chariot. The audience has no reason to expect the availability to a mortal of such a stage apparatus. "The use of the upper level is symbolic of the visual and social/institutional/psychological separation between mortal and divine." (D. J. Mastronarde, "The Skene-Roof in 5th-Century Drama," in *Abstracts*, 120th Annual Meeting of APA; Atlanta 1989, 48). Medeia does not elsewhere display powers beyond the human, although she has special skills as a poisoner, see Christmann (4–8). Note the complaint of Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454b.1–2.

[71] See Eilhard Schlesinger, "Zu Euripides' *Medea*," *Hermes* 94 (1966) 26–53; and M. P. Cunningham, "Medea 'ΑΠΟ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΣ," *CP* 49 (1954) 151–60.

[72] Page on v.231, p. 89.

[73] In contrast to normal marriage alliances, e.g., that which Iason has contracted with the king of Corinth, in which the primary parties are the groom and the male relatives of the bride, Medeia's own liaison was based on a contractual agreement between the participants and explicitly excluded the bride's male relatives, whose interests were sacrificed to the union. For the importance of these

instance of Medeia's "insincerity," however. Euripides appears to have anticipated in her role some of the characteristics of figures—familiar in the modern world—who instigate social change. The advantages in education, background, or economic resources that may fit social activists for their disruptive work may also distance them from the disadvantaged groups that they seek to lead; and the attempt to bridge this distance can lead to a certain falsity in rhetoric.

Medeia's particular dilemma and the solution she chooses involve her in interlocking contradictions. She articulates for the chorus an important equation that could bring, as the chorus later sings, "honor to the race of women." She argues that good faith in marriage should be judged on an equal basis for both sexes; and she counters the argument in favor of male privilege—that males support women who sit idly at home[74]—by citing the pain and risk—and the important social function—of childbearing. Her analogy seems to find some support in Hellenic tradition;[75] but in order to achieve her revenge Medeia must betray the very maternal role that she used to justify her actions.[76]

Medeia's last address to her children has been for a long time a favorite passage in Greek literature. The implication of a decision for athetesis is that this pathos is the inappropriate but not ineffective addition of an interpolator, who hoped to improve the scene by wringing more emotion out of it.[77] But, even if we decide that the lines are Euripidean, as in fact they appear to be, we cannot entirely set aside the question of whether they may be overdone. There may be some potential frigidity in the slight exaggeration of Medeia's repeated apostrophes;[78] the violent emotionalism of the repeated changes of mind contributes to the same effect, as does the fallacy at 1059–61. Any uncertainty the audience may feel will be reinforced by the very odd theme of the anapaestic interlude following: the familiar trope of parental suffering—probably borrowed from Neophron and already used to subtle effect in the opening of Medeia's speech—is reemployed by the chorus in a naive and therefore disturbing way. The Corinthian women seem to have forgotten their earlier expressions of horror at the infanticide: they now feel only sympathy for Medeia's maternal sorrow. Their complaint about the disappointments of parenthood, however, may cause the audience to reflect that Medeia is, after all, sacrificing her children, not

agreements, see S. Flory's study of hand-clasps as a token of faith between equals, "Medea's Right Hand: Promises and Revenge," *TAPA* 108 (1978) 69–74 and Rickert (106–13).

[74] Cf. Orestes in *Choephoroi* 919 and 921, τρέφει δὲ γ' ἀνδρὸς μόχθος ἡμένας ἔσω. Medeia alludes to this argument at 248–49: λέγουσι δ' ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίον / ζῶμεν κατ' οἴκους...; see the Garvie commentary (Oxford 1986) on *Choephoroi* 919.

[75] See the story (Plutarchos, *Lykurgos* 27) that in Sparta only two classes of citizens received funeral monuments: males who died in battle and females who died in childbirth.

[76] That Medea's description of poison as "the direct way (384)" to pursue revenge draws attention to an inherent conflict between feminine means and the masculine ethic of revenge has been pointed out by Pucci, (above, note 54) 93–96, Von Fritz (above, note 6) 360–63. Müller used this contradiction as the basis for the athetesis of 407–9 (68–69). See also 70–77, where he attempts to make Medeia's moral stance clear and unambiguous by further excisions.

[77] See Müller (73): "Abmilderung furchtbarer Grösse ins schwächlich Sentimentale."

[78] See Reeve, 54 n. 2: we should presumably read a full stop at the end of 1072 as at 1075.

herself; and this thought may retroactively tarnish the memory of her emotional farewell.

Yet Medeia's pathos, in spite of its contradictions, is genuine; and her vivid expression of her feelings calls into question the heroic value system itself, by revealing its inhuman and irrational elevation of ego integrity over social obligation. The address to the children, in which she refers to their delicate skin and sweet breath, brings us very close to the instinctive bond between parent and young, something that human beings and animals have in common. The same trope is employed in another great tear-jerking moment of Euripidean tragedy, Andromache's farewell to Astyanax in *Troiades* 757–63.[79] In Medeia's case, however, the greater the pathos of her loss, the greater and more perverse we must judge her crime to be.

The close of Medeia's speech is a famous formulation that appears to pit intellect against passion and that was frequently cited in antiquity. But, as Kovacs has pointed out, we should not mistake the passage in its use as a commonplace for the passage as it appears in the play.[80] If it appears as an isolated proverb, we can understand the statement that "*thymos* is stronger than my planning [βουλευμάτων]," as a juxtaposition of abstracted mental and emotional elements; but that is not quite what it can mean in the context of this play where, as Diller has shown (273–77), the word βουλεύματα is closely associated with the protagonist's schemes of revenge. GailAnn Rickert has pointed out that the principle underlying Medeia's acts is not prudential caution but the assertion of heroic honor, a principle traditionally associated with heroic *thymos*.[81] The *thymos* Medeia deplores, like the *cholos* mentioned by Achilleus (Σ 108), is the product of an aggressive self-assertion that can lead to much unhappiness. There is some real difficulty, however, in the use of κρείσσων (stronger) to describe the *thymos*. H. Diller attempted to surmount the difficulty of seeing *thymos* as in opposition to βουλεύματα by arguing that κρείσσων can be translated "in control over." But this solution leaves some loose ends.[82] The word seems to imply control or mastery only in one context: someone, or that person's "mind," is described as being "stronger than" or "in control over" the individual's various sensual or emotional urges. The element to be controlled is very often the *thymos*.[83] For *thymos* to be "in control of" a

[79] See Diller, 270.

[80] Kovacs' suggestion that τολμήσω, the reading of all manuscripts but L, should replace δρᾶν μέλλω (352), is quite persuasive, since the need to quote the passage as a separable *gnômê* could have motivated the substitution of δρᾶν μέλλω for a more ambiguous original. But τολμήσω, while less activist than the familiar reading, does not strikingly alter its meaning, since the verb can mean both "dare" and "suffer." Besides this, the notion that Medeia is not making a "moral" judgment (Kovacs, 351) if she speaks of "suffering" evils rather than doing them is based on a distinction between selfish and altruistic motivations that is of modern date and thus irrelevant to Greek thought. The confusions are rife in Müller's analysis (69–72); for correction see Voigtländer (227, and 232–33 [on the meaning of κακά]).

[81] 99–101. See also the article of H. Foley (above, note 55).

[82] Diller, 274. For Snell's opposing view see above, note 6, pp. 58–59. For a recent defense of Diller's reading, see G. R. Stanton, "The End of Medea's Monologue: *Euripides' Medea* 1078–80," *RhM* 130 (1987) 97–106.

[83] Reeve noted the oddness of this, 59 n. 2. Diller cites examples from Platon and Aristotle (274). Early examples are Theognis 631–32: ᾧτινι μὴ θυμοῦ κρέσσων νόος, αἰὲν ἐν ἄταις / Κύρνε καὶ ἐν μεγάλαις κεῖται ἀμηχανίαις.

rational element is a play upon words that derives its meaning from a reversal of the proper situation.

By turning a truism upside down, Medeia reveals the complexity of the interaction between reason and emotion. As she reflects (μανθάνω) on the evils that calculations (βουλεύματα) governed by *thymos* will produce, her words seem to unearth something that resembles the complex picture of moral responsibility that we find in Aristotle more than it does a Sophistic or Socratic paradox.[84] Medeia declares herself to be self-aware; but, as in 1244–50 where she wilfully "forgets" her motherhood, her awareness is a kind of paradox. Unlike Neophron's heroine, who could resign herself to madness, this Medeia, who feels mother love most keenly at the moment of her decision to murder, recognizes the irrational force guiding her rationality.[85] Yet there is a further twist: even while Medeia sees her internal conflict, she continues to deceive herself (and us), since in the elaborate turns of her rhetoric she has failed to make a clear choice between maternal love and the demands of *thymos*. It is therefore appropriate that in 1079 she uses the idiom that later developed into the philosophic language of *akrasia*: the choice, and the tragic "conflict of values," has been evaded by the trick at 1058–59.[86]

Medeia is a play rich in references to intellectual power, and to the tendency of that power to undermine itself. The conflict between thought and action is a favorite Euripidean theme,[87] but in this play Medeia describes herself as ready for both.[88] Her case is thus a particularly good one with which to frame problems, such as those in rhetoric, that involve the application of intellectual skills to real situations. To Kreon she protests,with evident hypocrisy, "but I am not over-wise [εἰμὶ δ' οὐκ ἄγαν σοφή]" (305). Later (583), denouncing Iason and any who are clever at speaking unjustly, she opines that such a person

and Euripides *Telephos* (Fr. 718 N2): ὥρα σε θυμοῦ κρείσσονα γνώμην ἔχειν. See also *Antiope* (Fr. 187.5–6 N2) where Zethus depreciates one who is γλυκείας ἡδονῆς ἥσσων.

[84] See W. W. Fortenbaugh, "On the Antecedents of Aristotle's Bipartite Psychology," *GRBS* 11 (1970) 236–38: one may reflect on the interaction between emotional and prudential factors in one's own choices. Fortenbaugh, however, mistakenly imposes Aristotelian assumptions about female irrationality upon Euripides (240). Also interesting is Christopher Gill (see above, note 26), who suggests that Chrysippos may have seen a similar complexity in this passage, if he cited it to support his own doctrines about moral responsibility, doctrines that did not separate impulses into the rational and the irrational.

[85] On this trait in Medeia, see Rickert, 116. Aristotle remarks that Medeia and others like her act in full knowledge, εἰδότες καὶ γιγνώσκοντες, *A. P.* 1453b28.

[86] Rickert argues reasonably that Medea's case is better assimilated to this tragic model than to that of *akrasia*; but she uses a definition of *akrasia* that is of modern date (see 96 n. 14), thus blurring the historical question. Since the idiom discussed above does precede and underlie the philosophical elaboration of ideas about self-control, we have a stronger ground than Rickert suggests (104, 116) for seeing in these lines an allusion to the problems and arguments that gave rise to the term "*akrasia*." For a detailed discussion of these idioms and their development, see W. J. Cummins, "Motivational Conflict from Homer to Plato: A Study of Language and Imagery," Diss. Cincinnati, 1989.

[87] A theme explored in the dissertation of G. Müffelmann, "Interpretationen zur Motivation des Handelns im Drama des Euripides" (Diss. Hamburg, 1965); see 18–31 on *Med.* and 178–81.

[88] Her address to the chorus (215–24) suggests that to be "quiet [ἥσυχος]" is an unworkable strategy for an intellectual or an outsider, cf. 807–10.

"is not over-wise [ἔστι δ' οὐκ ἄγαν σοφός]." The repetition gives an ironic color of truth to her earlier self-assessment: Medeia's cleverness at persuasion is reflexive, and thus self-destructive.

Although Euripides borrowed the dual voices of Medeia from the play of Neophron, he gave them a significance that they do not appear to have had in the original. In a succession of scenes, his Medeia appears in a bewildering series of changes and reversals. The final scene constitutes the final reversal, as by dramaturgical sleight of hand Medeia appears unexpectedly in the Sun chariot, like a kind of parody divinity, triumphing over her husband. While the audience will retain a memory of a more sympathetic and more vulnerable Medeia, hardly a trace of her survives this final and most jarring transmutation.[89] Euripides found these contradictions already implicit in his model. If Neophron attempted to vindicate his infanticidal heroine, it is likely that he may not have carried off this perverse tour de force with enduring success. In picking up the most striking and original play of a rival of inferior talent, Euripides took care to emphasize just those elements that made Neophron's *Medeia* risky as tragic material and questionable in taste. Factors that would extenuate Medeia's action are explicitly eliminated. Iason parades his own pacific and dispassionate attitude, while repeatedly pointing to jealous anger as Medeia's sole motivation.[90] The implicit parallel with Prokne, already weakened by the emphasis on erotic motifs, is in fact repressed altogether, as R. M. Newton has pointed out.[91] The chorus state that they can think of no one whose act compares with Medeia's except Ino (1282–89); but, since Ino was mad when she caused the death of Melikertes, the feeble analogy makes Medeia's crime appear uniquely heinous.

Euripides' Medeia is partly an image, incorporating interesting realistic elements, of a human individual; but she is also an absurdity, a paradox, in which conflicting forces are held forever in opposition. The joining of the opposed categories, hero and woman, of the Greek gender system explicates the system from two angles at once,[92] while generating a series of united contraries. As hero, she unites the characteristics of the wily and intelligent survivor with those of the doomed hero of honor, Odysseus and Aias at once, as it were.[93] As woman, Medeia is both exemplary, a loyal and fruitful wife, and aberrant, a woman who arranges her own marriage by betraying her family of birth. As mother, she is loving and devoted, as well as monstrously depraved. As intellectual, she puts thought into action with horrifying results. The final scene expresses this union of irreconcilables in dramatic terms: it is a triumph that is also a kind of annihilation.

The great speech exemplifies this technique of exaggeration and paradox, because we can see both the original and what Euripides made of it. The passion

[89] As Karl Reinhardt pointed out ("Die Sinneskrise bei Euripides," *Eranos Jhrb.* 26 [1957] cited in *Euripides*, Wege der Forsch. 139; E-R. Schwinge, ed. [Darmstadt, 1968]), it is precisely the injection of human feeling into Medeia's role that forces it over the edge, into absurdity and irony: Euripides refuses to portray Medeia as the traditional witch or enchantress, yet "Da sie menschlich wird, sinkt sie ins Absurde" (519).

[90] 529–31, 568–75, 1367, 1369. Note that in 1368 Medeia seems to admit the truth of these accusations.

[91] "Ino in Euripides' *Medea*," *AJP* 106 (1985) 501 and n. 15.

[92] For a fuller treatment of these themes, see the article of H. Foley (above, note 55).

[93] See Knox, 202.

and pathos, driven close to the edge of taste but still effective in the extreme, the exaggerated and almost parodic use of the soliloquy forms in pointed allusion to the original of Neophron, the open trickery at 1059, the union of self-awareness and self-deception, and of realism with mannerism—all this makes the piece both the chef d'oeuvre of the play and the locus at which its tensions are most violent.

Reference List:

Eckhard Christmann. 1962. "Bemerkungen zum Text der *Medea* des Euripides." Diss. Heidelberg.

Albrecht Dihle. 1976. "Euripides' *Medea* und ihre Schwestern im europäischen Drama." *A & A* 22: 175–84.

Albrecht Dihle. 1977. "Euripides' *Medea*." *SHAW*, Abh. 5. Heidelberg: C. Winter.

Hans Diller. 1966. "ΘΥΜΟΣ ΔΕ ΚΡΕΙΣΣΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΜΩΝ ΒΟΥΛΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ." *Hermes* 94: 267–75.

Michael Dyson. 1987. "Euripides' *Medea* 1056–80." *GRBS* 28: 23–34.

Harmut Erbse. 1966. "Über die Aigeusszene der euripideischen *Medea* ." *WS* 79: 120–33.

Harmut Erbse. 1981. "Zum Abschiedsmonolog der euripideischen *Medeia*". ΑΡΧΑΙΟΓΝΩΣΙΑ 2: 66–81.

B. M. W. Knox. 1977. "The *Medea* of Euripides." *YCS* 25: 193–225.

David Kovacs. 1986. "On Medea's Great Monologue." *CQ* 36: 343–52.

Hugh Lloyd-Jones. 1980. "Euripides, *Medea* 1056–80." *WJb* 6a: 51–59.

Bernd Manuwald. 1983. "Der Mord an den Kindern: Bemerkungen zu den Medea-Tragödien des Euripides und des Neophron." *WS* NF 17: 27–61.

Gerhard Müller. 1951. "Interpolationen in der *Medea* des Euripides." *SIFC* 25: 65–82.

Denys Page, ed. 1938. *Euripides: Medea*. Cambridge: The University Press.

M. D. Reeve. 1972. "Euripides, *Medea* 1021–80." *CQ* 22: 51–61.

GailAnn Rickert. 1987. "Akrasia and Euripides' *Medea*." *HSCP* 91: 91–117.

Wolf Steidle. 1968. *Studien zum antiken Drama, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Bühnenspiels*. Munich: Fink.

E. A. Thompson. 1944 "Neophron and Euripides' *Medea*," *CQ* 38: 10–14.

Hanns-Dieter Voigtländer. 1957. "Spätere Überarbeitungen im grossen Medeamonolog?" *Philologus* 101: 217–37.

Otto Zwierlein. 1978. "Die Tragik in den Medea-Dramen." *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 19: 27–63.