departure of a friend and the reunion of a bride and groom at the door of their home. By *not* living as "one alone," Admetus in effect manages to live twice. The idea of a "marriage to death" takes on new meaning in *Alkestis*, a morbid conceit converted to the promise of a second life.

Chapter 7

TORCHING THE MARRIAGE

EURIPIDES' *MEDEA*

MEDEA is an excessive play, even for Euripides. Brutally wronged by Kreon and Jason (who claim to represent the rational Greek order), Medea manipulates the civilized forces that have been turned against her to fashion a revenge of chilling precision. Her poisoned gifts to Jason's new bride convert the wedding ritual into murder, and Medea caps her vengeance by slaying her own innocent children. At the close of the play, she appears transcendent and triumphant in the chariot of her father Helios. Screaming out her hatred for her grief-stricken husband, Medea denies him access to his dead sons while she looks forward to a new life, and a new marriage, in Athens.

It is doubtful that the Athenian audience had seen anything like it. For sheer horror, the story of a mother intentionally killing her children is hard to surpass, but in the telling Euripides exposes—as nowhere else in Greek tragedy—the bleak situation that commonly faced women in the ancient world.[1] Medea recounts what she has had to endure as a foreigner, a wife, and a mother (222–48), concluding that she would prefer three times over to face the dangers of battle rather than the perils of childbirth (248–51). Continuing with the imagery of war, Medea compares her lot as foreign wife to that of a captive seized at the sack of a city (λελησμένη 256).[2] The married state Medea describes is akin to the situation in contemporary Athens where an ordinary bride could feel like a stranger in a new country.[3]

Discarded by her husband, Medea has no place to turn. Her position mirrors that faced by foreign wives after the enactment of Perikles' Citizenship Law of 451/50. Limiting citizenship to those children *both* of whose parents were Athenian, the law discouraged Athenian males from marrying foreign wives and led to the dissolution of at least some marriages with non-Athenians.[4] If the law was not retroactively applied to children born of mixed marriages before 451/450, then its impact on such preexisting marriages would have been strongest circa 432 B.C., near the time of *Medea*'s first production. At that point a "mixed" son born just after the law was passed would

have reached the age of eighteen without political franchise, and a "mixed" daughter would have arrived at marriageable age with little hope of finding an Athenian husband.[5]

Ubiquitous in the play, the language and circumstance of weddings often reveal a funereal after-image. The Nurse reports that Medea and her husband are estranged, for Jason "is bedded down in a royal marriage,/ marrying the daughter of Kreon" (γάμοῖς Ἰάσων βασιλικοῖς εὐνάζεται,/ γήμας Κρέοντος παῖδ' 18–19). The Chorus sing of Medea as a "bride" (νύμφα 150) who desires that "unapproachable bed of love" (τᾶς ἀπλάτου/ κοίτας ἔρος 151–52), who strives after "the end [or "ritual completion"] of death" (θανάτου τελευτάν 153). Her rival Glauke is a new wife writ large: a "bride" (νύμφαν 163, νύμφη 1003, 1179), a "newly yoked bride" (νεοζύγου/ νύμφης 804–5), a "wretched bride" (κακόνυμφε 991), the "newly wedded" daughter of Kreon (νεογάμου 324, νεοδμήτου 623) who, with her "bridegroom" (νυμφίωι 514) Jason, has joined together as "newlywed" (νεωστὶ νυμφίοις 366) in a "newly forged marriage" (νεοδμῆτες γάμοι 1366). Medea tells Kreon to "marry off" his daughter (νυμφεύετ' 313) but attacks Jason for arranging "this marriage union of yours" (γαμεῖν γάμον 587). She plans to make that "wedding bitter and mournful" (πικροὺς . . . καὶ λυγροὺς . . . γάμους 399) and considers setting fire to the "bridal house" (δῶμα νυμφικὸν 378). She warns Jason that "by marrying you will come to mourn the marriage" (γαμεῖς τοιοῦτον ὥστε θρηνεῖσθαι γάμον 626), and the characters repeatedly refer to the new marriage-bond (*kēdos*) between the families of Jason and Kreon, the same word used of "mourning rites for the dead."[6]

The breakup of her marriage with Jason is only the first blow to hit Medea. Brusquely interrupting her colloquy with the Chorus, Kreon informs Medea that she has been banished from Korinth. By apprising the audience of her exile some two hundred lines earlier (reported by the Tutor, 70–71), Euripides marshals our sympathies for the protagonist who mistakenly believed that the worst had befallen her. Already marginal in a male world and betrayed by her husband for a new bride, Medea learns that she is to be excluded categorically from the life of the *polis*.

She strives to have her exile rescinded (294–315), presenting herself to Kreon as obedient and reasonable, even to the point of discussing the dangers of sophistic education. At the critical moment, however, Medea abandons rational argument, shifting to rapid stichomythic exchange and assuming the posture of a suppliant (324). Because supplication is an admission of weakness, the picture of Medea kneeling before Kreon is emblematic of the situation of women in the Greek world.[7] Not surprisingly, Medea's overt acknowledgment of her inferior position succeeds where arguments do not, and Kreon grants her one more day in Korinth.

As if motivated by the encounter between a dominant male figure and an abject Medea, the Chorus address the oppression of women directly in the first stasimon.[8] They assail the fact that their gender has been denied the gift of song (424–26), preventing them from answering the charges of men (426–30). If the situations were reversed, "honor would come to women" (419) instead of "ill-sounding fame" (420). The Chorus's language evokes poetic models that underline women's artistic powerlessness: the Ionicisms of ὑμνεῦσαι ἀπιστοσύναν ("singing of woman's faithlessness" 423) may point to the misogynist verses by the Ionian poets Archilochus, Hipponax, and Semonides, and the phrase ὤπασε θέσπιν ἀοιδάν ("he gave [the gift of] godlike song" 425) is taken almost directly from *Odyssey* 8.498, where Odysseus praises the bard Demodokus.[9]

Being denied poetic access does not stop the Korinthian women from denouncing the perfidy of men who gainsay the oaths they have sworn to the gods (415–16). We recall the condemnations of Jason's dishonesty by the Nurse (21–22), Medea (160–63), and the Chorus itself (169–70, 206–12), who repeat the charge in the second antistrophe—"The gift [grace] of oaths has departed, no longer does respect/ for oaths remain anywhere in Greece" (439–40). The stage is set for the arrival of the quintessential oath-breaker, Jason.[10]

The first stasimon begins with an image of sacred rivers flowing backward and heading upstream, a dream of a new dispensation in which honor might come to women by women. With nauseating self-righteousness, Jason offers his own reversal of the natural order, inverting almost everything we have come to consider true in the play. He claims that he is marrying Glauke for Medea's sake and for the good of the children (550–51, 595–97), denying that self-aggrandizement and erotic desire play any part (555–56). He refuses to admit that Medea saved his life or that he has caused her pain, and he concludes that if children could be born another way, there would be no need for the female sex at all and men could be spared an unnecessary evil (573–75).[11] Jason's last comments are egregious, particularly when we recall how Medea valorized a woman's struggle in giving birth over the traditional heroism associated with battle (250–51). She has borne her husband two sons, confirming and validating their marriage, as she herself points out (489–91) and as Jason tacitly admits (557–58).[12] Nonetheless, he blithely prepares for another wedding night, arguing that Medea should be happy because things have turned out so well for her (601–2).

The chief benefit Jason claims he obtained for Medea is that he

rescued her from cultural obscurity (539). If not for me, Jason boasts, "you would have no *logos*" (οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν 541), where *logos* means "language," "culture," "repute."[13] Being among Greeks and their culture makes Medea count, even though Jason flouts the very customs that might give his claim some value. Instead of a civilizing influence, the *logos* has been used to strip Medea of family, home, and city.[14] She protests that Jason employs language not to serve justice but to justify, to "cloak well" (περιστελεῖν 582) the wrongs he has committed.[15] Compare Aristotle on the function of *logos* a century later:

> But speech (*logos*) is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household (*oikia*) and a city-state (*polis*).[16]

Far from providing for such a partnership, Jason and Kreon use *logos* to destroy Medea's household and drive her from the city.

As the first stasimon (410–45) makes clear, Medea is a woman trapped in a culture that denies her a public and a poetic voice. But Euripides' tragedy is no meditation on female powerlessness, for Medea bursts the mold of passive victim with explosive fury. Emerging as the author of her own story, Medea at times gains our sympathy —when she learns from Kreon of her exile, or when she faces her husband for the first time and he shamelessly denies that she saved his life. We admire Medea's ability to use the limited means at her disposal to gain a reprieve from Kreon; we do not protest when she thinks of killing Jason and his new bride; and we approve when she secures sanctuary in Athens from Aegeus. However, the attitude in the audience shifts radically when she reveals that she will kill her own children (792).[17] We share the horror of the Chorus (811–13, 816, 818, 844–65, and 996–1001) and hope, as they do (1251–70), that Medea will change her mind or that something will stop her.

The mythical tradition encouraged the original audience to respond in this way, for in all probability the version that Medea intentionally kills her sons was an Euripidean innovation. The Athenians in the theater of Dionysus expected the Korinthians to murder the children, and Euripides leaves that dramatic possibility open until the last minute when we hear their offstage deathcries (1271). Even after the fact, the unknowing Jason fears that his children will suffer violence at the hands of the Korinthians, *not* from Medea (1301–5).[18]

Given the way that Euripides handles the material, those in the

audience not only welcome Medea's reservations about infanticide but expect them to prevail. Twice in her second scene with Jason, Medea nearly reveals her authentic self, weeping when she realizes that her actions entail the death of her own children (899–905, 922–32).[19] Ironically, the closer she comes to betraying herself, the more she regains the audience's sympathy. When the children return from their gift-giving embassy, Medea reconsiders her decision in a climactic speech to which the play has been building (1021–80). Nowhere in Greek tragedy is an inner debate so fully dramatized and the pull of competing choices conveyed with such immediacy.[20] But what exactly are those choices, and how is the confusion of marriage and funeral rituals relevant? A closer look at the speech in its dramatic context will help us toward an answer.

As the Chorus predicted (860–65), the sight of the children causes Medea to weep and renounce her plan, at least momentarily. She wonders why, in order to hurt their father, she should "bring on herself twice the evils" (δὶς τόσα κτᾶσθαι κακά; 1046–47). The phrase recalls Hesiod's advice to "pay back double" (δὶς τόσα τείνυσθαι *Op.* 711) a friend who was like a brother but who turns on you and wrongs you by word or deed.[21] Medea inverts the maxim, realizing that by taking revenge against Jason—a "friend" who was once like a brother (implied at line 257)—she will punish *herself* twice as much as her guilty husband. Medea introduces the possibility that the heroic notion of vengeance to which she adheres may constitute her greatest enemy.

Recognizing that the evils (κακοῖς 1046) she visits on Jason through her children are nothing compared to the evils (κακά 1047) she inflicts on herself, Medea abandons her plan (1044, 1048). But the thought of her enemies' laughter changes her mind, and she calls her hesitation "cowardice" (κάκης 1051). The words κακοῖς, κακά, κάκης end their respective lines, and the accumulation of evils reaches its climax at the end of the speech. "Conquered by evil" (νικῶμαι κακοῖς 1077), Medea sends her children inside the house. She knows the "evil" (κακά 1078) that she is doing and that she will suffer,[22] but her desire not to be mocked overwhelms her, a feeling she identifies as "the cause of the greatest evils for men" (μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς 1080). With this second triad—κακοῖς, κακά, κακῶν—ringing out at the end of her speech, neither Medea nor the audience can view the triumph of avenger over mother as a victory.[23]

In reaching her decision, the presence of the children highlights the enormity of the violence that Medea intends. Euripides could have had the Tutor announce that Glauke accepted the gifts and that the children were back home, inside the house. Medea could then con-

sider what to do and why, without having to contend with the physical presence of her victims. Instead, the "smiles" (προσγελᾶτε and γέλων 1041) of her sons lose out to the "laughter" (γέλωτ' 1049) of her enemies. Medea calls her reasons for abandoning infanticide "soft" (μαλθακοὺς 1052), the same adjective she uses to describe the "soft skin" of her children (μαλθακὸς χρώς 1075). The "sweet image" (γλυκεῖα φροντίς 1036) of a life together with her boys—ruined in Korinth (1035) but possible in Athens (1045, 1058)—becomes the "sweet kiss" (γλυκεῖα προσβολή 1074) that she must reject in order to carry out her plan. Awakening her sense of touch, smell, taste, and sight, the children "come to life" via Medea's response, only to become the victims she must destroy.

If Medea bids farewell not only to her children but to her maternal instincts as well, then we expect some expression of loss in terms of the specific expectations of a Greek wife and mother, some indication beyond the commonplace that she will miss her sons when they are dead. Having juxtaposed marriage and death earlier in the play, Euripides now works out the macabre interplay of weddings and funerals in detail, focusing particularly on the mother's role as the overseer of her children's nuptials.

Medea mourns that she will not arrange the wedding of her sons, prepare the bridal chamber and bed, and hold up the traditional marriage torch (1026–27).[24] Time and again in Euripides, mothers refer to this torch-bearing role. Jokasta laments that Polynikes' marriage in Argos kept her from lighting the wedding torch and her son from taking the nuptial bath and processing with his bride through Thebes (*Ph.* 344–49).[25] In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Klytemnestra wonders who will hold the marriage torch for Iphigenia when she weds Achilles, and she grows furious at Agamemnon for interfering with her part in the ritual (*IA* 731–41). Alkestis mourns the fact that she will not be there to dress her daughters for their wedding or help them during childbirth (*Alk.* 317–18), and Admetus laments her death by recalling their nuptial procession with marriage torches and wedding songs (*Alk.* 915–25). In *Ion*, Kreusa reveals the bleakness of her "wedding" with Apollo, for no marriage torches led her to the bridal bed where she eventually gave birth to, and later abandoned, her child (*Ion* 1474–76).[26]

As well as mourning the non-wedding of her sons, Medea grieves that they will not care for her in her old age, nor will she receive funeral rites at their hands (1032–34). As discussed in Chapter 6, Greek parents placed great value on being cared for in their old age and then buried by their children when they died. Medea herself claims that burial by loved ones is something "desired by all people"

(ζηλωτὸν ἀνθρώποισι 1035).[27] Without the rituals of wedding and funeral, a mother's efforts are "in vain" (ἄλλως), Medea's first word in lines 1029 and 1030.

Although she will sacrifice these rituals with her children, Medea helps to prepare the wedding and funeral of Jason's new bride, Glauke. She tells Jason in their second meeting, "I should have taken part in your plans/ and seen them through, and stood by your wedding/ and taken pleasure in tending to your bride" (886–88). Medea speaks like a *numpheutria*, the mother who helps her daughter get ready for the ceremony.[28] From wife of Jason to surrogate mother of his new bride, Medea manipulates the social and ritual roles available to her, just as in her farewell to her children she realizes that these maternal duties are the ones she will miss the most.

Medea arranges for gifts to be sent via her children to clothe the new bride, identifying the finely wrought robe and golden headpiece as φερναί, both "dowry" and "wedding presents" (956).[29] When the young boys leave bearing caskets with the gifts inside, the audience may have recognized a theatrical version of gift-bearing scenes frequently depicted on Attic vases, either part of the wedding procession itself or the gift-giving occasion (*epaulia*) that followed the next morning.[30] Medea insists that the children deliver the gifts directly into the hands of "the prospering (*makariai*) bride" (957), a nicely ambiguous command given that the *makarismos* blessing was offered not only to newlyweds but also to the recently deceased. For Medea, Glauke is both a prosperous new bride and one of the blessed dead.[31]

The Chorus imagine Glauke donning Medea's gifts, where the wedding crown will prove "an ornament of Hades" (τὸν Ἄιδα/ κόσμον 980–81), and the robes will make her a "bride for those below" (νερτέροις δ' ἤδη πάρα νυμφοκομήσει 985).[32] When Medea bids farewell to her children, she also conjures the moment that Glauke as bride (νύμφη) puts on the fatal crown (στέφανος) and wedding dress (πέπλοισι 1065–66), exploiting the similarities between adorning a bride and dressing a corpse for burial.[33] Even as she mourns the lost marriage and funeral rituals of her sons, Medea arranges a fatal wedding for her rival.

The conflation of the two rituals culminates in the Messenger's horrific account of the death of Glauke and Kreon. He describes how the children and their father enter "the marriage house" (νυμφικοὺς δόμους 1137), and Glauke turns away in disgust at the sight of Medea's children.[34] She "veils her face," προυκαλύψατ', (*proukalupsat'* 1147), the opposite gesture to that of the bridal *anakaluptēria* performed before her husband. But the splendor of the gifts over-

comes Glauke's disdain, and she eagerly tries them on, arranging the crown in her hair as she sits and looks at herself in a mirror. The details mesh closely with scenes of bridal preparation popular on red-figure vases after 440 B.C. In these compositions, a woman sits in her chamber and prepares for her wedding, accepting gifts, trying on clothes and jewelry, and admiring the effect by looking in a mirror.[35] Gazing at her reflection, Glauke "smiles at the lifeless image of her own body" (ἄψυχον εἰκὼ προσγελῶσα σώματος 1162). The scene snaps into focus, for the mirror captures a fifth-century wedding about to turn into its opposite. We noted in Chapter 2 the presence of bronze mirrors in the grave goods of women and, more strikingly, the prominence of funerary stelai that bear the sculpted image of the deceased woman sitting and holding a mirror.[36] While Glauke and her household see a happy bride dressed for her wedding, the Messenger, Medea, and the audience know that the mirror reflects a potential corpse adorned for her funeral.

Glauke catches on fire and runs through the chamber trying to shake off the crown, but her efforts only make the fire "give off twice as much light" (1194). Mixing with the flames, "blood drips from the top of her head," and her flesh "flows away from her bones like pine tears" (1200). The macabre comparison of flesh and blood to the pitch that drips from burning pine has specific relevance to the wedding ceremony. Recall that in her farewell to the children, Medea regrets that she will not be able to hold up their nuptial torch. Now she works a ghastly inversion of this ritual practice, turning Jason's new bride into her own wedding brand, burning brighter and brighter until she expires.[37]

Medea's contribution to the marriage celebration is not over, for the Messenger recounts how Kreon enters and throws himself on his daughter's body, προσπίτνει νεκρῶι (1205), meaning "he falls on" or "he embraces the corpse." After enfolding the body in his arms, Kreon kisses it (1206–7), and the sexual language soon merges with the funereal, for Kreon's grief takes the form of "threnodies and wailings" (θρήνων καὶ γόων 1211). He wonders aloud, "Who has made me an old tomb (τὸν γέροντα τύμβον 1209) orphaned of you?" and then he cries in despair, "May I die together with you" (συνθάνοιμι σοι 1210). As if trapped by his own rhetoric, Kreon becomes what he only intended as a figure of speech. He struggles to free himself from the dead girl's counter-embrace (1216), but her wedding dress clings like ivy to a bay tree (1212–13), and Kreon rips his skin from his bones as he tries to pull away. His self-portrayal as an "old tomb" proves all too accurate, and his prayer to die with his daughter is granted sooner than he desires. After their "terrible wrestling" (δεινὰ . . . παλαίσματα

1214), father and daughter "lie together in death" (κεῖνται δὲ νεκροὶ 1220).[38]

Euripides magnifies the horrific impact of Glauke's murder by having Medea exploit signal aspects of the wedding ritual: she contributes to the gift-giving ceremonies by sending bridal adornments and dowry, she precipitates a momentary revealing of the bride, she helps with the nuptial preparations by providing the garments and coronal worn on the occasion, she ignites a human wedding torch, and she even arranges a perverse consummation of Glauke's marriage by providing her a male to embrace and lie with in death. But Medea also attends to Glauke's funeral, clothing and crowning the corpse for burial, providing a family member to offer the lament over the body, and even erecting a kind of burial marker (Kreon's "old tomb"). Medea's revenge is hideous not only for the physical suffering it unleashes, but also for the poetic refinement with which it subverts the ritual patterns familiar to the Athenian audience.

Preparing to extend her vengeance by killing the children, Medea braces herself with warlike encouragements, exhorting her heart to "arm itself" (ὁπλίζου 1242) and "not grow cowardly" (μὴ κακισθῆις 1246). She addresses her own right hand—"Take up the sword,/ take it!" (1244–45). The hand that signifies sworn oaths (21–22, 492–95), supplications (496, 745–55), and reconciliation (899, 1141) now becomes an instrument of violence.[39] Medea's double imperative and vocative indicate that she gestures at this point, and she may have raised her right hand in militant fashion (befitting the warrior she has become) and then converted that gesture into the ritually appropriate farewell to the dead, the "right-hand farewell" of male mourners known from vase-painting (figure 7).[40] Adrastos makes this sign when saluting the corpses of the Seven (Eur. *Supp.* 772), and the Servant wishes he could do the same at Alkestis' funeral (*Alk.* 768). Because the gesture seems to have been reserved for men, its use here would be all the more telling, marking the emergence of Medea as a male warrior in both language and physical action.

The murder of her children completes the process of Medea's "male-ification" that began when she first countenanced infanticide (764–810). She yearns to be the conquering hero over her foes (765); she wants to pay her enemies back (767); she construes Korinth as hostile territory (781) and will not leave her children there to be insulted by the enemy (782); she cannot endure the thought that they will laugh at her as well (797); she takes delight in proving herself hard on her enemies and kind toward her friends (809).[41]

Following that strident speech, the Chorus respond with an ideal, "feminized" view of the city of Athens, only to contrast it in the

second half of the stasimon with a war-torn city victimized by Medea's violence (824–65).[42] Initially, this "ode to Athens" reflects the erotic, women-centered lyric epitomized by Sappho, who often queries the system of values found in epic.[43] But the second half of the ode shatters this vision of Athens: in place of "stepping lightly through the air" (830), Medea offers deadly blows against her children (851); for garlands of roses (841), the Chorus sing of blood and slaughter (φόνον 852, φονεύσηις 855, φόνου 862, φοινίαν 864); the lovely waters of the river Kephisus (835) will be polluted by Medea's crime (846–50); the peace-loving songs of the Muses (830–32) give way to unheeded pleas for mercy (851–55); instead of Harmonia, the daughter of the Muses (832), or Aphrodite (836) and her sons the Erotes (844), we hear of Medea "the child destroyer" (παιδολέτειραν 849).[44]

It is this crazed warrior that the city of Athens will receive, and who appears on high at the close of the play. But even as Medea ascends to that part of the Greek stage usually reserved for the gods, we realize how far she has fallen. As Cunningham puts it, "The final scene of the play presents visually and strikingly the dehumanizing effect upon Medea of what she has done."[45] For all her knowledge of the future—she predicts Jason's death (1386), the establishment of a cult in Korinth (1379–83), and her own marriage to Aegeus in Athens (1384–85)[46]—Medea is controlled by the past, particularly by her dread of being mocked by an enemy. As she tells Jason, "you were not about to dishonor my bed/ and lead out your life in pleasure by laughing at me" (1354–55). She reins in her regrets over killing the children—"the pain I feel brings me profit so long as you don't laugh at me" (1362). To Jason's incredulous "You killed them," Medea responds, "To cause you pain" (1398).

Medea denies Jason's request to mourn over his sons and bury them (1377–81), and she rejects his appeal to hold their bodies one last time (1399–1404, 1411–12). Stripped of his arrogance, Jason becomes more and more like the Medea who earlier struggled with her decision in the presence of the children. Jason calls his sons "most beloved" (φίλτατα 1397, used twice by Medea at 1071); he yearns to kiss them (1399–1400, as does Medea at 1071, 1074); and he longs "to touch the soft skin (μαλακοῦ χρωτὸς) of my sons" (1403, echoing Medea's ὦ μαλθακὸς χρὼς at 1075).[47] Unable to ease his grief by tending to his dead sons, Jason wishes that he had never been a father at all (1413–14). In these (his last) lines, Jason reaches the same conclusion that the Chorus do when Medea decides on infanticide, namely that it would be better never to have offspring (1090–1115).

Given the transposition of attitudes of Jason and Medea, we catch

the bitter irony in Medea's insistence that *she* keep the dead bodies and bury them in the "sanctuary of Hera" (1379), the goddess traditionally associated with marriage.[48] At Hera Akraia in Korinth, Medea will initiate "rites" (τέλη 1382) to expiate the murder of the children.[49] Far from securing a resolution to the upheavals of the play, the institution of a ritual in honor of Hera guarantees a locus *in perpetuum* for the conflation of weddings and funerals that has so guided Medea's revenge.[50]

Medea taunts Jason with the prophecy that his death will be caused by a piece of the Argo, constituting the "bitter final rites of my marriage" (πικρὰς τελευτὰς τῶν ἐμῶν γάμων 1388), again playing on the double meaning of *teleutē* as "end" and "ritual completion." The play's language has come full circle, for the Chorus first sing of Medea as a bride who desires that "unapproachable bed" (τᾶς ἀπλάτου/ κοίτας), striving after "the end/completion of death" (θανάτου τελευτάν 150–53). Between these two "ritual ends," a vicious pattern of marriage and death has been revealed—the wedding rites of Glauke lead to her (and her father's) gruesome murder; the children born from the marriage of Medea and Jason are killed by their own mother; a distraught father is unable to bury the sons whom he now realizes he loves.

And Medea? As Mead writes, "The woman we have known throughout the play is no longer there. A hard and embittered creature has taken her place."[51] That creature heads for Athens, the city where the play was performed, there to join Aegeus (1384–85), the Athenian ruler who offered her asylum. At the time of his unexpected entrance, Aegeus showed a benevolence that mirrored the audience's own acceptance of Medea, a woman victimized by political exile, brutal sophistry, and conjugal rejection.[52] By the end of the play, however, Athens will receive a very different Medea, one who brings war into the household, a "child destroyer" (παιδολήτορ 1393) who justifies bloodletting by appealing to a "heroic" code that enemies must not laugh at her.

The horrifying precision with which Medea converts marriage into death—and maternity into child-murder—shatters the validity of the heroic ideal she uses to justify her actions. When doing harm to enemies so as not to be laughed at becomes the reason for killing one's loved ones, when an abused woman inverts her traditional roles at weddings and funerals and so converts her home into a battlefield, then the play challenges the ideological roots of the culture. For it is to this ideology that Medea succumbs, denying the Chorus's hope that one day women will tell a different, and perhaps better, story.

Herein lies the importance of Athens as Medea's final destination and home. Far from representing a place of escape beyond the conflicts of the play, Athens receives a Medea who is a monstrous image of the city's own values.[53] Euripides indicates that the excesses of the play are not restricted to an imaginary *mythos* but stand squarely before his contemporaries in the audience.

In the spring of 431 (the year of *Medea*'s first production), a full-scale war between the Athenian empire and Sparta and her allies was imminent, and major hostilities between Athens and Korinth (in the Spartan camp) already had broken out. Although no one could have imagined the destructiveness of the Peloponnesian War, something of its cost—especially to noncombatants—could have been surmised from the unprecedented scale of the fighting that had already taken place.[54] We get a suggestion of the impending violence in the ode to Athens (*Med.* 824–65), where Euripides juxtaposes the portrait of a peaceful, feminine city with the bloody picture of murdered children. Medea's valorization of childbirth over warfare (248–51) conveys a similar opposition, but one that she abandons as the play unfolds. Estranged from her society and herself, Medea increasingly adopts the language, ethos, and actions of a warrior. In the process, her infanticide takes on unmistakable aspects of the male art of war, reflecting the oncoming conflict between Athens and Sparta.[55]

With what specificity *Medea* communicated this connection is, of course, impossible to determine. As we have seen, the play also grapples with issues familiar to the daily life of the *polis*: the destructive effect of men's public aspirations on the family, the importance of children to both private and public spheres, the conception of the *oikos* as people and not property, the differing relationships between women and men and their offspring.[56] However, given the historical moment of the play's first production, the story of a twisted warrior coming from Korinth to Athens must have struck a disturbing chord in the original audience of 431 B.C.

Reading *Medea* in this way emphasizes the social and political contexts that inform the play. In *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre describes a similar approach to the plays of Sophokles, although his comments are no less applicable to Euripides:

> What is at stake in Sophoclean dramatic encounter is not simply the fate of individuals. . . . [I]t is the outcome for the Greek community which is in the balance. . . . Hence in some important sense the community too is a dramatic character which enacts the narrative of *its* history.[57]

In *Medea*, the rituals of weddings and funerals serve as cornerstones of community self-definition, but they also provide the fulcrum and lever with which Medea undermines it. With ruthless logic Euripides exposes the limitations of his society and its values, presenting a powerful image of the forces that could lead to its collapse. Perhaps the very bleakness of the picture encourages the audience to imagine, and create, a better one.[58]

Glotz, *La Solidarité de la famille* (Paris 1904), 317n.3, lists other poetic and dramatic examples. In *Alk.*, once Herakles leaves Admetus' house he faces a most inhospitable welcome, for his intended host in Thrace, Diomedes, feeds his "guests" to man-eating horses (483–90).

44. Several years later, Euripides again portrayed the hero as restorer of the *oikos*, rescuing his *own* family from death (*HF*). In the terrible reversals of that play, however, Herakles kills his wife and children after being struck mad by Hera.

45. ξένος (*xenos*) and compounds describe Herakles as guest and Admetus as host over twenty-five times in the play.

46. Ch. 1 p. 14.

47. Arrowsmith 1974, 93; his note on 1472–73 (his lineation) is exemplary.

48. O'Higgins 1993, 78, 92–95 and Rabinowitz 1989 view Alkestis' silence as a symbol of the misogyny they find consistently represented in Greek tragedy (but see above, n.39). Cf. Burnett 1965, 255n.24, who argues persuasively that Alkestis must remain mute for us to believe that she actually had died. Buxton 1987, 173 and E. P. Trammell, "The Mute Alcestis," *CJ* 37 (1941–42), 144–50 stress the importance of silence and ritual purification, but Buxton's claim that this reflects a formal part of the Greek wedding ceremony is dubious. Closer to the mark is Dale 1954 on 1146, who emphasizes the advantage of a silent Alkestis in terms of "drama, poetry and good taste." She is wrong (as is O'Higgins 1993, 93) only in assuming that Euripides had but two actors at his disposal in the play, and therefore was compelled to have a nonspeaker play the veiled Alkestis. In Euripides' tetralogy of 438 B.C. (which included *Alk.*), at least one of the other plays—*Telephus*—required three actors; see Webster 1967, 44–48 and M. Heath, "Euripides' *Telephus*," *CQ* 37 (1987), 277–80. With three actors at hand, why wouldn't Euripides have used them all in the final scene of *Alkestis*?

49. For the "despair" motif—no marriage, no children, no grief—see Ch. 7 p. 106 and Ch. 8 p. 114.

50. Cf. the proverb φιλία ἐστὶ μία ψυχὴ ἐν δύω σώμασιν ἐνοικουμένη ("*philia* is one soul dwelling together in two bodies"), in G. H. Opsimathes, *ΓΝΩΜΑΙ* (Leipzig 1884), 19, quoted by Burnett 1965, 255n.21. The play recuperates the description of Alkestis as "both living and dead" (ζῶσαν . . . καὶ θανοῦσαν 141), as one "who both is and is no more" (ἔστιν τε κοὐκέτ' ἔστιν 521).

CHAPTER 7

1. Cf. the reductive conclusions reached by Cantarella 1987, 66: "Euripides confirms with utter certainty the old commonplace of the woman as 'scourge, infamous race, unspeakable misfortune' for whoever cannot manage to escape her evil influence." So, too, S-E. Case, "Classic Drag: The Greek Creation of Female Parts," *Theatre Journal* 37 (1985), 327, steamrolls over the play's complexities: "Feminist practitioners and scholars may decide that such plays [*Medea*, *Lysistrata*] do not belong in the canon—that they are not central to the study and practice of theatre."

2. Kassandra describes Helen as λελημμένης (Eur. *Tro.* 373), albeit seized "willingly and not by force." Iole in S. *Tr.* (Ch. 5 pp. 73–74) is a new bride literally captured at the sack of a city.

3. See Reckford 1968, 337 and 354; Redfield 1982, 181–201; and Jenkins 1983, 137–46. M. Visser, "Medea: Daughter, Sister, Wife and Mother," in Cropp et al. 1986, 152, emphasizes Medea's loss of both natal and conjugal families.

4. This situation may provide the backdrop for the exchange at 591–97. Medea accuses Jason of spurning a "barbarian marriage," and he responds by claiming advantages of power previously denied him. One of Jason's few defenders, R. Palmer, "An Apology for Jason," *CJ* 53 (1957), 49–55, claims that Jason realizes the implications of the fifth-century Athenian law and acts accordingly. For other ideas about the law's relationship to *Medea*, see Mead 1943, 15–20; E. M. Blaiklock, *The Male Characters of Euripides* (Wellington 1952), 21–22; Snell 1960, 124; Reckford 1968, 346n.26; Davies 1977–78, 111–12; and Ch. 1 p. 18.

5. Those who insist the law was retroactive argue that, in the absence of birth registers, "the only effective way to put the law into effect was to instruct demes and phratries that *from the date when the law was passed* they were not to admit any candidate who was not of Athenian parentage on both sides" (Humphreys 1974, 92). See also Davies 1977–78, 107 and D. Whitehead, "Women and Naturalisation in Fourth-Century Athens," *CQ* 36 (1986), 109n.3. By this reasoning, a son born to an Athenian and his foreign wife in 467 B.C.—sixteen years before the citizenship law was passed—would find himself suddenly ineligible to enroll as a citizen. However, Hignett 1952, 345 and Broadbent 1968, 170 argue that so grossly unfair an arrangement could never have been adopted. Moreover, as Hedrick 1987 points out, "It is only natural that issues of heredity be debated *at birth* [my emphasis] in the context of a kinship organisation such as a phratry rather than at eighteen in the context of a geographic entity such as the deme." See also Ch. 1 n.36, this volume.

6. *kēdos* (or cognate) occurs at 76, 367, 400, 700, 885, and 991.

7. Medea still kneels fifteen lines later (as ἱκέτευσά, "supplicating," at 338 suggests). Gould 1973, 85–86 and 94–95 describes supplication as placing oneself completely at another's mercy with the understanding that the gods protect anyone who takes this desperate step. See also Michelini 1987, 175–76; Collard 1975 on *Supp.* 8–11a; Dover 1974, 199; Vickers 1973, 438–94 (476–78 for *Medea*); and L. Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford 1962), 94, 136–37.

8. G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge 1981), 159–62, notes that revolutionary theories about women's status and rights were in the air at the time of *Medea*'s first performance.

9. See Page 1938 on *Med.* 423; Elliott 1969 on *Med.* 421–22 and 424–25; and H. Lloyd-Jones, *Females of the Species: Semonides on Women* (London 1975), 14, 18–20, 25–29. Verrall 1883 on *Med.* 420 notes the Homeric parody in the line "Muses . . . *abandon* your song" (421), fitting in a play that questions "heroic" values.

10. Dover 1974, 248 characterizes oaths as a means of involving the gods as witnesses. Medea attacks Jason as an oath-breaker at 492–95, 511, 698, 801–2, and 1392; see Boedeker 1991; Mikalson 1991, 82–84; Vickers 1973, 282–86; and Burnett 1973, 13–14.

11. Echoed by the misogynist Hippolytus (Eur. *Hipp.* 618–24).

12. See Osborne 1985, 138–39. At Eur. *Supp.* 54–56, the Chorus tell Aethra, "You bore a son, making your bed [or "marriage"] dear to your husband," a sentiment repeated at Lys. 1.6–7.

13. C. H. Kahn, "The Origins of Social Contract Theory," in *The Sophists and Their Legacy*, ed. G. B. Kerferd (Weisbaden 1981), 94–99, examines the role ascribed to *logos* in the rise of Greek civilization. M. Heidegger defines *logos* as "the laying out that gathers" and "the essence of saying as thought by the Greeks," in "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)," *Early Greek Thinking*, tr. Krel and Capuzzi (San Francisco 1984, orig. essay 1951), 59–78.

14. The inability of *logos* to rectify injustice may be part of Euripides' point. Although Jason and Medea's first encounter can be characterized as a law-court scene (Collard 1975a, 61–63; Elliott 1969 on *Med.* 475–95; and Page 1938 on *Med.* 476), at its conclusion no pretense remains that this form of problem solving can redress the wrongs (Solmsen 1975, 28).

15. Describing the civil war in Kerkyra, Thuk. 3.82.4 reveals the disastrous results when words are twisted to mean their opposite and serve only the ends of power. The White House christening Nicaraguan "Contra" terrorists as "Freedom Fighters" provides a modern parallel (Ch. 9 n.2). Re περιστελεῖν, Medea uses it in its literal sense (1034), grieving that her children will not "cover" or "dress" her corpse when she dies.

16. Arist. *Pol.* 1.1.10–11, tr. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass. 1949).

17. Critics have tried to determine when this black light first dawns on Medea. Schlesinger 1966, 42 locates the moment when she hears Kreon say that, next to his children, he loves his homeland most (329): "Sie empfängt hier die erste Anregung zum Kindermord" ("Here she first gets the idea of infanticide"). But Kreon's line is part of a stichomythic exchange and nothing in Medea's response indicates any such realization. Euripides was perfectly capable of externalizing the thoughts of a character if he felt it important to do so. He did not, and therefore Medea's announcement of her new plan at 792 comes as a shock, marking a radical shift in which the audience along with the Chorus begin to turn their sympathies away from Medea.

18. Earlier versions had the Korinthians slay the children to revenge Kreon's death (spreading the rumor that Medea killed them) or, in a variation in which Medea ruled Korinth, she slew her children by accident while trying to make them immortal. See Lesky 1972, 217–18, and 1967, 143; Page 1938, xxii–xxiv; and A. E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (Oxford 1896), 289–90. The case for the anteriority of Neophron's lost *Medea* (in which Medea kills her children) is made by E. A. Thompson, "Neophron and Euripides' *Medea*," *CQ* 38 (1944), 10–14; B. Manuwald, "Der Mord an den Kindern," *WS* nf. 17 (1983), 27–61; and Michelini 1989, 115–35; and refuted by Kovacs 1993, 49 and McDermott 1989, 9–24. See also T. V. Buttrey, "Accident and Design in Euripides' *Medea*," *AJP* 79 (1958), 13–14.

19. Conacher 1967, 194 contrasts the wavering Medea with the cold-blooded avenger who emerges after the Aegeus scene:

> If this is the Medea which we are to watch without relief to the play's end, then both the Chorus and ourselves have been the dupes . . . for yielding our sympathy and interest. Fortunately, however, it is the air of cold inflexibility which is false: a cloak of desperate resolution hiding the maternal anguish as well as a device by which the dramatist may, in the end, present the anguish more effectively.

20. Lesky 1967, 146. Snell 1960, 124 observes how the scenes are constructed to lead up to the monologue. The authenticity of lines 1056–80 has been challenged recently. See App. B., where I argue that the speech (with minor deletions) is both original and essential to the play.

21. Dover 1974, 184 calls Hesiod's principle "a head for an eye," and Blundell 1989, 30 notes that it "adds an element of retribution to the financial model of restitution."

22. Reading τολμήσω at line 1078 with Kovacs 1986, 352; see also Foley 1989, 71n.36.

23. See Burnett 1973, 21–23; Walsh 1979, 297–98; and Foley 1989, 79–83. For a fuller discussion of "helping friends and harming enemies" in *Medea*, see App. C.

24. Diggle, following Burges, prints λούτρα for λέκτρα at 1026, preparing the bridal bath rather than the marriage bed; in either case, Medea refers to the wedding ceremony.

25. Plutarch (*De Exilio* 606F–607A) lambastes Euripides' Jokasta for carrying on as if her son would not find a nuptial bath and someone else to bear his wedding torch. The passage suggests what five hundred years can do to ideas of ritual *participation*.

26. See Ch. 8 n.65.

27. The linguistic parallels between *Med.* and *Alk.* are exact: Medea's children will not be able "to care for me in my old age,/ and to cover [my corpse] when I die" (γηροβοσκήσειν τ' ἐμὲ/ καὶ κατθανοῦσαν . . . περιστελεῖν 1033–34); Pheres must father new sons to "care for your old age and cover [your corpse]/ when you're dead" (γηροβοσκήσουσι καὶ θανόντα σε/ περιστελοῦσι, *Alk.* 663–64).

28. Page 1938 on *Med.* 887. The play never mentions the woman who is Glauke's mother and Kreon's wife.

29. Schaps 1979, 99.

30. See Ch. 1 p. 18 and App A. p. 142. Medea's gifts must have been carried in a container, because the robe and crowns act on contact (787–88). For gifts borne during the wedding procession, see the Group E amphoras *ABV* 134.15 and 141.1, *Add*² 38; the black-figure column crater (Bérard 1984, #135); and the red-figure vases listed in Sutton 1981, including W.13 (figure 1b, this volume), 27, 29, 31, 34, 52, and 53(?). See also the red-figure loutrophoros ca. 420 B.C. in *AR* 14 (1967–68), 59 and fig. 19. For red-figure scenes depicting the *epaulia*, see Sutton 1981, 210–11, 364–69.

31. Ch. 1 nn.16 and 64. Earlier, Medea sardonically calls herself *makarian* ("blessed" 509) for having Jason as a husband.

32. Verrall 1883 on *Med.* 957 notes that the phrase κόσμον [*kosmon*] φέρειν ("to offer adornment") is used for both wedding and funeral gifts; it occurs at Eur. *Alk.* 613 for gifts buried with the dead, and *kosmos* alone refers to grave goods at *Alk.* 149, 618, and *Hec.* 578. At *Alk.* 161 *kosmos* is used for the ornaments Alkestis wears with her funeral dress; Hecuba adorns the corpse of Astyanax with *kosmoi* (*Tro.* 1200, 1208), and Helen weaves such a garment for the dead Klytemnestra (*Or.* 1431–36). Periander (Hdt. 5.92.7) strips beautiful *kosmoi* off the women he brings to the Hera temple and burns them as offerings to his dead (and naked) wife.

33. στέφανος and πέπλος refer explicitly to "funeral crown" and "burial dress" at Eur. *Tro.* 1143–44, 1220, and 1223; see Lee 1976 on *Tro.* 1221–23. Megara dresses and crowns her sons for their impending death and burial at *HF* 329, 525–26, and 548–49.

34. Glauke "turns away her pale cheek" (1148) out of loathing for the children, the same gesture Medea makes to hide her distress at the thought of killing them (923). Other details connect the two "brides"—both exhibit "wrath" (ὀργή) before their husband (Glauke at 1150, Medea at 870), and Jason advises Glauke to control her "passionate spirit" (θυμός 1152), the very thing Medea cannot do (1079). In the mock reconciliation, Medea advises her children to exchange "enmity for friendship" (ἔχθρας ἐς φίλους 897); when Glauke initially spurns the children, Jason tells her to "consider as friends [φίλους 1153] the same people your husband does." His injunction that she not be "hostile to friends" (δυσμενὴς . . . φίλοις 1151) echoes Medea's boast that she is "well-intentioned to friends" (φίλοισιν εὐμενῆ 809). The parallels turn Glauke into a kind of mirror-Medea, her gruesome demise anticipating the metaphoric death of the protagonist.

35. Sutton 1981, 49, 196–212, 337 and Webster 1972, 216–22.

36. See Ch. 2 p. 41. Of special interest is the bronze caryatid mirror from Korinth, c. 450–40, in Congdon 1981, 196 and pl. 84. The caryatid that supports the mirror herself holds a mirror and gazes at her image. This detail in *Medea* proved memorable: a Lucanian hydria (late fifth century) by the Policoro Painter (#286 Taranto) shows Medea in her dragon-chariot, to the left the seated Glauke *holding a mirror*, and below the Tutor, the two dead children, and Jason brandishing a sword. See N. Degrassi, "Il Pittore di Policoro," *BA* 50 (1965), 9–10 and figs. 8, 11, 12; also J. Henle, *Greek Myths: A Vase Painter's Notebook* (Bloomington 1973), 110–11.

37. The metonym "pine" (πεύκινον δάκρυ 1200) for "torch" also signals wedding torches at *Alk.* 915 (πεύκαις σὺν Ἰηλιάσιν). For the treatment of pine to accumulate resin for torches, see *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 2nd ed. (London 1878), s.v. *taeda* 1039a. Heiner Müller (*MEDEA-MATERIAL*) expands the trope of a bride becoming wedding torch, in *Hamlet-Machine and Other Texts for the Stage*, tr. C. Weber (New York 1984), 128–33.

38. Wrestling frequently occurs as a sexual metaphor, as at A. *Ag.* 1206. The erotic overtones of Kreon "dying together with" Glauke (συνθάνοιμί 1210) recall Agamemnon and Kassandra in *Ag.* (1438–47), Klytemnestra and Aegisthus in *Ch.* (ξυνθανεῖσθαι 979, also 894–95, 906), Antigone and Haimon in S. *Ant.* (1237–41), Evadne and Kapaneus in Eur. *Supp.* (συνθνήισκειν 1007, also 1019–1030, and συνθανοῦσα 1063), and Helen's wish to die with her husband in *Hel* (ξυνθάνοιμ' ἄν 1402). R. Hirzel, *Der Selbstmord* (Darmstadt 1966, orig. 1908), 18–26, 85–88, identifies both the flight from marriage and the desire for physical union in death as motivations for suicide in Greek tragedy. Other references to "lying together in death" occur at *Il.* 23.83–92 and *Od.* 24.76–77 (Achilles and Patroclus), S. *El.* 1165–70 and Eur. *Or.* 1051–55 (Elektra and Orestes), and *Alk.* 363–68 (Admetus and Alkestis).

39. See S. Flory, "Medea's Right Hand," *TAPA* 108 (1978) 71, and Kaimio 1988, 29. The word *hand* (χείρ) occurs over thirty times in *Medea*; the right hand is specified five times.

40. At the same moment Medea urges herself to forget her sons for the day "and mourn them later" (κἄπειτα θρήνει 1249), making the funeral gesture all the more fitting.

41. The word Medea repeats is ἐχθρός (*echthros*), often reserved for personal enemies but frequently applied to military foes, as at S. *Ant.* 10, 522, 1162. See Blundell 1989, 39 and Kells 1973, 9n.1.

42. The contrast of two cities, one at peace and one at war, goes back to the *Shield of Achilles* (*Il.* 18.490–540). Homer's depiction of the peaceful city begins with weddings (nuptial feasts, torchlight processions, marriage hymns), a paradigm for civic concord. So, too, the Chorus of Ar. *Pax* oppose weddings to war (775–80) and call Peace the "mistress of marriages" (976).

43. See Winkler 1990, 162–87; L. Rissman, *Love as War: Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho* (Königstein 1983); and J. D. Marry, "Sappho and the Heroic Ideal: ἔρωτος ἀρετή," *Arethusa* 12 (1979), 71–92. For echoes of Sapphic vocabulary in the ode, see Rehm 1989, 106n.32.

44. Euripides also links the Muses with peace at *Supp.* 488–91 (see Collard 1975 on *Supp.* 489–91), indirectly at 882–87, and at *Kresphontes Fr.* 453 (Nauck-Snell). In A. *Supp.*, the war-god Ares "lacks dance and music" (*achoron akitharin* 681).

45. Cunningham 1954, 159.

46. Medea will go to Athens "dwelling with Aegeus" (1385); the verb συνοικήσουσα can mean "living in wedlock" (Ch. 1 p. 18), so used by Medea at 242. For the various myths of Medea's life in Athens, see C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Theseus as Son and Stepson*, *BICS* Supp. vol. 40 (London 1979), 18–58.

47. As Foley 1989, 79n.60 writes, "Jason begins by devaluing children for expedient reasons and ends as movingly paternal. Medea, in her movement toward masculinity, follows the reverse course." See also Pucci 1980, 162–65 and Strohm 1957, 3.

48. See Ch. 1 p. 13, and Seaford 1988, 120, 122–24 for Hera's cult titles of Τελεία ("Consummator"?) and Ζυγία ("Yoker"). Hera's ties to marriage were especially strong in Argos, exploited in Eur. *El.* (Zeitlin 1970).

49. Burkert 1977, 263–64 and 1966, 118–19 reconstructs the ritual in the temple of Hera Akraia, but the sources are late. Euripides' aetiology is surely ironic—Medea establishes a cult where Korinthians atone for a crime that they never committed.

50. Cf. the view of the *deus* in Euripides argued by Spira 1960, passim (no discussion of *Medea*), who denies irony to this most theatrical of devices. W. Schmidt, *Der Deus Ex Machina bei Euripides* (diss. Tübingen 1964), 199–200, is closer to the mark.

51. Mead 1943, 20. S. G. Daitz, "Concepts of Freedom and Slavery in Euripides' *Hecuba*," *Hermes* 99 (1971), 222, compares Medea to Hecuba—for both, "the moment of greatest physical triumph and freedom is identical with the moment of most abysmal inner defeat and enslavement." Cf. Pomeroy 1975, 109, who finds them preferable to their Sophoklean counterparts Deianeira and Antigone, for they "are successful" and "are too strong to regret their decision." Lefkowitz 1981, 5–6 and Collard 1975a, 64–66 consider the self-destructive consequences of such "successes."

52. Once Medea has secured refuge in Athens, Aegeus abruptly departs, taking no farewell of Medea (Page 1938 on *Med.* 756). It is as if the play has no more need of him; see Rehm 1985, 65–69.

53. Cf. Burnett 1973, 24: "To Athens we too escape with a sense that we are free . . . of the Jason within." Similarly, Shaw 1975, 261n.21 asserts that Athens "represents the cultural integrity missing in Corinth." For Foley 1985, 162, Euripides "consistently represents Athens as a place that can cope, ritually and artistically, with the violence represented by the terrible heroes of myth," an idea taken up by Zeitlin 1990. But far from being "free of the Jason within," Athens welcomes Medea who "entirely assumes Jason's principles and negates the position she had taken against him earlier" (Walsh 1979, 296). Put simply, Medea brings the *problems* of the play with her to Athens. How well the city "coped" is suggested in Thukydides and in many of Euripides' subsequent plays.

54. Thuk. 1.50–66. Athenian and Kerkyraian ships engaged the Korinthians in 433 B.C., "the greatest sea battle that Greeks had ever yet waged against other Greeks" (1.50.2). Athens also undertook land and sea actions against the Potidaeans who were supported by Korinth; at Olynthos, 150 Athenians were slain, including their general Kallias (1.58.3). See Meiggs 1972, 201–2 and P. Deane, *Thucydides' Dates, 465–431 B.C.* (Don Mills, Ont. 1972), 74–89.

55. This reading places *Medea* first in a series of Euripides' plays—*Hec.*, *Tro.*, *Hel.* and *IA*—that criticize the Peloponnesian War, often from the perspective of women and children who are its victims. A strong case also can be made for viewing the pan-Hellenic sentiments of *HF* and *Ion* as part of Euripides' ongoing critique of the war. Tragedies at the City Dionysia were performed in early spring, before the onset of military campaigns, and so were positioned to influence the debate about the nature and direction of Athenian policy. See G. Ley, "On the Pressure of Circumstance in Greek Tragedy," *Ramus* 15 (1986) 46, and Ch. 8 p. 118.

56. McManus 1990, 227–28.

57. MacIntyre 1981, 135.

58. As Stern and Silk 1981, 378 conclude, "The essential character of dissonance . . . is that it evokes a need for resolution which it cannot itself satisfy."

CHAPTER 8

1. *H.Cer.* 353; also 305–11, 332–33. The poem construes the agricultural cycle in terms of anthropomorphic agents operating in a narrative of withdrawal and return. See S. C. Humphreys, "Death and Time," in *Mortality and Immortality*, ed. S. C. Humphreys and H. King (London 1981), 276–77. Cf. Clay 1989, 263, who abjures an agricultural reading of the poem. She downplays (209–13) the fact that Zeus allows Hades (his brother) to abduct Persephone (his daughter) and marry her by force (but cf. *h.Cer.* 3, 30, 78–80), positing instead a thoughtful patriarch who has the entire world in his purview. However, Zeus clearly does not foresee Demeter's refusal to allow the crops to grow (*h.Cer.* 310–13), analyzed by Richardson 1974 on 312.

2. The *anodos* structure also informs Eur. *Alk.* (Ch. 6 p. 84 and Foley 1992). The same pattern operates in Ar. *Pax*, when Attic farmers hoist the goddess Peace from the underground cave where War has buried her, and Trygaios celebrates her return by marrying her handmaid Fullfruit (Ar. *Pax* 221–26, 292–317, 361–72, 426–538, 1316–57).

3. At one point the Chorus wish for a literal *katabasis*, praying that they might die with their dead sons and "descend together to Hades" (κοινὸν ἐς Ἀιδην καταβᾶσα 797).

4. Garner 1987, 118. A. N. Pippen (Burnett), "Euripides' *Helen*: A Comedy of Ideas," *CP* 55 (1960), 154, speaks of the play's "relentless playfulness."

5. On the Mysteries, see Foley 1994, 84–97; Clay 1989, 260–61; Parke 1977, 55–72; Richardson 1974, esp. 271–75, 310–14; K. Kerényi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* (London 1967); and Mylonas 1961, esp. 282–85. For the Proerosia, see A. C. Brumfield, *The Attic Festivals of Demeter* (New York 1981), 54–69; Parke 1977, 73–75; Mylonas 1961, 7; and Deubner 1932, 68–69.

6. Rehm 1988, 283–88 analyzes the way that the central altar organizes the staging of the play's opening section.

7. The phrase θάψαι νεκρούς (with slight modulations) occurs at 16–17, 121, 130, 174, 385, 537, 558–59, 571, 670–71, 760, and 935. *nekroi* occurs as the last word at 121, 130, 308, 385, 471, 558, 764, 772, 940, 945, 1037, 1207, 1210, and as the first word at 25, 88, 524, 543, and 665.

8. Ch. 1 pp. 26–27. Collard 1975, 26 notes the similarity of the stage ritual to actual funerary practice in Athens. However, commenting on 857–917 (also at 1972, 47–49), he stresses the differences between the Athenian *epitaphios* and Adrastos' address (following Zuntz 1955, 13–15). Cf. Rehm 1988, 289–90 and Loraux 1986, 48, who argue that the scene follows the basic pattern of the Athenian public funeral.

9. Other funeral processions include those of Alkestis (*Alk.* 606–13, 739–46, Ch. 6 pp. 87–88), Astyanax (*Tro.* 1118–22, 1156–1255, Ch. 9 pp. 133–34), and Neoptolemus (*Andr.* 1166–1225).

10. Collard 1975, 15–16 believes that Evadne climbed a special structure painted to appear like the crags of Eleusis, which are referred to at 987, 1016, and 1045. This would weaken the surprise of Evadne's appearance, because the audience would expect such an anomalous set-piece to be used. Athena

MARRIAGE TO DEATH

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RUSH REHM

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