

## THE END OF MEDEA'S MONOLOGUE: EURIPIDES, MEDEA 1078–1080

καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δοῶν μέλλω κακά,  
θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,  
ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς.

The closing verses of the great monologue which expresses Medea's irresolution were much quoted in antiquity. They had a life of their own, removed from their context. But the lack of context has infused modern discussion as well. Verse 1079 is taken as virtually equivalent to 'my passion is stronger than my reason'<sup>1</sup>) and is then held to contain the essence of Medea's tragedy. Euripides (it is said) believes that reason should govern the affairs of men; in this play he spells out the terrible results which ensue from the fact that Medea allows her passionate nature to overrule her reason. Medea's tragedy is that she embodies this triumph of passion over reason<sup>2</sup>).

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1) Thus H. Lloyd-Jones, Euripides, *Medea* 1056–80, *Würzburger Jahrb. für die Altertumswiss.* N.F. 6a (= Festschrift für Hartmut Erbse zum 65. Geburtstag), 1980, 51–59 at 57, represents the general understanding of vv. 1078–1080 as: 'And I know what kind of evil it is that I am about to do, but my pride, my anger, my passion is stronger than my calculation – pride, that causes the greatest evils for mortals'. His own view is quite close to this: Medea, he says, 'knows what evil she is about to do; that knowledge would counsel her to abstain from action, but her θυμὸς is more powerful than such counsels' (ibid. 58). That this understanding is abroad in works for the non-specialist is shown by two examples: H. Arendt, suggesting that Ovid *met.* 7, 19–21 is translating the famous passage, offers the version: 'I know indeed what evil I intend to do; but stronger than my deliberations [*bouleumata*] is my *thymos* [what makes me move], which is the cause of the greatest evils among mortals' (*The Life of the Mind*, II: Willing, London 1978, 69); and C. Collard renders v. 1079: 'my heart's anger is stronger than my deliberation' (Euripides, Oxford 1981, 31).

2) H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study*, 3rd ed., London 1961, 194 refers explicitly to v. 1079 in saying that Medea 'is tragic in that her passions are stronger than her reason' and that 'the point of the tragedy ... is that θυμὸς can be stronger than βουλευματα, passion than reason, and so can be a most destructive agent'. B. Snell, *Scenes from Greek Drama* (Sather Class. Lect. 34), Berkeley 1964, 51–52, 54–56 sees the conflict between θυμὸς (passion, agitation) and βουλευματα (sound considerations, reasonable intentions) as making its first appearance in *Medea*. P. E. Easterling, *Yale Class. Stud.* 25 (1977), 177–191, especially 178,

What, then, is the context which, when too much ignored, has allowed this interpretation? After the foreboding and utter despair of the chorus for Medea's children, Jason's bride, Jason and Medea in turn in the ode at vv. 976–1001, the paidagogos returns with the news that Medea's children have been released from exile and may now stay in Korinth; hence (he thinks) Medea might be brought back when they are older. He is soon disabused of the thought that his news of the delighted reception by Jason's new bride of Medea's gifts is welcome to Medea. For her the most awful part of her plan is near. She pretends to accept his counselling on her separation from her children and sends him inside to prepare for them things which – on her plan – they will never need (1002–1020).

There follows the great monologue in which Medea twice loses her determination but twice steels herself to kill her children by Jason. Brief pity for her children, deprived of their mother in that other form of life, is overtaken by grief at her own future without their loving looks, their care for her in old age, their attention to her burial. In vain the cruel pain of childbirth, her nurture of them, her toil and weariness. Her relentlessness (αὐθαδία) has destroyed her high aspirations in them (1021–1039).

The first thing which makes Medea's resolve fail is the radiant smile of her children, their last. She bids farewell to her former plans (1044–5 *χαιρέτω βουλευματα* | *τὰ πρόσθεν*, 1048 *χαιρέτω βου-*

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186–189, in arguing that Euripides in this play represents the observed patterns of human behaviour closely, suggests that the audience will only accept the abhorrent deed Medea contemplates if it has evidence (in the great monologue) of a profound struggle between injured pride and love for her children. E. Schlesinger, while denying that 'the tragic conflict of the whole drama lies essentially in the assault of passion on her maternal feelings, which here in the monologue finally impels her to decide to kill her children', nevertheless finds in the climax of the monologue a strong opposition between reason and passion (Zu Euripides' *Medea*, *Hermes* 94 [1966], 26–53, especially 29–30 = On Euripides' *Medea*, in E. Segal [ed.], *Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1968], 70–89, especially 71–72). W. Schadewaldt, *Monolog und Selbstgespräch: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der griechischen Tragödie* (Neue Philol. Unters. 2), Berlin 1926, especially 193–198, 251–252, seems to have been influential. The approach of M. T. Cassanella, *Alástor, thymós, bouleuma* nella *Medea* di Euripide: *Analisi semiologica, in Mythos: Scripta in honorem Marii Untersteiner* (Pubbl. Ist. di Filol. Class. 30), Genova 1970, 107–120, especially 110, 115–119, seems to me mistaken: she sees a bipolarity between *θυμός* in v. 1079 (the passion or fury of Medea – a psychological aspect) and *θυμός* in v. 1056 (the seat of the emotions – an independent part of Medea, a daemonic aspect) and is prepared to find *βουλευματα* used in the monologue to present two different plans.

λεύματα). No, she will not, in her efforts to make Jason grieve, bring twice as much misery on herself. She will take her children away from Korinth. Abruptly she reverts to her original resolution (1049 *καίτοι τί πάσχω;*). Her overriding fear is the ridicule she will incur by letting her enemies go unpunished<sup>3</sup>). She detests her weakness and steels herself to sacrifice the children (1040–1055).

Again, however, she falters and beseeches her driving spirit (*θυμός*) not to carry out the deed. Spare the children, they will cheer her *θυμός* in exile in Athens. But no, she will not, by the avenging fiends who dwell with Hades below, let her children be insulted by enemies. Better they were dead. In any case, earlier actions preclude any alternative, she claims. The royal bride will not escape; already she is perishing in the robes, the crown on her head, and Medea must travel a most wretched road and send her children on an even more wretched one. Hence she desires a final embrace. Her senses fully appreciate the hands, mouth, noble form and features, the soft skin and sweet breath of the children as she cuddles them. When overcome by her suffering, she sends them hastily (1076 *χωρεῖτε χωρεῖτ'*) from her sight (1056–1077). What, then, do verses 1078–80 mean?

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3) Medea's justification for the 'most unholy' deed, the murder of her children – that it is intolerable to be mocked by one's enemies – has already been expressed at vv. 794–797. She will wreak vengeance on Jason (802). For glory attaches itself to those who are dangerous to their enemies and well-disposed to their friends (809–810). Avoidance of ridicule is also Medea's motive at vv. 381–383, 404–406, 1354–1355 and 1362; cf. v. 782. That Medea's code of honour as a heroic figure demands that she be avenged on her enemies is well stressed by B. M. W. Knox, *The Medea of Euripides*, Yale Class. Stud. 25 (1977), 193–225, especially 198–199, 201–202, 224 = Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theatre, Baltimore 1979, 295–322, especially 297–298, 300, 315 (cf. E. Schlessinger, loc. cit. 50, 53 – only partially translated in Segal's book). For the theme of friends and enemies in tragedy, see the brief study by J. de Romilly, *Amis et ennemis au V<sup>ème</sup> siècle avant J. C.* in *Φιλίας χάριν: Miscellanea di studi classici in onore di Eugenio Manni*, Roma, n. d. (1980), III 739–746; de Romilly, however, goes too far in judging that 'the situation of Medea is tragic because her husband has become her enemy' (744). Medea enunciates her determination to avenge herself on Jason as early as vv. 260–261, as Lloyd-Jones (loc. cit. 52) points out. A. P. Burnett, *Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge*, Class. Philol. 68 (1973), 1–24, explores the significance of revenge with particular reference to this play. The link between revenge and the esteem in society which results from harming one's enemies is brought out by G. B. Walsh, *Public and Private in Three Plays of Euripides*, Class. Philol. 74 (1979), 294–309, especially 295–300. S. P. Mills, *The Sorrows of Medea*, Class. Philol. 75 (1980), 289–296, who stresses the mythic element in the play, sees Medea's plan for revenge as taking two distinct forms which are not brought together until the final scene.

θυμός must be something ‘which is the cause of the most terrible evils for mortals’ (1080). It should also be consonant with the vocative usage earlier in the speech (1056). It can be thought of as drive – in this instance, Medea’s aggressive determination to carry out her plans. It is certainly personal to Medea, as ἐμῶν in v. 1079 shows, not an abstract passion or anger. Individual drive to further or maintain one’s own standing is responsible for so much misery among men. Medea in this very speech is explicit about her own case. She testifies that she cannot tolerate the ridicule which she would incur if she were to allow her enemies to harm her with impunity (1049–50). Her reputation is too important. Her drive is the θυμός, her θυμός, which she addresses in v. 1056.

Verse 1079 has been taken since the third century B. C.<sup>4)</sup> to mean ‘anger is stronger than my plans’, that is, ‘my passion is stronger than my reason’. But there is a fatal flaw in this interpretation. In the context of this speech ‘my plans’ cannot refer to Medea’s easy way out, her taking of the children into exile with her. The meaning of βουλευματα must be consistent with its usage earlier in the speech. The word has already occurred twice in the speech and in v. 1048 it is unqualified: χαιρέτω βουλευματα. But we know from vv. 1044–5 (χαιρέτω βουλευματα | τὰ πρόσθεν) that the plans in question are her former plans, to murder her children after bringing about the death of Jason’s new bride. The same plans are the point of reference in v. 1079: θυμός δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων means ‘but drive is master of my plans’. Her drive is one which brings about the most terrible evils for those connected with Medea.

There is a possible difficulty with this version: can κρείσσων mean ‘master of, in control of’? H. Diller has suggested that

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4) Unfortunately we do not know enough about the context in which Chryssippos quoted vv. 1078–1079 (Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippokrates and Plato* III 3.13–16 De Lacy [306–307K] = SVF II 906, p. 255.5–7; IV 6.19 De Lacy [480K] = SVF 473, p. 124.15–19). See the recent discussions by A. Dihle, SHAW 1977 (below, n. 14), 25 n. 14, J. Pigeaud, *La maladie de l’âme: Étude sur la relation de l’âme et du corps dans la tradition médico-philosophique antique*, Paris 1981, 377–384, and C. Gill, *Did Chryssippos understand Medea?*, *Phronesis* 28 (1983), 136–149. However, despite his wish to consider Medea as a unified person, Chryssippos (in Galen’s paraphrase) sees Medea’s anger as stronger than her deliberations (IV 2.87 De Lacy [372K]; cf. C. Gill, loc. cit. 140–141 and 147 n. 24, describing Chryssippos’ interpretation of Medea’s state as ‘a recognition, but deliberate rejection, of what a reasonable human being would do in these circumstances’).

κρείσσων in this passage might be equivalent to κρατῶν<sup>5</sup>). H. Lloyd-Jones dismisses this as 'altogether unconvincing' and refers to R. Kassel's view that 'the natural way' to take the word κρείσσων is exemplified by v. 965 of this play<sup>6</sup>). Indeed there are passages where κρείσσων means 'stronger than' in Euripides<sup>7</sup>). But the word is ambivalent, as is indicated by the game which Agathon plays with the meaning of the word at Plato, *Symposium* 196C. The meaning 'master of' is already present in Aischylos, *Agamemnon* 60, where the primary connotation of ὁ κρείσσων is surely that Zeus is the controller of all<sup>8</sup>). There is no question of a comparative meaning 'stronger than', 'überlegen' in the parallel which Diller offers from *Medea* itself: τῶν τε λέκτρων | ἄλλα βασιλεια κρείσσων | δόμοισιν ἐπέστα (443–445). In *Bacchai* 879–880 (repeated at 899–900), also cited by Diller, there is no comparative force in 'to keep a controlling arm over the head of one's enemies' (χεῖρ' ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς | τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν). Demokritos uses ὁ κρείσσων of the man who is master of the enemy (τῶν πολεμίων) or of desires (τῶν ἡδονῶν) and this sense is confirmed by the δεσπόζουσι / δουλεύουσιν contrast in the following sentence (DK 68 B 214)<sup>9</sup>). Protagoras (DK 80 B 9) uses ἑαυτοῦ κρείσσω of a man in control of himself and Plato has a range of similar phrases<sup>10</sup>). Hence there is ample parallel for the meaning 'master of, in control of'.

5) H. Diller, *Θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων*, *Hermes* 94 (1966) 267–275, especially 274 = *Kleine Schriften zur antiken Literatur*, ed. H.-J. Newiger and H. Seyffert, München 1971, 359–368, especially 366–367. W. Steidle, *Studien zum antiken Drama unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Bühnenspiels* (*Studia et Testimonia Antiqua* 4), München 1968, 152–168 at 165 finds Diller's interpretation feasible. M. Shaw, *The Female Intruder: Women in Fifth-Century Drama*, *Class. Philol.* 70 (1975), 255–266 at 263 with n. 29 translates 'rule her plans' and refers to Diller's argument, but envisages a struggle between reason and passion and between anger and love.

6) H. Lloyd-Jones, loc. cit. 58, referring to R. Kassel, *Kritische und exegetische Kleinigkeiten IV*, *Rhein. Mus.* 116 (1973), 97–112, especially 102–103 n. 21.

7) J. M. Wilkins reminds me of *Herakleidae* 1039, *Orestes* 728, 806.

8) I. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus Agamemnon II*, Oxford 1950, 39 finds also 'the certainty that Zeus, who watches over the laws of hospitality, is mightier than Paris the offender and his supporters, and will vanquish them'.

9) Similarly, Gorgias (DK 82 B 11a § 15) contrasts 'those who are masters of their natural desires' (οἱ κρείττονες τῶν τῆς φύσεως ἡδονῶν) with 'those who are slaves to their desires'.

10) κρείττους αὐτῶν ὄντας (Phaidr. 232A); κρείττω αὐτοῦ (Rep. 430E–431A); ὁ ἑαυτοῦ κρείττων (ibid. 430E); κρείττω αὐτὴν [πόλιν] αὐτῆς (ibid. 431B, 431D); κρείττων αὐτοῦ (ibid. 431B).

Lloyd-Jones rightly argues that the word *βουλεύματα* is in itself colourless. He points to its use at v. 449 of Kreon's decision that Jason will marry the princess and at v. 886 of Jason's plan to leave Medea and marry Kreon's daughter. *βουλεύματα* does indeed take its meaning from the context. The point is not that four times elsewhere in the play (vv. 769, 772, 1044 and 1048) *βουλεύματα* refers to Medea's plan to kill the children. It is that twice earlier in this very speech *βουλεύματα* has that reference. It does not take its meaning solely from the statement immediately preceding (v. 1078) that Medea knows what evil she is about to do. Far too many logical steps are needed to reach the conclusion that *βουλεύματα* means the counsels not to act that derive from her knowledge of the evil results of her planned action<sup>11</sup>). Dissatisfaction with Lloyd-Jones' conclusion led the honorand of the Festschrift volume in which his article appeared, H. Erbse, to take up a 19th century conjecture and emend *βουλευμάτων* in v. 1079 to *μαθημάτων*. Erbse sees a contrast between correct knowledge and passion<sup>12</sup>). But the transmitted text should be retained if it yields a satisfactory meaning, as it does on the interpretation defended here. Far from being colourless in this context, *βουλεύματα* refers to Medea's dreadful plan to murder her children. A. Lesky, in his review of Diller's article, suggests that *βουλεύματα* in v. 1079 refers to Medea's later as well as her earlier plans; all (in his view) are overpowered by emotion. But he elsewhere proposes vv. 1078–1080 as the classic expression of the antithesis of passion and reason in the 'tragedies of passion'. On the basis of his view that *βουλεύματα* refers to all the plans, he concludes that Medea's *θυμός* is stronger than her and conquers her<sup>13</sup>). But this conclusion

11) H. Lloyd-Jones, loc. cit. 58. On his interpretation the contrast between pride and plans *not* to kill the children is present in 1078–1080 (e.g. 59: 'Medea's human instincts are for mercy, but what determines her decision is her pride'). But for his view that the fate of the children has been long since decided, the interpretation of v. 1079 offered here is more appropriate. The occurrences of *βουλεύματα* in vv. 769, 772, 1044 and 1048 all come after Medea has gained from Aigeus a guarantee of refuge. She is sharing with the chorus her plans, which include the murder of the children, for this will punish Jason (e.g. v. 767).

12) H. Erbse, *Zum Abschiedsmonolog der euripideischen Medea* (Eur. Med. 1021–1080), *Ἀρχαιολογία* 2 (1981), 66–82, especially 75–81. Koehly suggested *φρονημάτων* or *μαθημάτων*, but without Erbse's parallels: *ibid.* 78 n. 1.

13) A. Lesky, *Griechische Tragödie*, *Anz. Altertumswiss.* 21 (1968), 1–30 at 10. He maintains the opposition between passion and reason in the third edition of *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*, Göttingen 1972, 312. For 'Tragedies of passion': see A. Lesky, *Γιὰ τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Εὐριπίδη*, *Ἐπιστημ. Ἐπετ. Θεσσαλον.* 12 (1973), 97–107 at 103–104; cf. *Die tragische Dichtung* 329.



is well removed from the statement θυμός δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων. βουλεύματα in v. 1079 must mean to the audience what it has meant all along in this speech, the plan to kill the children. The verse says simply that Medea's θυμός is master of her plans to kill the children.

In recent times A. Dihle also has insisted that βουλεύματα must refer to Medea's plan to kill the children. In comparing the ways in which the unprecedented action of Medea is motivated in the Euripidean play with the well-springs of her action in its direct or indirect successors in the theatre, Dihle understands Medea to say that her emotions and passions are stronger than her plan to kill the children<sup>14</sup>). He argues that βούλευμα in the play never means simply 'rational consideration', but refers in Medea's world to the concrete and cleverly devised plan to dispose of her competitor and the children. But he sees the θυμός of Medea as the agent which might stop her crime, from the reaction of the chorus (vv. 864–865) to her first revelation of her plan (vv. 795–796) until the ode (vv. 1081–1115) which follows the culmination of the monologue, where (he believes) the chorus still do not believe that Medea will kill the children. 'As a reaction to an announcement that the children are dead, this beautiful, melancholy song would be completely unintelligible'. For Dihle the tragedy of the Euripidean *Medea* lies in the conflict between the intellectual power which has produced the murder plan and the fully developed emotions of a wife and mother. Hence the second half of the play is full of the struggle between the 'Gefühle und Leidenschaften' of Medea and the execution of her plans, a struggle which culminates in the apparent final victory of θυμός at the end of the great monologue<sup>15</sup>).

14) A. Dihle, *Euripides' Medea und ihre Schwestern im europäischen Drama, Antike u. Abendland* 22 (1976), 175–184, especially 179: „meine Gefühle und Leidenschaften sind stärker als meine Pläne“; 180: „Mein θυμός, meine Gefühle, sind stärker als der Plan (βουλεύματα), die Kinder umzubringen“; *Euripides' Medea* (Sitzungsb. Heidelb. Akad. Wiss. 1977, 5), Heidelberg 1977, especially 12, 13: „Meine Gefühle und Emotionen (θυμός) sind stärker als der Plan (βουλεύματα), die Kinder umzubringen“.

15) AA 22 (1976), 180–182; SHAW 1977, 13–18, 26–44. O. Zwierlein (see below) responds to the statement quoted from Dihle about the ode at vv. 1081–1115, but the point can be put more strongly: a song which climaxes with the grievous sorrow of parents whose children die prematurely follows appropriately a monologue which ends with Medea's determination to murder her children, but would be inappropriate if Medea had just deceived the chorus into thinking that she would spare the children.

The views of Dihle provoked rapid adverse responses from O. Zwierlein and E. Kraggerud. Zwierlein, who defends the deletion of vv. 1054–1080, schematises the tragedy of the play as follows: Medea, harmed by the treachery of Jason and her banishment in the interests of the new royal marriage, must take revenge in order to restore her self-respect and dignity; adequate revenge entails the destruction of Jason's hopes for the continuation of his house through the murder of their children; but this murder brings very great harm to the loving mother for the rest of her life. Hence he sees the celebrated verses 1078–1080 as importing into the play a conflict between passion and knowledge of what is best which otherwise plays no part in it<sup>16</sup>). In a long note<sup>17</sup>) he combats Dihle's interpretation of these verses by pointing out that θυμός is defined in v. 1080 not as producing something human such as one might expect if it referred to the feelings of a mother but as the originator of the greatest evil. For a speech to conclude with the assertion that 'Muttergefühl' or 'weiblich-mütterliches Fühlen' is the cause of the greatest trouble for mortals would leave an ancient hearer with a contradiction to his general experience. Moreover, the concluding part of the choral ode at vv. 1081–1115, which sees the climax of suffering about children in the mourning for their death, harmonises better with a preceding resolution to kill the children than with a laying-aside of that plan. E. Kraggerud also objects to Dihle's view that Medea at the end of the monologue declares that, overcome by a mother's emotions, she will spare the children. He finds no support in the language used for the final oscillation supposed by Dihle and concludes that θυμός refers to the particular personality – the proud and implacable disposition – of Medea as seen in the earlier course of the play. But while recognising that βουλευματα at vv. 1044–1045 and 1048 refers to Medea's plan for revenge, he interprets the word at v. 1079 as rational consideration<sup>18</sup>).

16) O. Zwierlein, *Die Tragik in den Medea-Dramen*, *Literaturwiss. Jahrb. N. F.* 19 (1978), 27–63, especially 27, 34–35. For a detailed case for the deletion of vv. 1056–1080 see G. Müller, *Interpolationen in der Medea des Euripides*, *Stud. Ital. Filol. Class.* 25 (1951), 65–82 and M. D. Reeve, *Euripides, Medea 1021–1080*, *Class. Quart. n. s.* 22 (1972), 51–61. Lloyd-Jones (*loc. cit.* 51–59) provides a reasonably satisfactory reply, but his excision of vv. 1059–1063 is convenient for his view that Medea cannot renounce her revenge because the fate of the children has already been decided.

17) O. Zwierlein, *loc. cit.* 35–37 n. 24c.

18) E. Kraggerud, *Hva skjer i Medeias store monolog?* (*Euripides, Medea 1021–80*), *Museum Tusulanum* 36–39 (1979), 45–52. As an indication of the force



Dihle is right to insist that βουλευματα in v. 1079 refers to Medea's plan to kill the children. That is what the word conveys throughout the monologue. But θυμός also must be interpreted in the context of this speech. In v. 1056 Medea cries out to her θυμός not to carry out the awful deed: μή δῆτα, θυμέ, μή σύ γ' ἐργάσῃ τάδε. θυμός in this section of the monologue is not exemplified, as Dihle believes, by κάκη and associated words. θυμός is in fact contrasted with the cowardice that would lay aside the plan for revenge. The cry ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς κάκης (v. 1051) refers to Medea's earlier weakness. When her resolve is firm, she tells herself that she must be bold to kill her children (1051 τολμητέον τάδ') and condemns her cowardice. When her resolve ruptures again, it is to her θυμός that she appeals (v. 1056) not to carry out the plan which will restore her self-respect. Her θυμός, then, is the aggression or drive which will execute the murder plan. That it is such a characteristic of Medea is seen after her first disclosure of her plans, when the chorus express the hope that she will not carry out the act of horrific daring (859 δεινὰν . . . τόλμαν) and that her ruthless spirit (865 τλάμονι θυμῷ) will not drive her to stain her hand with her children's blood<sup>19</sup>).

Another scholar who has recently taken βουλευματα to refer to Medea's decision to kill the children is P. Pucci. He translates vv. 1078–1080: 'I understand what evil I am about to do, but *thymos*, which causes the greatest evils to mortals, rules my decision'. He does not, however, offer any argument in favour of this version, simply referring to Diller's case for the meaning of κρείσσων in v. 1079. Taking Burkert's perception of an affinity between ritual sacrifice and tragedy as a starting-point for his discussion of the monologue, Pucci sees room for movement between the literal sacrifice of Jason's children as the substitution for Jason and the metaphorical sacrifice. While the sacrifice of v. 1054 remains a metaphor, Medea can see her plan of revenge as murderous: 'I understand what evil I am about to do' (v. 1078). Working in a theoretical framework which owes much to Jacques Derrida,

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of v. 1079 he prefers the rendering: 'but my disposition (ego) is stronger than my deliberation (as mother)' (51 n. 3).

19) The chorus recognise early that her plans involve the bold determination to kill her children (816 ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι; cf. 846–855). In v. 879, after Jason has returned, θυμός is still the aggressive attention to her own interests which she pretends to Jason that she is renouncing. Medea's alleged realisation that she was μάτην θυμουμένη (883) is consonant with this understanding of θυμός.

Pucci finds an inconsistency between a force outside herself which is driving Medea to the fateful deed and an identity of this θυμός (φρόνη, καρδία) with Medea herself. The outcome of the tragic conflict is in reality determined beforehand, but Medea speaks as though she is controlled by 'a sort of censorious, imperious master'. On the other hand, we know from vv. 1056–1058 that Medea and the θυμός are the same. So Pucci concludes that the talk as though they are different forms a basis for the manoeuvres unscrupulously devised by 'the discourse of pity'; Medea 'substitutes the pain of self-pity for the horror of seeing herself as the murderer of her children'<sup>20</sup>).

I have offered above reasons for taking the concluding verses of Medea's famous monologue in the way Pucci would like. βουλεύματα must refer to the plan to murder the children, as the word does earlier in the speech. θυμός is not the seat of soft emotions such as motherly love, but the strong force in Medea which drives her to assert herself. It is θυμός which controls her resolve to carry out the murder. There is no deception, as Dihle thought, at the end of the monologue, but a reaffirmation that the plan for revenge will be executed. The verses do not call for excision when correctly understood. What Page suggests of the text of v. 1078 – that it has been changed by frequent quotation<sup>21</sup>) – applies to the interpretation of v. 1079: taken out of context, it has been made into a proverbial saying that passion is stronger than reason. What Medea says, however, is: 'I realise what evil I am about to do, but drive, which is the cause of the most terrible evils for mortals, is master of my plans'<sup>22</sup>).

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(Australia)

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20) P. Pucci, *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 41), Ithaca N. Y. 1980, especially 131–144, 221–224. Pucci refers (221–222) to W. Burkert, *Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual*, Greek Rom. Byz. Stud. 7 (1966), 87–121 at 117–119.

21) In v. 1078 the reading of *L* δρᾶν μέλλω is supported by early quotations, the reading of AVBP *τολμήσω* less so (see P. Elmsley, *Euripidis Medea*, Leipzig 1822, 260). Page (ad loc.) cites 'lead on, Macduff' and other excessively familiar (mis)quotations as parallels to the change from *δρᾶν μέλλω* to *τολμήσω*.

22) Since this article was accepted for publication in December 1983, I have been unable to take account of the new edition by J. Diggle, Oxford 1984. He follows Reeve (n. 16) in deleting vv. 1056–1080.