

Hesiod's injunction not to turn one's semen-bespattered genitals towards the hearth after sex.¹¹ Perhaps because of its intimate seclusion, the hearth seems to have acquired a symbolic connection with the female sexual organs. Henderson has noted that, in comedy and elsewhere, the almost synonymous word *ἐσχάρα* could denote the vagina (p. 143). There may even be an allusion of this kind in Euripides' *Helen*.¹² The association between passion and fire is, of course, ubiquitous.¹³ Therefore, I submit that there is a sexual undertone here. Clytemnestra has nothing to fear for as long as she and Aegisthus are together in their liaison and he continues to light her fire.¹⁴

In drawing attention to the sexual connotations of these passages, I am not interested in sexual language merely for its own sake. We hear at the very outset that Clytemnestra has an *ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ* (11). We see that she is probably, in fact, more masculine than most of the men in the play. When, in the Beacon Speech (281ff.), she summons up far away vistas for the chorus and audience, we feel that she knows things hidden from most men, to say nothing of women.¹⁵ Her cunning intelligence and powers of ironic dissimulation and persuasion also set her apart from the other characters.¹⁶ Her language here must add to our perception of her as a profoundly disquieting character.

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¹¹ Hes. Op. 734ff. with M. L. West's note ad. loc. (Oxford, 1978).

¹² At line 234f., Helen says that Paris *ἐπλευσε βαρβάρῳ πλάτῃ / τὰν ἐμὰν ἐφ' ἐσίαν*. Given the purpose of his voyage, the presence of Aphrodite (238), and the possibly phallic connotations of the barbarian oar, I do not think we can rule out this slightly risqué thought.

¹³ Sappho 31.9f. is a well-known example.

¹⁴ It appears that there did indeed exist in Greek an idiom comparable to that of the popular song lyric 'Come on baby, light my fire'. We find at Xen. Cyr. 5.1.16 the phrase *αἰθεσθαι τῷ ἔρωτι* and at Ap. Rhod. 3.296f. *ὑπὸ κραδίῃ εἰλύμενος αἶθετο λάθρῃ / οὐλος ἔρωτος*. cf. A.P. 12.83 (Meleager) where *ἀνάπτω* and *αἰθομαι* are used respectively of *ἔρωτος* and its effects.

¹⁵ She also has an awareness of these places as military installations, e.g. 293, 301; scarcely a feminine concern.

¹⁶ E.g. the false sincerity of 601ff., 896f.; the 'Carpet Scene', 931ff.

PHAIDRA'S *AIDOS* AGAIN*

W. D. Furley, 'Phaidra's pleasurable *aidos* (Eur. *Hipp.* 380–7)', *CQ* 46 (1996), 84–90 is in part a response to my article, 'αἰδώς in Euripides' *Hippolytos* 373–430: review and reinterpretation', *JHS* 113 (1993), 45–59. Furley states that I suggest that *aidos* is 'a euphemism for *aidoia*, the genitals, thus = sex'. This is an over-simplification. I argue (at pp. 45, 55, 56) that 'in this context, αἰδώς is a euphemistic metonymy for *ἔρωτος*'; that 'in terms of linguistic use, αἰδώς may be viewed as the natural reaction to the αἰδοῖα . . . just as γελῶς is to γελοῖα'; and hence that 'the linguistic associations and semantic nuances of αἰδώς are sufficient to allow the word, in appropriate contexts, to mean "sex"'.

Furley concedes that '[sex] would certainly give a viable pleasure for Phaidra's list'; but objects that 'there is no direct parallel for *aidos* = sex, and the sense required would be most abrupt'. On the question of a parallel he allows that Theognis 1263–6 (a passage adduced by me) 'implies sexual gratification', but finds that this is 'only by

*I am indebted to Douglas Cairns, who waived his anonymity as referee to respond effectively and helpfully to this note, and am particularly grateful for a preview of his article 'The Meadow of Artemis and the Character of the Euripidean Hippolytus', forthcoming *QUCC*.

innuendo'; and objects that 'Phaidra's speech is not on the level of sly winks'. Indeed not: the sly winks have been introduced gratuitously by Furley; and 'innuendo' is a thoroughly misleading term, carrying implications of obscene and pornographic, rather than merely sexual, content.¹ Here, the subject of sex is introduced subtly, obliquely, poetically, with a restrained and allusive delicacy; to impute a furtive coarseness to the speech is to misunderstand both Phaidra and Euripides. On the question of abruptness in sense, Furley makes no reference to my argument that this is the concluding item in a triadic crescendo where sensuality and sexuality are throughout implicit; but seems tacitly to accept it in finding sex a 'viable pleasure for Phaidra's list'. Furley adds that 'it is difficult to see how *aidos* in this sense could be obscurely ambivalent' and that 'there is no ambivalence possible in Phaidra's perception of the two relationships open to her: that with Theseus is appropriate and respectable, that with Hippolytos totally inappropriate. . .'. But Phaidra is reflecting in general terms on the subject of adultery, and the immoderate nature of her passion is as important as its inappropriateness. (See my discussion of *καίρος*, pp. 56–7).

The overall structure and purpose of the speech, its dramatic context, and its poetic texture should not be disregarded. A densely associative penumbra of poetic usage surrounds this passage in this play. That the apparent opposites, Hippolytos and Phaidra, are suggestively aligned through interlocking patterns of language and imagery has often been remarked; and the symbolic sensual overtones of Hippolytos' evocation of meadows and gardens, motifs echoed and reiterated by Phaidra, are fully recognized.² Parallels from serious poetry, as well as from comedy, have been adduced for the erotic associations of the *locus amoenus*.³ *Aidos* first occurs in Hippolytos' first speech (particularly important in establishing character and dramatic situation): the dedication to Artemis of a garland from an unmown meadow is described in such a way that every word has a literal sense; but there is a heavy charge of erotic *sous-entendre*, resistant to over-literal analysis. Here we encounter *aidos* in the context of 'river dew': *αἰδώς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις*.⁴ 'Dews' may be added to the language of ambiguity and implication, as this specific aspect of the garden has a very definite alternative sense. The word *δρόσοις* was commonly used of sexual secretions, both male (Ar. Nu. 978) and female (Ar. Eq. 1285).⁵

By iteration of key words, Euripides can suggest, without directly articulating, associations familiar to his audience. The phrase 'river dew' recurs and there is a double reprise of the adjective 'dewy'. Hippolytos' words are directly echoed in the first stanza of the parodos, 121ff., an evocation of the scene where the chorus first heard of Phaidra's illness: *ᾠκεανοῦ τις ὕδωρ στάζουσα πέτρα λέγεται | βαπτὰν*

¹ See my comments in 'Sexual Imagery and Innuendo in *Troades*', in A. Powell (ed.), *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality* (London and New York, 1990), pp. 1–15, especially at p. 14, n. 3.

² See, for instance, B. D. Frischer, 'Concordia discors and Characterization in Euripides' *Hippolytos*', *CRBS* 11(1970), 85–100; and F. E. Brenk, 'Phaidra's Risky Horsemanship: Euripides' *Hippolytos* 232–238', *Mnemosyne* 39 (1986), 385–8, especially at p. 387 on the 'creeping eroticism and crossing of language from one character to another'.

³ See A. Motte, *Prairies et jardins de la Grèce antique* (Ac. Roy. Belg. Mém. Classe des Lettres 2.61, fasc. 5) (Brussels, 1973) and J. M. Bremer, 'The Meadow of Love and Two Passages in Euripides' *Hippolytos*', *Mnemosyne* 28 (1975), 268–80; also, on usage of *κήπος* and *κηπεύειν*, J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (Baltimore and London, 1979), hereafter *MM*, at 76 and 135.30.

⁴ All citations are from the *OCT* of J. Diggle.

⁵ The phrase *δρόσος καὶ χνοῦς*, Nu. 978, is understood by K. J. Dover, comm. ad loc. (Oxford, 1968), to refer to Cowper's secretion, but see second thoughts in *Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978), p. 125 n. 1; and note the suggestion of Henderson, *MM* 76 and 445 that the reference is to 'athletic sweat'.

κάλπισι πα | γὰν ῥυτὰν προιεῖσα κρημνῶν | τόθι μοί τις ἦν φίλα | πορφύρεα φάρεα
ποταμίᾳ δρόσῳ | τέγγουσα . . . Then the adjective 'dewy' appears in Phaidra's
expression of longing, 208, soon after her first entrance, πῶς ἂν δροσερᾶς ἀπὸ
κρηνίδος | καθαρῶν ὑδάτων πῶμ' ἀρυσάιμαν and in the Nurse's answering remon-
strance, 226, πάρα γὰρ δροσερὰ πύργοις συνεχῆς | κλειτύς, ὅθεν σοι πῶμα γένοιτ'
ἄν. Literally, of course, the women of the chorus refer to the local laundrette, Phaidra
to a distant spring, and the Nurse to the palace water supply; but this does not negate
the *sous-entendre* in the Leitmotiv.

That Euripides was fond of punning and wordplay is well-known; and that this
tendency extends to the language of sex, in plays where sex is a dominant theme, need
not surprise us. How far could such boldness go? In *Cyclops*, ὄρχηστὺς is probably a
pun on ὄρχεις (Cy. 171; see *MM* 27). In these passages in *Hippolytos*, where δρόσος
has sexual overtones, κλειτύς, lit. 'slope', 'hillside', may be intended as a reminiscence
of κλειτορίς (cf. Poll. 2.174 and Ruf. *Onom.* 111) and κρημνοί, lit. 'bank', as a
reminiscence of its other sense, as a medical technical term, of the vaginal labia (Poll.
2.174 and Ruf. *Onom.* 112; also Hipp. *Loc. Hom.* 47, cf. 29). What is certain is that *aidos*
first occurs in a passage of dense erotic imagery; and that other words of this passage
are later deployed in a way which capitalizes on this associative introduction. A link
between *aidos* and *eros* is established long before Phaidra's rhesis; and we may note
that *Eros* is the subject of the ensuing lyric, 525ff.

I conclude with a brief word on Furley's own interpretation. Much of what he says
about *aidos* in general is unexceptional; most of what he says about *aidos* in
Hippolytos, from the starting point of *Theognidea* 1063–8, is unoriginal. *Aidos*
(glossed at 88 'decency', 'courteousness', 'impeccable manners') is at 89 'a fastidious
sense of honour which can ruin oneself and others'. But much had already been
written on Phaidra's *time*, *eukleia*, and social status, on prideful pleasure in attention
to conventions, and on the ways in which virtue can become a vice if taken to excess.⁶
If, as Furley suggests, treatment of this passage may be likened to 'such ancient rites as
singing the *skolion*, where every member of the symposium was supposed to give his
variant of a given theme', it is time for the symposiarch to intervene: οὗτος,
ὦ Ἐρυξίμαχε, ὁ ἐμὸς λόγος ἐστὶ περὶ Ἑρωτος.

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⁶ Furley's stance does not differ substantially from that of Barrett, Dodds, Segal and others;
see discussion and bibliography in my article. Reciprocity is noted throughout D. L. Cairns, *Aidos*
(Oxford, 1993); see e.g. pp. 3–4, 458–9, 184–5.

A NOTE ON EURIPIDES, *HECUBA* 1054F.

ἀλλ' ἐκποδῶν ἄπειμι κάποστήσομαι
θυμῷ ζέοντι Θρηκὶ δυσμαχωτάτῳ.¹

The manuscripts attribute these lines with 1049–53 to Hecuba. This is accepted by
all editors. But the fear of Polymestor as revealed in the sentence does not fit the
death wishes Hecuba expresses e.g. in 167f., 231–3, 383–7, 391–3, 396; nor is
it consistent with her scornful description of the blind king as τυφλὸν τυφλῷ
στείχοντα παραφόρῳ ποδί in 1050. On the other hand, the chorus have many

¹ The text follows J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae I* (Oxford, 1984).