

XIII. Staging in the Central Scene of the *Hippolytus*

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The central scene of the *Hippolytus* begins with Phaedra's discovery that the nurse has told Hippolytus her secret and ends with Phaedra's exit to commit suicide. The traditional conception of the action and the assignment of speeches within the scene,¹ accepted by modern editors and commentators with few insignificant variations, is as follows:

From 565 to 600 Phaedra listens at the central door of the palace and informs the chorus that the nurse has betrayed her secret. She reports the words of Hippolytus which she overhears, and finally, in answer to the chorus' question what she will do, she announces her intention to die immediately. The door opens, and Hippolytus and the nurse enter, still in conversation (601). Phaedra remains onstage, seen or unseen by Hippolytus and the nurse, whose conversation she overhears (601-68).

When Hippolytus exits, Phaedra sings a lament. She then rebukes the nurse for her betrayal and dismisses her abruptly when the nurse tries to defend herself (680-709). Phaedra then swears the chorus to silence and tells them of her discovery: the single available course for saving her reputation, and so her family. Again she says she must die immediately, but she obliquely indicates that she will avenge herself on Hippolytus (710-31). Her exit ends the scene.²

¹ The ultimate source and authority of the assignments of speakers in the manuscripts, or of the scholia which give stage directions, are problematical. Most likely none of this helpful apparatus appeared in the original editions of the plays; cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Einleitung in die attische Tragödie* (Berlin 1899) 120-29, D. L. Page, ed. *Euripides' Medea* (Oxford 1952) xxxvii-xli. Many staging scholia are demonstrably related to theaters and to productions of the fourth century or later, as shown by A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theater of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford 1946) 210-14. In no case can the scholiast's opinion as to staging or speaker involved have an authority greater than the text it interprets.

² Manuscripts and scholia vary only in the assignment of lines 669-72 (see below, note 9). All editions, commentaries, translations, and discussions of the play naturally depend on some concept of the staging, but few discuss it. Notable departures from the treatment of the staging outlined above are: a statement by Reisch, in W.

In this paper I will argue that a natural interpretation of Phaedra's words in 599–600, the words of the lament (669–79), the chorus' address to Phaedra (680–81), and Phaedra's estimation of Hippolytus' intentions, as shown in 689–92, leads to a quite different construction of the action within the scene. Briefly, I propose that Phaedra's lines 599–600 are what we should expect such a climactic couplet to be: an exit line. Phaedra is absent from the stage from that point until the chorus acknowledges her reentrance by addressing her at 680. The new discovery that she speaks of at 715–16, she makes offstage, and that is what brings her back. The lament between Hippolytus' exit and Phaedra's reentrance is sung by the nurse. I will consider the evidence which the text offers for this construction, and then I will attempt to assess the significance of the staging for our interpretation of the scene.

Between 565 and 600, descriptions and explanations contained in the dialogue between Phaedra and the chorus indicate that Phaedra is listening at the palace door and that the chorus is in the orchestra where they were singing when Phaedra interrupted them (565, 575, 577, 587). Repeated descriptions of the scene are for the sake of the audience. Since the scene is an unusual one, the poet is concerned that the audience shall not miss the fact that Phaedra is overhearing a conversation by people who are unseen.

When at 598 the chorus asks Phaedra what she will do in the present hopeless situation, her answer is:

I know of only one thing, to die immediately.
That is the only cure for the evils now present.

This couplet represents the moment of decision for Phaedra. To this point in the play she has been delaying, resisting, calculating

Dörpfeld and E. Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (Athens 1896) 204, that Phaedra apparently exits into the women's quarters at line 600; L. E. Matthaëi, *Studies in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1918) 96, says that possibly Phaedra exits at 601 and reenters at 668, in which case we must imagine that someone reports Hippolytus' words to her; David Grene, *Euripides, Four Tragedies*, ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore (Chicago 1955) 188, gives the following stage direction at 600: "She retires into the palace through one of the side doors just as Hippolytus issues through the central door, dogged by the nurse. Phaedra is conceived of as listening from behind the door during the entire conversation between the nurse and Hippolytus." It seems apparent, however, that if Phaedra leaves the stage at 600 after the dramatic announcement that she must die with dispatch, the audience will not imagine her waiting for a report or crouching behind the closed door.

how she can best live or die without disgrace. At the suggestions of the nurse that she need not die, but can be cured by a "potion," Phaedra gave in.³ She has been waiting for the promised drug while the chorus sings about the power of love.⁴ What Phaedra now learns from the exchange she overhears is that the nurse was deceiving her. The nurse has done the thing that Phaedra most feared (520). Betrayed by the nurse to whose care she had entrusted her life, she is driven to action and must find her own cure. She reverts to the only one she could devise before the nurse's intervention. As written, the emphatic couplet in which she announces her decision to die as soon as possible sounds like an exit line in anticipation of offstage action that is to be reported to the audience.

What has prevented scholars from so reading her words is their knowledge that Phaedra does not die "as soon as possible" but speaks again later in the scene. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that Phaedra does, indeed, leave the stage. First, the nurse is concerned with shushing Hippolytus so that no one will overhear. He protests that he does not care whether he is overheard (603 f., 609–12). Their words might be spoken if they are aware of the chorus at a distance, but seem very unlikely if they were to discover Phaedra when they come out of the house. Secondly, Hippolytus addresses only the nurse throughout and

³ Lines 486–524. The best analysis of this dialogue that I know is offered by B. M. W. Knox, *Yale Classical Studies* 13 (1952) 10–12, who emphasizes the double application of all that the nurse says, which allows her to make astounding propositions without being specific. It should be emphasized, however that Phaedra's "suspension of critical judgment" involves primarily her faith, finally, that the nurse will obey her and speak no further of such things (503–4). The nurse's assent is unambiguous: she will not violate Phaedra's intentions nor involve her in the shameful deeds she has been urging. Phaedra reminds the nurse of that promise in 685–86. Contrary to the view of David Grene, *CP* 34 (1939) 57–58, the nurse is not acting as Phaedra's agent, nor does Phaedra give consent, tacit or otherwise, to the nurse's plan. Cf. below, note 14.

⁴ Symptomatic of the difficulties involved in arriving at an accurate view of the staging are the discrepant treatments of Phaedra's action at this point. Few modern commentators would agree with the scholiast who posits Phaedra's absence during the choral ode (*ad* 565: "Enter Phaedra, distraught."). L. Meridier, *L'Hippolyte d'Euripide* (Paris 1935) 114–16, describes her as resting on her couch where she has been throughout, but up against the door where she can overhear Hippolytus. Wilamowitz in his stage directions, *Griechische Tragödien* (Berlin 1899), has her get up at 215, sink back at 238, get up at 311, go back to the bed at 353, and get up for good at 373. Most descriptions of Phaedra during the choral song would agree with Wilamowitz: "She listens at the door with increasing agitation."

speaks of Phaedra as though she is absent. He is talking to a slave, taunting and threatening. But the strongest evidence that Phaedra is not a witness, seen or unseen, is that she does not hear what Hippolytus says. His words are (656–63):

Know, woman, that it is my piety that saves you. If I had not been trapped in oaths to the gods, I would not have hesitated to tell my father. Now I shall leave home as long as Theseus is away. And I will keep silent. But I shall watch, when I come home with my father, the way you look at him, you and your mistress. I shall recognize your boldness, having tasted of it.

There are many things in what Hippolytus says that Phaedra might find fault with. He draws a sordid picture. But what she does say misses the mark completely (687–92):

I can no longer die with a good reputation. Instead, I have need of new words. For that man, his mind whetted by anger, will accuse me of your sins to his father, will tell old Pittheus what has happened, will fill the whole land with ugly words.

There is no reason given in the play why Phaedra should ignore or contradict Hippolytus' explicit statements about his intentions, if she heard them. The contradiction is so evident and so significant for Phaedra's motives in leaving the lying note of slander that it cannot pass unnoticed. What Phaedra says is an inference from precisely what she overheard Hippolytus shouting at the nurse (581 f., 589). There are no grounds for constructing a complicated calculation for Phaedra, in which she balances Hippolytus' asseveration against his earlier taunt that the oath means nothing to him (612). It is better to assume that she means what she says, and to accept the indications that Phaedra is absent during the interview between the nurse and Hippolytus, rather than to concoct a series of *ad hoc* explanations for them outside what the text offers.⁵

The device employed by Euripides in having Phaedra exit,

⁵ E.g. Hippolytus studiously ignores Phaedra while he is onstage (Meridier [above, note 4] 124; Schmid-Stählin, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.* [Munich 1940] 1.3.387), or gives her a contemptuous glance before his final curse (Wilamowitz [above, note 4] *ad* 665). Phaedra speaks as though she has not heard Hippolytus, because Phaedra and the women simply do not trust Hippolytus after his one tremendous lapse (Matthaei [above, note 2] 97; W. H. Friedrich, *Euripides u. Diphilos* [Munich 1953] 144); "probably she had hardly noticed the actual words in his torrent of rage," Gilbert Murray, note *ad loc.* in his translation (London 1912); Phaedra realizes he was telling the truth and will not disgrace her, but she kills him anyway, because of his insults: G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941) 185.

apparently to die, but subsequently reappear, is not uncommon. Two exits by a character to die or to do murder are better than one, and all the dramatists knew it. It is a way of drawing out the climax. In the *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra follows Agamemnon inside the house, the doors close firmly, and the chorus broods about its forebodings (975–1033). But when the doors open and Clytemnestra comes out, it is not to announce murder but to summon Cassandra to join them in the house; the dramatist devises a second opportunity to create suspense. In the *Ajax*, Ajax announces that he must die and goes into his tent. The chorus sings in anticipation of his death (598 ff.). But the doors open and Ajax comes out again to talk about time and change and burying his sword by the sea. In the *Medea*, Medea in a magnificent monologue wavers in her resolution to murder her children, calls them back from the house, steels herself and sends them in, and then follows them (1021–80). But after the choral song she reenters to watch for news from the palace about her other plot. The messenger appears with the news, and after a lengthy scene and another statement of her plan, Medea exits to do the murder (1250).

In the *Hippolytus* the device is used with more subtlety. Phaedra's announcement that she must die and her sudden exit serve as an effective context for Hippolytus' scene with the nurse. And on Phaedra's return, Hippolytus' words, unheard by Phaedra, serve in turn as a context for Phaedra's gradual revelation of her change in plan: she cannot simply die as it seemed she could before. To save her family and her own name she now believes that she must "be an evil to another." She returns to the stage, then, to hint to the audience about her plan for vengeance. The dramatic occasion for her return is her need to insure that the chorus will not interfere.

Two passages in the play might be thought to offer evidence of different sorts that Phaedra is onstage throughout. Hippolytus' statement in his first surprised reaction to Phaedra's death was cited by Wilamowitz^{5a} as evidence that he actually sees Phaedra on the stage during his conversation with the nurse. His words are (907–8):

ἦν ἀρτίως ἔλειπον, ἦ φάος τόδε
οὐπω χρόνον παλαιὸν εἰσεδέρκετο.

^{5a} *Op. cit.* (above, note 4) 79.

The kind of evidence offered by the lines could perhaps be described as follows: if the audience had not seen or known of a specific meeting between Phaedra and Hippolytus, they would find Hippolytus' statement more than confusing. Since no meeting between Phaedra and Hippolytus has been described elsewhere, Hippolytus must be referring to an event in the play. Otherwise Euripides would not have written the lines as he did. An examination of the lines in their context, however, yields a more satisfactory explanation of them.

When the lines are spoken, Euripides is making use of Hippolytus' innocence and Theseus' suspicions that Phaedra's note tells the truth. Hippolytus must seem to implicate himself without doing so. Spoken innocently, Hippolytus' words have sinister implications for Theseus, who has a vivid conception of what occurred at the last meeting between his wife and son. For Hippolytus, this is the conventional response to the shock of seeing Phaedra dead. "It is not long since I saw (*or* used to see) her alive." "She was so young." The audience is supposed to shudder as it sees the gap widening between father and son. This is why the poet wrote the lines as he did. Ambiguity is essential. But what exactly does Hippolytus say? He does not say, "I just now left her" (*ἀρτίως λέλοιπα* or *ἔλειψα*). Since the imperfect is what is used, it does not draw attention to a specific act of leaving. The meaning is something like "I have been out of her presence only a short time," leaving the specific time when he last saw her vague enough so as not to confuse the audience and those scholars who have posited that Hippolytus does not see Phaedra in the course of the play. If he were to refer coolly to his stalking from the stage after an insulting speech in her presence, it would offer an interesting characterization but one inconsistent with the rest of the passage. As it is, he refers only to the brevity of the time since he saw her alive, a sentiment which is completed by his reference to the brevity of her life as a whole. As evidence for the staging of the central scene, the lines could be said to be neutral. They do not depend on a particular known event for their meaning, however vividly Theseus may be imagining such an event.

The other possible indication that Phaedra remains onstage, or receives a full report of Hippolytus' speech, is the apparent reference by Phaedra to words used by Hippolytus in the scene.

Phaedra's final words in the play are a dark reference to her vengeance on Hippolytus. She will die, she says, but she will be a source of evil to someone else, "so that he will learn not to be arrogant about my evils. Sharing this sickness in common with me, he will learn *sôphrosynê*" (730-31). This exit line anticipates the rest of the action in the play. It is also a verbal reminiscence of Hippolytus' exit line, sixty verses before. Hippolytus had said, "Let someone teach women *sôphrosynê*, or else allow me always to attack them" (667-68). The verbal echo is a significant one, drawing the two people and their motives into comparison: each is going to teach the other a lesson in *sôphrosynê*. But what kind of echo is it? G. M. Kirkwood⁶ distinguishes between two types of verbal repetitions and echoes. One type he calls "argumentative," i.e. conscious and purposeful repetition by one character of the words of another, a purely local effect. The other type involves "emphasis of dramatic themes by means of words or phrases that strikingly recall previous occurrences of the word or word-group" (229). An example of this second kind of repetition in the *Hippolytus* is Theseus' dismissal of Hippolytus' request that he delay the sentence of banishment until Hippolytus' guilt can be tested by divination. τοὺς δ' ὑπὲρ κάρᾱ | φοιτῶντας ὄρνις πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω (1058-59) is Theseus' retort, and it recalls Hippolytus' rejection of Aphrodite's claim to his service: τὴν σὴν δὲ κύπριν πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω (113). The audience cannot fail to notice the first statement or catch this echo of it. In Hippolytus' mouth the play on *chairein* is emphatic and humorous: he has been counseled by the old servant to be a friend to all, easily met, not stuffy (91-103). "I bid your Cypris a grand hello," he says. His statement is also near to blasphemy, as the servant has explained: "Goodbye to your Cypris." It also reinforces a thematic verbal motif introduced by Aphrodite herself with a strained use of the term.⁷ The audience recalls Hippolytus' witty remark with horror when Theseus repeats it. But Theseus did not hear Hippolytus. The repetition is part of the dialogue between author and audience, not of argument between characters.

⁶ *A Study of Sophoclean Drama* (Ithaca 1958) 219-46.

⁷ Line 8; cf. 64, 70, 183, 1094, 1097, 1340, 1437, 1453 for noteworthy occurrences. E. M. Blaiklock, *The Male Characters of Euripides* (Wellington 1952) 41, nicely reproduces the wit and insolence in the farewell of line 113: "My love to Aphrodite." The emphatic *sên* also adds another nuance, "your kind of Aphrodite."

A verbal echo, then, is not evidence, in the face of indications to the contrary, that one character has heard what another said. Phaedra and Hippolytus have both laid claim to *sôphrosynê* previously. The theme is a constant one throughout.⁸ Now in the central scene Phaedra and Hippolytus condemn one another in the name of *sôphrosynê*, and each claims he will be a source of education in it. But each speaks in ignorance of the other's words.

Phaedra exits at 600. The chorus addresses her again at 680. There are various indications in the text that 680–81 is the chorus' greeting to her on her return to the stage and that the lament preceding her reentrance is sung by the nurse.⁹ Phaedra's attitude when she realizes that she has been betrayed by the nurse is that there is one solution only, immediate death (599–600). Her speech to the nurse, beginning at 682, and her later speech to the chorus show the same mood but somewhat developed: she gradually reveals that she has added another plan to her plan to commit suicide. The lament does not belong to the sequence. Instead, the vocabulary and sentiments are wholly characteristic of the nurse and serve as a reminiscence and summary of her part in the play. The lament opens (669–73):

Oh wretched, ill-fated lot of women. What device have we now,
what words to loose the knot, now we have failed? Our fate
was justice, oh earth and light. Whither can I avoid this fate?

The nurse is stunned by her failure and desperate. She characteristically looks for a new expedient to replace the old ones, for a *technê*, just as before she boasted of her female ability to produce

⁸ For the theme of *sôphrosynê*, its use and occurrences, see Matthaei (above, note 2) 114, E. R. Dodds, *CR* 39 (1925) 102–4.

⁹ Although the MSS. assign the opening lines to the chorus or to Phaedra, the scholia attribute them to the nurse, and Murray's OCT apparatus should be so corrected: *ad* 671, *sphaleisai* is explained: "having failed in the hope of persuading him to sin," a sentiment that fits only the nurse. *Ad* 672 the scholiast explains the change of speaker as follows: "The scene is transferred to the other part, i.e. to the suffering of Phaedra and the sympathy of the chorus." He may mean "part of the scene," i.e. stage, or "part of the plot," i.e. the Phaedra plot as opposed to the Hippolytus plot. In either case he conceives of the interview with Hippolytus as being finished by the nurse's rather personal lament, followed by the lament of Phaedra. I suspect he envisions two separate areas of action on the stage. Wilamowitz failed to connect these two scholia and used the first to impugn Phaedra's motives, *Analecta Euripidea* (Berlin 1875) 210.

méchanai (480–81).¹⁰ In response to Hippolytus' condemnation of women, she speaks, as before, in the name of womankind, using well the conventional plural for singular. Characteristic of the nurse, too, is the repeated emphasis on *tyché* (669, 672, 673, 679). This is preparation for her final philosophical contribution to the play: "wisdom is only a matter of chance" (701). The word *kathamma* (671), metaphorically "a knotty problem," "an entanglement," involves also a reference to Phaedra's intended suicide. It is quite appropriate for the nurse, who has tied the knot through her devices, to refer unconsciously to the result. If Phaedra or the chorus, who know of Phaedra's intention, were to speak the lines, the pun would be grotesque.

The lament continues with a wish for a god or mortal to stand by or be an accomplice in these evil affairs, recalling the nurse's prayer to Aphrodite in similar terms as she exited to corrupt Hippolytus (522–23). Next the nurse describes the situation as impossible, not to be overpassed in life, reminding the audience of her exorbitant, self-dramatizing reaction to Phaedra's first admission of her passion (353 ff.). Finally the nurse calls herself the most unlucky of women. Naturally the audience thinks of Phaedra, and at that moment Phaedra appears. The chorus greets her (680–81): "Alas, alas. It is finished. The devices of your servant failed, queen. All goes badly."

Had Phaedra delivered the lament, it would be rather otiose for the chorus to inform her that the nurse's devices failed. As it is, the lines have a clear function. Phaedra has been absent since Hippolytus and the nurse entered. The chorus leader greets her now and reports that little has changed since she left. She picks up the word *technai* from the nurse's lament to describe the failure. She informs Phaedra that the interview, of which she had heard the preliminaries, is finished, and she directs Phaedra's attention to the nurse's presence and so offers the occasion for her address to the nurse. Euripides also uses the choral greeting to direct the audience's attention where he wants it. He has gotten the effect of suspense during Phaedra's absence. He causes surprise

¹⁰ For the nurse's characteristic use of *logos*, congruent with 671, see B. M. W. Knox (above, note 3) 18–20. The MSS. are unanimous in repeating two forms of *logos* at the end of successive lines, 670–71, though they do not agree on the forms. The word is emphatic in this whole passage (note 688, 692, 703, 706). As Monk notes (*ad* 670), Euripides did not hesitate to repeat words, particularly where he sought emphasis. This double use by the nurse should not be edited out.

when she returns alive. Now by turning Phaedra's anger on the nurse until the nurse departs, he can draw out his effect by delaying Phaedra's announcement of the new and deadly resolution that brought her back.

Readers and editors have given too little attention to the nurse's situation at this moment. Her position is a dangerous one, a fact that would be more obvious on the stage as she is attacked by the two people in turn. For much of the play she has been the object of satire. Her sophistries are the vehicle for a *reductio ad absurdum* of commonplaces about moderation: it is hard to take her seriously as a person when she extends moderation to include moderate immorality and moderation of intelligence. She inevitably reminds us of the philosophical slave who is the clown in new comedy, or even in old.¹¹ But despite these characteristics she is still a character in tragedy, where blows are painful and swords kill: she is a slave who has truly betrayed her masters.

The nurse is grovelling in fear as she begs Hippolytus to keep his oath, and he taunts her. He ends with an implied threat as he describes his watching her in the future (661–62). Her subsequent personal lament shows her fear. Then Phaedra's first address to her begins and ends with a curse (683–85, 693–94), and Phaedra shortly dismisses her with a warning (706–9). The nurse failed to tell Hippolytus that she was not sent by Phaedra, presumably because she got no easy opportunity and because she was afraid for herself. Now the nurse does not correct Phaedra, who says that her reputation is irreparably ruined, since Hippolytus is going to fill the whole countryside with the story. For the second time the nurse fails to speak the words that might avert the tragedy, and for the same reasons as before. She shows no inclination to tell the truth about Hippolytus. Instead she speaks in answer to Phaedra's curses, in defense of her own motives. And her defense is a crude one, which amounts to: "If I had succeeded you would have been gratified" (700). When she attempts to prolong the conversation on the promise of showing a safe way out, she is driven from the stage. She never learns of Phaedra's intention of immediate suicide nor of her intention to slander Hippolytus. The nurse's ignorance joins a crowd of fatal misunderstandings.

¹¹ Wilamowitz (above, note 4) 104, Friedrich (above, note 5) 139 f.

There are dramatic reasons also why the chorus does not intervene to tell Phaedra the truth (cf. below, note 13), reasons which make it unnecessary to explain their reticence by their ignorance, by their antipathy to Hippolytus, or by carelessness on the poet's part. Actually the chorus never shows that it has heard Hippolytus' words. All the information it gives Phaedra (680-81) comes from the nurse's lament, which is addressed to the chorus (674). Nevertheless, the Hippolytus-nurse dialogue must be conceived as an exterior scene,¹² and though the chorus is at some distance (577, 585), they are aware that the argument is going on even before it moves outside. By their position and by the swift and violent progress of the scene, they are simply excluded from any active part in it.

It remains now to consider briefly what the staging does for the audience's reception of the scene, and how the scene contributes to the design of the play as a whole. The scene is so conceived as to throw the audience's sympathies violently first one way and then the other. It opens with a sudden new development in the plot, reported by Phaedra, whom it most affects. Hippolytus' denunciation of the nurse as a pander brings to a sad and undignified end Phaedra's attempt to keep her own guilty secret until her death. Her sudden realization that she has been deceived and her equally sudden exit to die summon all the audience's sympathy for her. Whatever weakness and abdication of moral control she showed in response to the nurse's urging are more than punished now.

As a result, Hippolytus' condemnation of the absent Phaedra receives the worst possible hearing from the audience. His righteous indignation is not in excess of the facts he is aware of. He is defending his father's honor and his own against a cynical proposal. His innocence and his ability to feel shame are refreshing after the nurse's rationalizations. But the audience is aware that Phaedra is as sensitive to the situation as he, though her problems are less simple. When this innocent boy speaks crudely and with imagination of the world of which he is ignorant, the results are not impressive. The audience's belief that the object of his scorn is dead or dying also changes the effect of his pious threats.

¹² This statement is based on 601 as well as our ignorance of any device or convention for presenting interior scenes. Cf. Pickard-Cambridge (above, note 1) 99, " . . . tragedy is not in the habit of representing interior scenes at all."

When he draws the picture of himself watching how Phaedra greets Theseus, while he stays on guard and so forces her to learn *sôphrosynê*, the audience can retain little concern for his delicate feelings of shame.

The nurse's lament reinforces what the audience already feels. She did not speak the truth to Hippolytus, which would have been of some use. Now her search for a new *technê* and a new accomplice and her references to bad fortune and the knot that needs loosing remind the audience point by point how the situation was created. Her language of high morality does the same. The nurse is afraid for herself now, and the audience is led to supply reasons why she should be.

But with Phaedra's reappearance the situation is exactly reversed. Phaedra begins with violent abuse of the nurse and curses which echo Hippolytus' words (683, 693; cf. 616, 664). The nurse's answers are similar irritating sophistries (700–701, cf. 615), increasing Phaedra's fury like Hippolytus' before. The chorus is given no part in either conversation, and they are now given no leisure to comment or discuss. Phaedra does not lose her momentum after she dismisses the nurse. Without pausing she turns to the chorus, addresses them as *paides eugeneis* and asks them to swear silence.¹³ They swear by Artemis; the audience is not allowed to forget the previous oath. But Phaedra proceeds in ignorance of it, and chorus and audience finally learn why she has returned alive to the stage. She needs the chorus' aid in deception. The new words she needed, like the old ones (688, cf. 490–91), are calculations about her reputation on which her fate and that of her family depend. This time her words are grim, not fair-faced. One life cannot be a hindrance.

As she describes Hippolytus speedily filling the whole land with the story of her disgrace, her imagination is fevered in a way reminiscent of Hippolytus himself. There is nothing in the scene to prevent the audience from conjecturing what elements

¹³ It is usual, following the scholiast, to comment that the oath is necessary to the economy of the drama. But the oath does more than account for the later silence of the chorus. Phaedra's sudden request and equally sudden revelation of her new plan make it dramatically feasible to keep the chorus from becoming an active element in this part of the scene any more than in 601–68. Later the chorus can intrude its pleas for moderation (891–92, 1036–37, urging acceptance of Hippolytus' second oath), but here for the sake of the dramatic economy they must not be given the chance to intervene and try to straighten out the confusion.

her emotion contains of bitterness for her wasted passion and restraint, or fury at the apparent speed with which Hippolytus condemned her, or even her hereditary taint which the chorus is shortly to discuss. Similarly nothing prevents our viewing Hippolytus' rage as the "gratifying of a repressed impulse under the guise of virtue."¹⁴ But there is little time for such conjectures, and Euripides does not encourage them. Instead the emphasis falls on the fact that Phaedra's violence, like that of Hippolytus, is defense against an imaginary attack. She kills Hippolytus for words he does not intend to speak. And when her final words echo the final words of Hippolytus, the reversal of the pattern is complete. The audience felt distaste for Hippolytus' ignorant condemnation of the dying Phaedra. Now with a kind of poetic justice Phaedra has returned to repeat his act. Both in their ignorance will teach a lesson in *sôphrosynê*.

There is a larger pattern in the play to which these two lessons in *sôphrosynê* belong: a pattern to which each character contributes. The first moral lesson is that described by Aphrodite in the prologue, expressed in terms of size. Aphrodite is a great god, she says (*pollê*, line 1), who honors those who revere her power. But those who think big thoughts (*mega*, 6) she trips up. Hippolytus thinks Artemis is the greatest of the gods (*megistê*, 16) and enjoys a companionship with her greater than mortal (*meizô*, 19). But

¹⁴ Dodds (above, note 8) 103. Gilbert Norwood, *Essays on Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1954) 80, note, offers a salutary correction to discussions of Phaedra's characterization in 565–600, which also applies to the whole scene: "her words contain no hint of baffled lust." In general it is difficult to assess the degree to which the audience's knowledge of the myth and Phaedra's "traditional character" might have controlled their reactions to the scene. Certainly modern knowledge has prevented adequate appreciation of possibilities for suspense in the scene. On the basis of Polygnotus' picture as interpreted by Pausanias (10.29.3) we can probably assume a pre-Euripidean story that Phaedra had hanged herself. Beyond that there is no evidence of a story with a definite form before Euripides, though scholars assume that there must have been; cf. Wilamowitz (above, note 4) 89–99, Hans Herter, *RhM*, N.S. 89 (1940) 273–79, Louis Sechan, *REG* 24 (1911) 105–36. If the audience did know Euripides' first Hippolytus play (no one seems to question that it was allowed a production), they may simply have spent their time cataloguing the alterations. But modern attempts to reconstruct the first *Hippolytus* must go far with little, and although this is no place to question their likelihood in detail, I would suggest that we cannot assume that the audience viewed the second *Hippolytus* in the light of the first. Certainly the scholiasts show no sign of doing so, despite Aristophanes' apparent knowledge of the first play. In the prologue of the second *Hippolytus*, Aphrodite allows Phaedra to keep her good name, but in details she is either vague or purposely misleading. This seems to be a device for maintaining the suspense which is exploited by Phaedra's exit at 600.

Aphrodite has already begun to trim him down (*prokopsas*’, 23) and will complete her revenge in the play. The necessity of sacrificing Phaedra is nothing beside her desire for justice (47–50).

Aphrodite expresses the most familiar sentiment of Greek morality: knowing one’s necessary limitations is the safe way. Growing too big, too powerful, forgetting one’s mortal station is dangerous. On this initial theme Euripides is to play a series of variations, all drawing a comparison between men and gods, all drawing specific lessons from the vague text of moderation.

The first scene offers the second moral lesson, given to Hippolytus by the servant. Its subject is *to semnon*. Both men and gods hate what is *semmnon* and is not friendly to everyone (93). The safe way is the opposite, to be *euprosēgoros*, well met, easily addressed (95). *Semnotēs* is dangerous because it is uncompromising. The point of the terms Euripides uses is their ambiguity. The servant is not actually rejecting piety, but is opposing it to that *semmnotēs* which sets one apart (and is perhaps reserved for the gods, see Murray’s apparatus *ad* 99 and 103). Hippolytus’ grand goodbye to Aphrodite is his rejection of the servant’s lesson by humorously accepting it.

The next lesson is taught by the nurse to Phaedra. The nurse is an authority on moderation. Before she discovers Phaedra’s secret she has already philosophized on the subject: one must be moderate in love and not let it touch the depths of the soul. Relationships should be easily breakable. It is rigidity that brings pain and disease (253–60). Her immediate reference is to her own pain at Phaedra’s troubles, but she expands on the same subject after Phaedra’s confession: “Mortals should not work too hard at living.” As long as their good deeds outnumber the bad they do well (467–72). Phaedra’s rigid morality is nothing but *hybris*. The gods give in to love, and a mere mortal should not presume to be better than the gods (473–76). Her earthy colloquialism fits well with her characteristic use of gnomic wisdom.¹⁵ Her extension of proverbs on the necessity of moderation to include moderate adultery is the second paradoxical lesson of the play. Her question to Phaedra, “*Ti semnomytheis?* It is not fair-faced words you need but the man” (490–91), recalls the first.

¹⁵ Scholiast *ad* 177, 465. If the nurse’s opinions had not previously been expressed as proverbs she makes it sound as though they had: 189–90, 207, 252 ff., 435 f.

By the time Phaedra and Hippolytus speak of teaching lessons, they have developed their own variations on the theme of moderation, particularly in terms of *sôphrosynê* and its relation to knowledge. Phaedra describes to the chorus the results of her own pondering on how the life of mortals is corrupted (375 ff.). It is not from ignorance (380–83): “We understand and know what is right, but we do not practice it, some from laziness, some preferring some other pleasure to the good.” Phaedra needed something more than knowledge of the good to conquer the irrationality with which she was beset. That something more she describes as *to sôphronein* (391–99). But even *sôphrosynê* was insufficient, and rather than violate it she chose death by starvation (400 ff., esp. 413 ff.). For Phaedra *sôphrosynê* is that difficult self-control that is required for following the good one knows, and one may have to die to achieve it. The nurse calls it *hybris* and *semnomythia*.

Hippolytus has no such difficulties with self-control. He describes his blessed state in terms of his right to pluck the flowers in the sacred meadow (79–81): “Those whose *sôphrosynê* is untaught, who by nature have it in all things, can pluck the flowers. The base man cannot.” This natural *sôphrosynê* is what the servant condemns as *semnotês*. Both Phaedra and Hippolytus prefer their own versions of *sôphrosynê* to the moderation offered them by their retainers. However, the moderation offered to them is a parody of popular and philosophical sentiments. It is later summed up by the chorus, who draw this lesson from Hippolytus’ banishment (1111–16): “May my opinions be neither unwavering nor extraordinary. May I have good fortune in life by changing my easy manners day by day.”¹⁶ For both Hippolytus and Phaedra, Euripides has drawn a situation in which moderation is intolerable and has thereby reduced moral platitudes about moderation to offensive paradoxes. They are right when they claim *sôphrosynê* and oppose such moderation. But their claims are to be examined in more difficult circumstances.

In the central scene Euripides shows these two opponents of moderation successively in action. Each violently condemns the

¹⁶ The pattern of the moral lesson is completed by Theseus (916–20) and by Artemis (1298 ff., 1431–36), but through the latter part of the play it is subordinate to the other aspect of the theme as Aphrodite introduced it: the contrast between men and gods in power, prerogatives, knowledge, and finally in the capacity for humaneness; men can shed tears, forgive, and be reconciled.

other in confidence of his own sufficient knowledge of the right and the other's relation to it. The stage management is such that they never meet but also such that the natural progressions of emotion and action for both are shown to be exactly parallel. The fatuous defenses by the nurse, "It is mortal to err," "Wisdom is only a matter of chance," within the dramatic context increase the fury of both and deprive them of their remaining self control. Still the lesson both teach, in their ignorance and misapprehension, only illustrates the nurse's proverbs.