Who Sings the Monody 669–79 in Euripides' *Hippolytus*?

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THE ASSIGNMENT of speakers in manuscripts is not binding.[1] This truism underlies Wesley D. Smith's attribution of lines 669–79 of Euripides' *Hippolytus* to the Nurse when he argues that Phaedra is off stage from 600 to 680.[2] Although his article was published four years earlier than Barrett's monumental edition, Barrett seems to have overlooked it.[3] I find Smith's views worth considering, however, and I hope to support them by further arguments. Smith's assignment of the monody 669–79 to the Nurse instead of Phaedra is based on the following arguments: (1) the lament does not belong to the sequence of thought which starts with Phaedra's resolution to commit suicide in 599–600 and continues with her adding another plan to this one (682ff); (2) the vocabulary and style of the lament are wholly characteristic of the Nurse and serve as a reminiscence and summary of her part in the play; (3) the information offered by the Chorus immediately after the lament would be redundant if Phaedra had delivered the lament.

In this essay I propose to enlarge the list of arguments by presenting others of linguistic, stylistic, psychological and structural nature, but I ask to be forgiven if I sometimes, for the fullness of argument, repeat things which have already been pointed out by Smith.

Most Mss assign the opening lines of the monody (669–71) to the Chorus and the rest (672–79) to Phaedra.[4] The division between two different speakers, which has nothing to recommend it, may have originated in the fem. plur. σφαλεῖσαι, which some scribe may have found improbable in Phaedra's mouth. Indeed it is a natural assump-

[1] See Euripides, *Medea*, ed. D. L. Page (Oxford 1952) pp. xxxvii–xli.

[2] W. D. Smith, "Staging in the Central Scene of the *Hippolytus*," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 162–77.

[3] *Euripides, Hippolytos*, edited with Introduction and Commentary by W. S. Barrett (Oxford 1964).

[4] Only A and B (*in ras.*) attribute 669–71 to Phaedra.

tion that σφαλεῖσαι implies more than one speaker. Yet there is another alternative: that σφαλεῖσαι is spoken by a person who sees herself as a member of a group of women sharing the same plight. One may argue, as Barrett does (p.287), that the subject to σφαλεῖσαι is 'we women', *i.e.* the female sex in general, especially since the speaker begins by bemoaning the tragedy of the whole sex. But at this stage the speaker is no longer concerned with the misfortune of womankind which she described in the opening lines. There is a clear-cut break between 669 and 670, where the speaker turns to the plight with which one is faced right now (νῦν 670). It is inconceivable that Phaedra, if she is the speaker, includes the whole female sex when mentioning her present shortcoming. In tragedy a woman can employ the plural when she speaks of herself, but that would have to be masc. pl. (here: σφαλέντες), as for instance in 349 (κεχρημένοι).[5] Hence, if Phaedra is the speaker, no one will hesitate to take σφαλεῖσαι to mean "the Nurse and I have failed"—a statement which will have serious consequences for our understanding of Phaedra's character. Such a statement would be akin to a confession that she has had a hand in the Nurse's scheme to procure Hippolytus. And this would obviously be inconsistent with the scene in which Phaedra is taken in by the Nurse's ambiguous talk about the pharmacon she has in store for her.[6]

The scholiast's comment on line 670 is worth considering.[7] The sentiment which he paraphrases thus, σφαλεῖσαι τῆς ἐλπίδος δι' ἧς προσεδοκῶμεν πεῖσαι αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, is one which fits only the Nurse, provided that the scholiast does not conceive of Phaedra as a character without moral scruples who goes to any length to involve Hippolytus in a love-affair.[8] Murray's critical apparatus is misleading on this point and should be corrected.[9] In his note on lines 669–79 Barrett maintains that "the true ascription given by BA, is implicit also in the scholiast's comment (NBV) on 669–71." I fail to see how

[5] See J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* I[2] (Basel 1926) 99f.

[6] I wholly agree with Barrett's interpretation of the scene in which the Nurse proposes to resort to a love magic (507ff). D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama, Myth, Theme and Structure* (Toronto 1967) 40, goes along with Barrett on this point, stating that "a certain ambiguity hangs over this *entente* at which Phaedra and the Nurse finally arrive..." William M. Calder's (*CP* 60 [1965] 280) vindication of Wilamowitz's view (*Euripides Hippolytos* [Berlin 1891] 208ff), that Phaedra is aware of what kind of charm the Nurse has in mind, misjudges both the style of this scene and the character drawing in the play.

[7] E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem* II (Berlin 1891) 84.

[8] Smith, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 169 n.9, interprets the scholiast's comment similarly.

[9] G. Murray, ed. *Euripidis Fabulae* I (Oxford 1902).

Barrett arrives at this conclusion. I do not attach to the scholiast's assignment any weight as evidence, but point out that the confusion over the assignment of the different lines of the monody is even greater than is usually assumed.

Yet in this case the scholiast appears to have hit upon the right solution. The only character who can say *cφαλεῖcαι* and imply another woman is surely the Nurse, who before putting her plan into action has taken care to secure, albeit under false pretences, Phaedra's approval. It is part of her stratagem to act at all times with the approval of Phaedra. We have seen earlier in the play that Phaedra's blunt refusal to acquiesce in the Nurse's first plan, namely to secure Hippolytus' affection by a spell, compels the Nurse to try another procedure. It is important, I think, that we conceive of the Nurse as a character who would never think of taking any step without Phaedra's blessing. It would appear that much of the irony of Phaedra's fate lies in the fact that she has in a way endorsed the line of action which the Nurse has initiated.[10] Therefore, if *cφαλεῖcαι* refers to the fact that her scheme has failed, the Nurse is to some extent justified in including Phaedra.

In line 678 Barrett has adopted Wilamowitz's fanciful emendation *πέραν* against the unanimous manuscript reading *παρόν*. This emendation is unnecessary and brought forth by the preconception that Phaedra is the speaker. Obviously one expects from Phaedra, who is now on the brink of death, an allusion to what is at hand, and Wilamowitz's emendation provides such a sinister allusion. *Πέραν . . . ἔρχεται βίου* would mean 'is moving to the other side of life', that is, death. This emendation provides with *δυcεκπέρατον* a curious play on words which one should beware of using as an argument in favour of adopting *πέραν*. I take the statement to be no allusion to death but yet another comment on the trouble that afflicts them. Méridier's interpretation of the line seems quite acceptable if we disregard the fact that he attributes the whole monody to Phaedra: "L'épreuve qui est sur nous dresse à notre vie un infranchissable obstacle." (It should be admitted that Méridier has to accept Weil's slight emendation *βίῳ*.)[11] This seems to me the only way of establishing between the previous statement and this one the kind of connection which the use of *γάρ*

[10] The sophistic rhetoric which the Nurse applies in her conversation with Phaedra is well brought out by B. M. W. Knox, "The *Hippolytus* of Euripides," *YCS* 13 (1952) 10–12.

[11] *Euripide*, texte établi et traduit par Louis Méridier, II (Paris 1965).

presupposes: there can be no help from god or mortal because the plight with which they are confronted is inevitable. These statements reveal no profound insight into human conditions, but the Nurse has uttered platitudes before (186ff), and I can see no justification for Barrett's attempt to squeeze a more subtle meaning out of lines 677–78.

We shall now, after these arguments of a basically linguistic nature, try to bring out how the various statements of the monody relate to the speaker, being well aware that such examination can bring no conclusive evidence.

The outburst concerned with the tragic lot of womankind which opens the monody, is a natural reaction from any woman who has listened to and felt insulted by Hippolytus' cynical denunciation of the whole female sex. The Nurse, who has been directly addressed and whose behaviour has been condemned by Hippolytus, has no less cause for lamenting the lot of womankind than Phaedra. Even the women of Troizen who make up the Chorus and have been on the stage during Hippolytus' tirade may be expected to utter such a statement on behalf of the abused sex.

It is only when the speaker begins to picture her present plight (in 670) that the modern reader, without the playwright's own stage directions, is able to identify her with some degree of probability. We have seen above that σφαλεῖσαι is a stumbling block to those who attribute the whole monody to Phaedra; so are, to a certain extent, the two plural predicates ἔχομεν (670) and ἐτύχομεν (672) and the plural pronoun ἡμῖν (677), all of which must be understood on the basis of σφαλεῖσαι. It is not in itself problematic that the plural predicates ἔχομεν and ἐτύχομεν are followed by the singulars ἐξαλύξω (673) and κρύψω (674) and the plural pronoun ἡμῖν by the singular ἐγώ (679), since it is quite common in Greek that a person is referred to alternatively by singular and plural predicates or pronouns.[12] But the alternation between plurals and singulars becomes precarious in a paragraph where the subject is now a group of people ('we women'), now a single person (Phaedra). On the assumption that the monody is sung by Phaedra, it is doubtful whether the audience would be able to see that ἔχομεν, ἐτύχομεν and ἡμῖν refer to her alone. Hence it is only when we take the Nurse to be the speaker that the plurals are

[12] See Wackernagel, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 98.

really in point. Then they will, together with σφαλεῖσαι, serve the purpose of separating the statements which bear on the compound subject 'Phaedra and I' from those which bear on the Nurse alone. On the Nurse's line of argument it makes perfectly good sense to include Phaedra when she talks about the abortive scheme, since she clings to the idea that what has happened is the result of their joint policy.

Some arguments based on style and character may be added.

It is fair to say, I think, that *τίνας νῦν τέχνας ἔχομεν ἢ λόγους | σφαλεῖσαι κάθαμμα λύειν λόγου* is uttered by a character who is used to seeking practical devices (*τέχναι*) to extricate herself (and others) from a predicament. This is in fact the most characteristic feature of the Nurse; suffice it to recall her proud words about feminine resourcefulness earlier in the play (480f):

ἦ τἄρ' ἂν ὀψέ γ' ἄνδρες ἐξεύροιεν ἄν
εἰ μὴ γυναῖκες μηχανὰς εὑρήσομεν.

It is also significant that the Chorus use the word *τέχναι* ('devices') in 680 to characterize the Nurse's unfortunate contrivance.[13] Phaedra's attitude is different, it seems, from the practical device-contriving one which informs lines 670–71 as well as the maxim quoted above. She has already intimated what her answer to the inextricable tangle will be (599f):

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν· κατθανεῖν ὅσον τάχος,
τῶν νῦν παρόντων πημάτων ἄκος μόνον.

And if she hesitates to put this plan into action it is not because she wavers and seeks other solutions, but because there are still matters to which she has to attend. Her decision is definitive; it only remains for her to give the traitorous Nurse a piece of her mind and to tell how she proposes to secure her own *εὔκλεια*.

The next clause, *ἐτύχομεν δίκας* (672), is simply an extension of σφαλεῖσαι, since in the Nurse's opinion the moral quality of an act is relative to its degree of success. "We have met with our deserts" is one way of saying that their scheme has proved useless. When the Nurse shortly afterwards has to defend herself against Phaedra's merciless abuse, she posits that success is the measure of one's moral

[13] It should be noted that *λόγοι*, which is found emphatically placed in both 670 and 671, is referred to again and again as the Nurse's instrument besides her love charm. See Knox, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10) 10.

reputation. She herself would have been reckoned amongst the wise people, she states (700f), if her efforts had been crowned with success:

> *εἰ δ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξα, κάρτ' ἂν ἐν σοφοῖσιν ἦ·*
> *πρὸς τὰς τύχας γὰρ τὰς φρένας κεκτήμεθα.*

It is from this point of view that the Nurse refers to her deed as a 'wrongful deed' (*ἀδίκων ἔργων*) in 676. For her the deed is wrongful because it has proved abortive.

It is hard to see how Phaedra could say *ἐτύχομεν δίκας* ("I have met with my deserts") and then start blaming it all on the Nurse. Admittedly she feels massive guilt about her love for Hippolytus (*cf.* 239ff), but *ἀδίκων ἔργων* can hardly be a reference to her passion for her stepson. Besides, what is being bemoaned in the monody is the calamitous turn the action has taken, and there is no evidence that Phaedra feels responsible for that. On the contrary, she has from the very beginning struggled against her passion, groping for an honourable outcome of her shameful situation (246–49, 331, 392–402). Her dismal appearance is a symptom of her inner tension, and her vacillation between different responses, reticence, self-conquest and suicide, should be interpreted as a manifestation of genuine moral endeavour.[14] When despite her virtuous efforts she is betrayed, the proud Phaedra straightway lays the blame on the Nurse.

One should beware of inferring from the following statement (403f), as some commentators do, that Phaedra's moral code is shallow and that she is prepared to do any deed provided that there are no witnesses:

> *ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ*
> *μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν·*

The purpose of this statement is to make it plausible that Phaedra can go to the length of accusing Hippolytus, in her letter to Theseus, of having driven her to death by his illicit desires. But even though Phaedra is innately concerned with her *εὔκλεια*, her conduct is by and large based on more profound standards.[15] She is sincere, I believe,

[14] It is commonly alleged amongst the critics that it is Phaedra's genuine moral disposition which distinguishes her from Phaedra in the earlier version of the surviving play, who is completely at the mercy of her infatuation.

[15] Conacher, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 41 n.19, comments on Phaedra's decision to incriminate Hippolytus as follows: "Whatever her motives, it must be admitted that this decision represents a considerable fall from grace on Phaedra's part, the first and only breach in the

when she vents her loathing of the adulteress who hides her recklessness and professes virtue (413f):

μισῶ δὲ καὶ τὰς σώφρονας μὲν ἐν λόγοις,
λάθρᾳ δὲ τόλμας οὐ καλὰς κεκτημένας·

We believe her when she says that she would find the consciousness of a secret guilt insupportable (415ff). And indeed no feeling of guilt is to be detected in the words Phaedra utters after her secret has been divulged, only a profound bitterness and a feeling that she has been put to shame by others, by the Nurse who has betrayed her and by Hippolytus who has sneered at her passion. It is clear to her that she will suffer from what another person has done amiss (σὰς ἁμαρτίας, 690); and when she hangs herself, it is partly because she thereby wreaks vengeance on the self-assured Hippolytus (725ff).[16]

It is impossible on linguistic grounds to identify the speaker of the rhetorical questions in lines 673–76 and of the outburst which ends the monody (679). Yet their emotional character and their metrical form (lyric iambics) do not seem to correspond with Phaedra's frame of mind at this stage. We remember that when she learned that her secret was out, there was no wild outburst, only the quietude of resignation, and the metre employed was spoken iambics (565–600).[17] At the end of that speech (600) she declares that she has resolved to commit suicide, and not long after she speaks with determination of her plan to destroy Hippolytus. But these lines reveal the overwrought, self-dramatizing attitude which the Nurse has displayed once before (353–61). That her reaction this time should be taken no more seriously than her previous outburst is clear from lines 695–701 and 705. Surely the tone of the lament corresponds better with the Nurse's pattern of reaction than Phaedra's. Further, if arguments

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'noble' characterization for which we have been arguing; however, as we have already noted, the main dramatic purpose of that characterization in relation to Hippolytus has already been fulfilled by this time."

[16] The causation here is more subtle, I think, than is held by G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941) 185, and by W. Zürcher, *Die Darstellung des Menschen im Drama des Euripides* (Basel 1947) 86. Both appear to regard revenge as the main motive for Phaedra's suicide.

[17] The distribution of 'singing parts' in the play cannot help us to identify the singer, since neither Phaedra nor the Nurse has any other 'singing parts'; only Theseus does.

from style carry any weight, the Nurse is more likely than Phaedra to pose the following question (675–77):

> *τίς ἂν θεῶν ἀρωγὸς ἢ τίς ἂν βροτῶν*
> *πάρεδρος ἢ ξυνεργὸς ἀδίκων ἔργων*
> *φανείη;*

Earlier in the play the Nurse in similar terms prayed to a goddess for help. Before setting to work she requested Cypris' aid in carrying out her purpose (522f):

> *μόνον σύ μοι, δέσποινα ποντία Κύπρι,*
> *συνεργὸς εἴης·*

Immediately after the lament the Chorus address Phaedra in the following way (680f):

> *φεῦ φεῦ, πέπρακται, κοὐ κατώρθωνται τέχναι,*
> *δέσποινα, τῆς σῆς προσπόλου, κακῶς δ' ἔχει.*

If we assume that Phaedra is the singer of the lament, is it conceivable that the Chorus start informing her about the very thing she has bewailed in the preceding lyric? The person who sings the monody is deeply concerned about the present situation; there is no need for her to be enlightened by the Chorus about how things stand. The piece of information given by the Chorus in 680f has the character of a résumé of the monody for the benefit of a character who has not heard it. I subscribe, in other words, to Smith's theory that Phaedra has been absent from stage for a while and that she reenters at 680.

The view that Phaedra exits at 600 has been held by other critics. It was assumed by Dörpfeld and Reisch that Phaedra exits into the women's quarter at line 600.[18] Matthaei, considering the same idea, draws attention to the difficulty entailed if Phaedra is assumed to be present during Hippolytus' speech: "It is not clear whether Phaedra is meant to leave the stage before this, when Hippolytos bursts out of the house (l. 600), and return when he goes off (l. 668), in which case we must suppose that her nurse or the women repeated Hippolytos' words to her, or whether she remains on the stage during his long speech, either seen by him (so Wilamowitz), or unseen. Whichever it be, we have to consider why she does not believe that Hippolytos will keep his word and *not* betray her to Theseus. He expressly says he will

[18] W. Dörpfeld/E. Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (Athens 1896) 204.

not do so, yet she acts as though he certainly would."[19] More recently David Grene has voiced a similar opinion: "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 behind the door during the entire conversation between the nurse and Hippolytus."[20] In fact, Matthaei and Grene differ only in the manner in which they account for Phaedra's familiarity with Hippolytus' speech (616–68). But is it beyond question that Phaedra knows more than what she learned from eavesdropping at Hippolytus' and the Nurse's loud and agitated voices inside the palace (565ff) and what she is now told by the Chorus (680)? I am inclined to agree with Smith when he argues that there is no evidence that Phaedra has been informed about Hippolytus' speech, let alone has listened to it. Neither does she in her dialogue with the Nurse (682ff) discuss any of the points raised by Hippolytus, nor can his vilification of all womankind explain her later course of action. Surely it is enough for her to know that her secret is betrayed, and that is clear already at 589–90. Thus I fail to see that Phaedra's knowledge of Hippolytus' tirade is necessary, as some critics have it, to motivate her suicide as well as her denunciation of Hippolytus as her seducer.

Conacher seems to take Phaedra's last words as an ironical sneer provoked by and answering the last words in Hippolytus' tirade.[21] True, there is an evident correspondence between (667f) Hippolytus'

ἢ νύν τις αὐτὰς σωφρονεῖν διδαξάτω,
ἢ κἄμ' ἐάτω ταῖσδ' ἐπεμβαίνειν ἀεί.

and (728–31) Phaedra's

ἀτὰρ κακόν γε χἀτέρῳ γενήσομαι
θανοῦσ', ἵν' εἰδῇ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς
ὑψηλὸς εἶναι· τῆς νόσου δὲ τῆσδέ μοι
κοινῇ μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

But both these statements are part of the continuous discussion of *σωφρονεῖν* and *σωφροσύνη* which the play provides and should not be taken to indicate that Phaedra has had the opportunity to hear Hippolytus' speech. It is part of the irony of the play that both Hippolytus

[19] L. E. Matthaei, *Studies in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1918) 96f.

[20] D. Grene in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore: *Euripides* I, *Hippolytus* (Chicago 1955) 188.

[21] Conacher, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 41.

and Phaedra lay claim to *cωφροcύνη*, denying it of their opponent, and that this claim in both cases is contradicted by their behaviour. Hence their reciprocal criticism should be understood not as a 'dialogue' between *dramatis personae* (Hippolytus is of course absent from the stage when Phaedra utters her last words), but rather as the playwright's revelation of his characters through dramatic irony.[22]

I do not think it necessary to assume that Phaedra, in order to say *ἵν' εἰδῇ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖc ἐμοῖc κακοῖc | ὑψηλὸc εἶναι*, must have heard Hippolytus' vilification of all women. This statement, which is rendered by Barrett (p.297) with "that he may know not to make my trouble an occasion for his high airs," is based on an assumption which Phaedra is fully capable of making, especially since she is familiar with Hippolytus' haughty temperament and has overheard his indignant reaction to the Nurse's proposal.

The attempts made by Matthaei and Grene to account for Phaedra's familiarity with Hippolytus' speech are in my mind not only superfluous, but also misleading. Matthaei is aware of the contradiction inherent in the supposition that Phaedra overhears Hippolytus declaring that he will keep his word and not betray her to Theseus, and yet she acts as though he certainly would.[23] Her own words (689–92) leave no doubt that she is convinced that Hippolytus will betray her:

> *οὗτοc γὰρ ὀργῇ cυντεθηγμένοc φρέναc*
> *ἐρεῖ καθ' ἡμῶν πατρὶ cὰc ἁμαρτίαc,*
> *ἐρεῖ δὲ Πιτθεῖ τῷ γέροντι cυμφοράc,*
> *πλήcει τε πᾶcαν γαῖαν αἰcχίcτων λόγων.*

The obvious way of avoiding this contradiction is to assume that Phaedra is ignorant of Hippolytus' oath. It takes much imagination, I think, to conceive of Phaedra as listening to Hippolytus' speech without believing that this profoundly pious man will abide by the oath of secrecy he has sworn to the Nurse. The fatal feature in Hippolytus is indeed his single-mindedness and firmness of principle, and Phaedra, who is the most clear-sighted character in the play, would hardly call in question the sincerity of this statement by Hippolytus (656–58):

[22] It is well brought out by Matthaei, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19), how Euripides helps us to judge the acts of the *dramatis personae* by using moral terms such as *cώφρων*, *cωφροcύνη*, *αἰδώc αἰcχύνη*, *εὐκλεήc* and *cεμνόc* ironically.

[23] See quotation on pp. 314-15

εὖ δ' ἴcθι, τοὐμόν c' εὐcεβὲc cῴζει, γύναι·
εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὅρκοιc θεῶν ἄφρακτοc ᾑρέθην,
οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἔcχον μὴ οὐ τάδ' ἐξειπεῖν πατρί.

His previous declaration that only his tongue and not his mind is bound by the oath (612) she would put down to his excitement and anger in the beginning of the scene.[24]

To gloss over the inconsistency between Phaedra's statement and Hippolytus' oath by arbitrary psychological observations, as Barrett does (p.291f), is not good enough: "The whole passage is spoken in a white heat of anger and distress, and she thinks only of the two essentials of her disaster: the collapse of her marriage (690) and the destruction of her good name (692)." Our principal duty as critics is to verify that Phaedra has overheard Hippolytus' speech; we are not allowed to postulate that she has been listening to him and then try to explain away, by subtle psychological reasoning, the piece of evidence which weighs against our theory.

It seems to me that Barrett's whole discussion of Hippolytus' long speech (616–68) suffers from the preconception that Phaedra is present on the stage and that Hippolytus is conscious that she is. On this assumption the speech works up to a climax in 662 where Hippolytus, after having denounced Phaedra under cover of generalizations, suddenly mentions her in an apparent afterthought. Needless to say, on Barrett's interpretation everything which follows *καὶ cὺ καὶ δέcποινα cή* must become a gross anticlimax. This is also the conclusion Barrett draws, using it as his main argument for the excision of line 663: "it would be rhetorically ruinous to descend again from that climax to the unimportant Nurse." Barrett also seeks to throw doubt on the authenticity of lines 664–68, but his argument against them boils down to a vague feeling that they are lame after the poignant reference to Phaedra. In support of his suspicion Barrett repeats Valckenaer's assertion, "ad odium, quo mulieres prosequebatur, significandum nihil versus addunt sequentes, qui mihi saltem hoc in loco valde frigidi videntur."

Admittedly it would add to the aesthetic thrill of the audience if Hippolytus under cover of generalizations were damning Phaedra

[24] Knox's (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.10] 13) interpretation of Hippolytus' speech has much to recommend it: "Hippolytus launches on his passionate denunciation of women. The violence of his speech relieves the passion which made him ignore his oath, and he ends his speech with a promise to keep silence, cῖγα δ' ἕξομεν cτόμα (660)."

without addressing her at all. But in the first place aesthetic effect is a highly dubious criterion in literary criticism. Secondly, such an irony on Hippolytus' part would surely be incompatible with the very careful character portrayal we find in this play. A Theseus is capable of this kind of irony and crafty diatribes, as he demonstrates when he later stands face to face with his son (916ff). Hippolytus, on the other hand, for all his agitation and anger, could be nothing but undissembling and ingenuous when faced by other people. Hippolytus' ingenuousness is shown in his conversation with the servant in the prologue (88ff). It is characteristic that Hippolytus agrees with his interlocutor on each point without being able to see that the matter at issue here is his own arrogant attitude. Likewise I think that his stubborn adherence to the oath when his life is at stake should be connected with his ingenuousness and lack of social intuition. Hence we should see Hippolytus' denunciation of the Nurse as an important stage in the delineation of his character. In this speech his monomaniacal puritanism and his lack of social adaptability assume a grotesque shape. As compared to its importance as an indicator of character, the contribution of this speech to the evolution of the plot is slight. Hippolytus feels offended by what he believes to be Phaedra's and the Nurse's joint proposal (there is no reason to assume that the Nurse has found time to explain the truth of the matter to Hippolytus) and launches out in a general condemnation of all women, thereby furnishing proof both of his extreme prudishness and of his rigid dogmatism. Only in the last part of the speech does Hippolytus proceed to attack directly the only representative of the accursed sex present on the stage, namely the Nurse (651). The absent Phaedra is referred to only in a subordinate clause, which I find hard to conceive of as the climax of the speech.

If there is a climax it should rather be found in Hippolytus' last challenging remark about the necessity of teaching women *cωφρονεῖν* (667–68). Even though these words are tied up with the whole argument in Hippolytus' speech, we will no doubt understand them on a different level since they, as suggested above, must be regarded as part of the playwright's continuous preoccupation with *cωφροcύνη* and *cωφρονεῖν* in this play. They are in fact the only part of Hippolytus' diatribe which should not be attributed to his particular disposition and which, so to speak, has an objective value.

Now one may argue, as has been intimated by some critics, that

Phaedra is present on the stage without Hippolytus noticing it. Then one is spared from having to accept that the naïve and ingenuous Hippolytus suddenly starts excelling in sarcasm and irony. But this solution lays itself open to the same objection as that of Matthaei and that of Grene: it is not capable of explaining how Phaedra can listen to Hippolytus' mention of the oath without taking any notice of it.

If one assumes that Phaedra exits at line 600, one also has to explain why she returns at 680. After having announced in 599–600 that death is the only cure for the ills that encompass her, no one expects her to appear on stage again. Such an unexpected appearance by the main character, however, is paralleled in another tragedy. In *Ajax*, Ajax announces that he must die and goes into his tent. When the Chorus sing in anticipation of his death (598ff), no one expects to see him again. But the doors open and Ajax comes out again to deliver a speech about time and change. Admittedly Phaedra's mission on stage is rather trivial compared to that of Ajax, who, on the threshold of death, feels impelled to ponder the conditions of mankind. *Medea*, which also provides an example of the main character's hesitation to carry out her plan, is possibly a better parallel. In a long and splendid monologue (1021–80) Medea wavers in her resolution to kill her own children inside the house and follows them with these unequivocal words (1079f):

θυμὸϲ δὲ κρείϲϲων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,
ὅϲπερ μεγίϲτων αἴτιοϲ κακῶν βροτοῖϲ.

We feel convinced that when she reenters she will have killed her children, but after the choral song she comes back to get information about her other plot (1116ff). It is only after another lengthy scene that she exits to do the murder (1250). Phaedra, too, returns because there are other things on her mind besides her own death. She wishes to lecture the Nurse for what she has done and to tell about her resolve to wreak vengeance on her stepson.

There is one remark by Hippolytus which seems to speak in favour of the traditional view that Phaedra is present on stage during his abuse of the female sex. When he at a later stage, ignorant of Phaedra's treacherous tablets, faces his father and learns about Phaedra's death, he exclaims (905–08):

ἔα, τί χρῆμα; ϲὴν δάμαρθ' ὁρῶ, πάτερ,
νεκρόν· μεγίϲτου θαύματοϲ τόδ' ἄξιον·

ἣν ἀρτίωϲ ἔλειπον, ἣ φάοϲ τόδε
οὔπω χρόνον παλαιὸν εἰϲεδέρκετο.

This seems *prima facie* to imply that Hippolytus has just left Phaedra, and since no other meeting between the two occurs in the play, the scene we have discussed above must be the one Hippolytus has in mind. Smith argues convincingly, however, that Hippolytus' utterance is the "conventional response to the shock of seeing Phaedra dead." What takes up Hippolytus' interest here is the shortness of time since he saw Phaedra alive. Barrett claims (p.336) that Hippolytus uses the imperfect ἔλειπον because he is picturing to himself the moment when he left her on stage. But surely the two verbs in the imperfect tense in this paragraph, ἔλειπον and εἰϲεδέρκετο, both serve the purpose of stressing the fact that Phaedra was alive only a short time ago. Hippolytus is stunned by the sight of her dead body and expresses his consternation in a perfectly natural way: "It is not long since I used to see her; she was no long time ago looking on this light of day." I disagree with Smith, however, when he claims that Hippolytus, if he wanted to draw attention to a specific act of leaving, would have said ἀρτίωϲ λέλοιπα or ἔλειψα. If the aorist were the appropriate tense, it would have to be ἔλιπον; but the imperfect ἔλειπον would be the natural tense to use for a particular act of leaving. On the whole Hippolytus' statement is vague, and that is why it has been misinterpreted by so many critics. But this vagueness serves a structural purpose: it confirms Theseus in his suspicion that Hippolytus has made free with Phaedra.

I do not think that this speech (or any other of those discussed in this essay) has any weight as evidence that Phaedra is actually seen by Hippolytus during his conversation with the Nurse. And, needless to say, this speech can lend no support to the theory that Phaedra is present on stage without Hippolytus' being aware of it. I take it that Phaedra reenters the stage only after the Nurse, provoked by Hippolytus' violent attack on her, has sung the lament 669–79.

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