# 4

# THE ARTICULATION OF THE SELF IN EURIPIDES' *HIPPOLYTUS*

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In this chapter, I want to explore further a question which has been much discussed in recent years, that of the best way to bring out, in one's critical approach, the conceptions of character and personality implied in Greek tragedy.[1] The topic I shall focus on is that of 'the articulation of the self', as exemplified in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. In using this phrase, I have two related themes in view. One is the way in which, in this as in other Greek tragedies, certain speeches can be read as being reflexive, as expressing or even defining the 'self' of the speaker. (I shall consider later what makes us regard certain speeches as reflexive, and what kind of selfhood is expressed in this way.) The other is the way in which these self-expressive speeches contribute to a larger pattern of articulation, through which the play's central argument or dialectic is constructed. As this dialectic unfolds, it provides a framework of significance, within which we understand the reflexive stances of the figures and the kind of selfhood they articulate.[2] The critical approach I have outlined is one which could, I think, be applied to a wide variety of dramatic forms. But the *Hippolytus* lends itself with a special clarity to this type of approach. On the one hand, it contains a number of speeches which are, in a variety of ways, reflexive in style and which can plausibly be interpreted as expressions of the selfhood of the speaking figure. On the other hand, as has long been recognized, the play is organized (to an extent unusual among Greek tragedies) around a single issue, that of the nature of *sōphrosunē*;[3] and the self-expressive speeches I have in mind both contribute towards the articulation of that issue and are in turn placed in a context of significance by the play's central argument. I shall not be addressing directly the





themes of gender and eroticism that form the focus of this volume. But I hope it will become clear that there is a close relationship between the central figures' understanding of their selfhood and of their sexuality; and that both kinds of understanding need to be situated within the play's central dialectic if we are to appreciate their significance properly.

My interest in the idea of the 'articulation of the self' is not limited to its role as the organizing theme of a critical approach. I also want to raise the question whether this idea figured as part of the conceptual vocabulary of the culture from which the play derived. I shall suggest later in this essay that there is evidence, from a number of sources, which indicates that the Socratic technique of *elenchos* (intellectual cross-examination) was conceived as a process which involved the 'self-articulation', in a sense, of the participants. In particular, I see Plato's *Charmides* (treated here as a fictional recreation of Socratic *elenchos*) as strikingly analogous to the *Hippolytus*. In both cases, the exploration of the nature of *sōphrosunē* is conducted, in part, through self-reflexive comments on *sōphrosunē* by the participants; we appraise the quality of the comments (and of the people who utter them) in the light of the unfolding argument about *sōphrosunē* to which they contribute. My aim, in pointing out this analogy, is not to argue, as some have done, that the *Hippolytus* forms part of a debate about human psychology between Socrates and Euripides.[4] My aim is the more limited one of suggesting that the idea of the articulation of the self, or at least some version of this idea, may have formed part of the intellectual discourse of Athenian society at the time of the play's composition. If this is true, it gives an additional interest – and perhaps added validity – to the use of this idea as the focus of an interpretative approach to the play.

I will take up at a later stage the question of the possible connections between the *Hippolytus* and the intellectual concerns of the period. But I want to begin by considering an apparent objection to the kind of interpretative approach I have outlined. It is made in the course of a celebrated article by John Gould, in which he states his reservations about the interpretation of Greek tragic dialogue in terms of the expression of character, personality, or selfhood.[5] His general thesis is that in a Greek tragedy 'the play as whole [is] an image, a metaphor of the way things are, within human experience – not a literal enactment of

"the way people behave"' (p. 62). It is this total image or metaphor which is 'humanly intelligible'; and the fact that the play as a whole is intelligible does not entail that each episode or figure within the drama is intelligible in the same way as is an event or person in real life.[6] During his discussion, Gould refers to two episodes in the *Hippolytus*, the dialogue between Phaedra and the Nurse (267ff.) and that between Hippolytus and Theseus (902ff.), which are often interpreted in terms of the disclosure of the character and state of mind of the participants. He argues rather that, in so far as these scenes communicate an 'image of human personality', they do so in a way that is crucially informed by the stylistic modalities of the dialogue, and by the formal conventions of the dialogue-types: specifically, those of the *stichomythia* of persuasion with its distinctively probing, gladiatorial manner, and of the oration or *rhēsis*, as a vehicle of accusation, appeal, or self-justification.[7] Gould's comments develop A. M. Dale's well-known claims that the determining factors in Greek tragic dialogue are 'the trend of the action' and 'the rhetoric of the situation', rather than the desire to bring out the psychological motivation and individual style of the characters involved.[8] Gould here underlines an important and evident truth: when Phaedra, at 373ff., presents a disquisition on human weakness in a deliberated, antithetical style, it is unnecessary (and critically dubious) for us to reconstruct the motivation that 'will plausibly account for Phaedra's making *this* speech at *this* moment'.[9] Formalized speech-making of this type is as much a convention of the Greek tragic genre as is the soliloquy or aside in Shakespeare, or the 'flash-back' or 'voice over' in a film; these are all ways in which a fictional figure's thinking or memory can be communicated to the audience, and none of them requires us to ask why *this* convention is used at *this* moment in the work.[10]

None the less, I have some reservations about Gould's claims, for reasons similar to those given by Simon Goldhill.[11] For one thing, although Gould goes a long way towards recognizing that different models of personality are implied by literary works of different periods and types (as his comments on Eugene O'Neill bring out),[12] there is still a tendency for him to contrast 'form' and 'character', *tout court*, as dramatic considerations, as though he is presupposing a single, determinate conception of character, which he takes to be either present in, or absent from, a particular text. But, in fact, when we ask how important 'character' is in a





given text, we need to be quite clear about what kind of conception of character we have in view. The kind of conception that matters, I take it, is the one that seems to be implied by the work itself. Establishing exactly what this is, and distinguishing this from 'our' conception of character (in so far as we are clear about what this is) is no easy matter. But clearly one important indicator of the way in which the psychology of the person is conceived is the type of vocabulary used in Greek tragedy to designate the processes of thinking and feeling (that is, such terms as *psuchē, gnōmē, phroneō, phrontizō*, and so on). And Goldhill is surely right to emphasize (what scholars such as Knox and Winnington-Ingram have helped us to appreciate) that we need to study such vocabulary as it functions within the dramatic context, coloured by, and forming a medium for, the moral and emotional conflicts of the play.[13] This type of enquiry raises methodological problems of its own, because it cannot be easily detached from the interpretation of the play as a whole. But it has the merit of keeping before our minds the question of the kind of conception of personality implied by the text, and of focusing our attention on some of the material relevant to this question.

Also, exploring this material helps to bring out a point which is not confronted fully by Gould. Although he insists that we cannot 'detach [a dramatic figure] from ... the play's "world"', as articulated (in the case he considers) in 'the pervasive metaphorical colouring of the whole language of the play' (p. 60), he does not emphasize equally the extent to which dramatic character can contribute towards making up the play's 'world' or 'language'. Goldhill formulates this point by drawing on Roland Barthes' distinction between the 'language' of character and that of discourse (the latter term meaning, I take it, the work's central dialectic and shaping action). As Barthes puts it: 'these two views [those of character and discourse] ... support each other: a common sentence is produced which unexpectedly contains elements of various languages'. In this composite fictional language, *'The character and the discourse are each other's accomplices'*.[14] To put the point in the terms I used earlier, a play, as it proceeds, develops its own informing dialectic or argument, to which the various components of the play (character, language, physical action) contribute; and that dialectic increasingly forms a context of significance within which we understand the component elements of the play.

Let me try to apply this interpretative framework to the *Hippolytus*. It seems clear, as I noted earlier, that *sōphrosunē* is central to the informing dialectic of the play. Part of what this means is that we interpret the character of the dramatic figures in the light of what they say about *sōphrosunē*, and that we interpret what they say about *sōphrosunē* in the light of our impression of their character and of their understanding of what *sōphrosunē* consists in. In saying this, I am not suggesting that the play presupposes that *sōphrosunē* has a single, determinate meaning, which we can use as a normative reference-point by which to appraise the figures' understanding of the notion and in this way appraise their character. As Helen North's study shows, the term, *sōphrosunē*, together with its cognate verbal and adjectival forms, is conspicuously broad in meaning, in this and other periods;[15] and the play seems to explore and exploit this diversity of meaning.[16] There seem to be at least four senses involved: (i) (sexual) 'chastity' or 'purity'; (ii) 'virtue' in a slightly larger sense, though one that is sometimes difficult to distinguish sharply from that of 'chastity'; (iii) 'self-control', as shown in controlling desire or anger; and (iv) 'good sense' or practical wisdom, as shown in the successful management of one's life.[17] I do not think that this is a case of modern readers seeing a variety of senses in a term which would have had a single, uncomplicated meaning for the original Greek audience (although this is not to say that we can ever quite capture the feel that the term had for them, since no English term covers a similar range of meanings). Rather the drama *plays* on these differences, and does so in a way that critics have often found striking.

This is particularly clear in the case of two passages that the development of the action invites us to juxtapose, the end of Hippolytus' tirade against women and Phaedra's subsequent suicide-speech:

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

(667–8)

... ἵν' εἰδῇ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς
ὑψηλὸς εἶναι· τῆς νόσου δὲ τῆσδέ μοι
κοινῇ μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

(729–31)





'Let someone teach women to be *sōphrōn* or allow me to go on trampling them down for ever' '... to make him realize that he shouldn't view my troubles with disdain; by sharing in this sickness of mine, he shall learn to be *sōphrōn*.' By *sōphronein*, Hippolytus seems to mean 'to be chaste' or, perhaps better, 'virtuous' (taking the English term in the slightly archaic sense of 'sexually proper', as in the phrase, 'a virtuous wife'). He presumably has in mind the kind of person who does not have illicit sexual desires rather than one who has them but keeps them under control.[18] Phaedra, on the other hand, in a clear echo of Hippolytus' phraseology, uses *sōphronein* rather to signify that Hippolytus should 'control himself', by moderating his feelings of anger and disdain. Hippolytus is to be made to unlearn his contempt for those in trouble (*kakois*), and, by sharing her 'disease' (the disgrace accruing from illicit sexual desire), learn to be more 'humane', which is perhaps another shade of meaning she attaches to *sōphronein*. Her usage of the term not only echoes the earlier one but, in effect, comments on it, colouring in retrospect our understanding of Hippolytus' usage and the attitude which it expresses.[19]

This process of accretion of meaning continues with the striking couplet that closes Hippolytus' speech of self-defence to Theseus:

ἐσωφρόνησε δ' οὐκ ἔχουσα σωφρονεῖν,
ἡμεῖς δ' ἔχοντες οὐ καλῶς ἐχρώμεθα.

(1034–5)

'She performed a *sōphrōn* act, although she wasn't *sōphrōn;* I am *sōphrōn*, but I haven't used this virtue well.' The lines resonate beyond their immediate context, and we are disposed to interpret them in the light both of what we take Hippolytus to mean, and of the unfolding dialectic of the play. Hippolytus seems to mean that Phaedra acted virtuously in killing herself, although – or, in a different way, because – she was not a virtuous person, in the sense of having chaste desires.[20] He, on the other hand, is *sōphrōn* because he has chaste desires, and also perhaps because he is showing self-control in not breaking his oath;[21] but he has gained no advantage, and has in fact been disadvantaged, by his possession of this quality.[22] At the same time, however, we may interpret his words in a rather different sense, and with a rather different valuation of the people

concerned. When Hippolytus utters the paradoxical line 1034, we may think rather of the inner conflict Phaedra describes, in her monologue to the chorus, between her illicit sexual desire and her longing to be, as well as to seem, virtuous.[23] Also, after Phaedra's insistence that Hippolytus needs rather to *learn* to be *sōphrōn* – and after his violent and undiscriminating condemnation of women, which Phaedra might well take as showing an absence of *sōphrosunē* ('self-control' or 'humanity') – we may want to question his confidence, often reiterated elsewhere, that he is *sōphrōn*. Alternatively, we may want to say (like him, though in a different sense) that, *if* he has this quality, he has not used it 'well' (*kalōs*).[24] But I do not think that the passage disposes us to *replace* Hippolytus' meaning, or meanings, with the additional one we supply; much of the resonance of the lines derives from the fact that we recognize these different possible meanings and also recognize, from a certain point of view, their validity. Nor do I think that the play as a whole moves towards establishing any one sense of the term as superordinate or all-inclusive, any more than the play as a whole legitimates a single moral perspective from which to judge the figures as being (in some definitive sense) *sōphrōn* or not *sōphrōn*.[25] Rather, the resonant ambivalence of the lines contributes to the whole nexus of ambiguities, misunderstandings, and dislocations, of which the play's informing dialectic and ethos is made up.

In fact, I think this couplet forms one of a whole complex of passages which, through recurrent phrase-patterns, help to make up the play's distinctive character. The most common pattern is one which denotes a dislocation between outer act (or word) and inner mental state, or between underlying character or capacity and action (or impulse) in a given situation. The most famous examples of this pattern are these:

χεῖρες μὲν ἁγναί, φρὴν δ' ἔχει μίασμά τι
(317)

'My hands are pure, but my mind has a kind of pollution.'

ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.
(612)

'My tongue swore, but my mind is unsworn.' But these lines form part of a larger family of such antitheses:





... φρονεῖς μὲν εὖ, φρονοῦσα δ' οὐ θέλεις
παῖδάς τ' ὀνῆσαι ....
(313–14)

'You are sane; but, sane as you are, you don't seem to want to help your children.'

οἱ σώφρονες γάρ, οὐχ ἑκόντες ἀλλ' ὅμως,
κακῶν ἐρῶσι.
(358–9)

'Those who are *sōphrōn* [virtuous?] desire what is bad, although they don't want to.'

τὰ χρήστ' ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν,
οὐκ ἐκπονοῦμεν δ'. ...
(380–1)

'We know and understand what is good, but we don't put this into practice.'

πόσους δοκεῖς δὴ κάρτ' ἔχοντας εὖ φρενῶν
νοσοῦνθ' ὁρῶντας λέκτρα μὴ δοκεῖν ὁρᾶν;
(462–3)

'How many men do you think there are who, though they're no fools, seem not to see the sickness in their marriage-beds?'

νοσοῦσα δ' εὖ πως τὴν νόσον καταστρέφου.
(477)

'Sick though you are, make your sickness work out well.'[26]

... θηρεύουσι γὰρ
σεμνοῖς λόγοισιν, αἰσχρὰ μηχανώμενοι.
(956–7)

'They go hunting, with fine words and vile plans.'

In a related pattern, we find the characterization of an action being radically qualified:

φίλως, καλῶς δ' οὐ τήνδ' ἰωμένη νόσον.
(597)

'Her attempt to cure this sickness was kindly meant but wrong.'

ὅλοιο καὶ σὺ χὥστις ἄκοντας φίλους
πρόθυμός ἐστι μὴ καλῶς εὐεργετεῖν.

(693–4)

'A curse on you and on anyone else who wants to do wrong to help friends against their will.'[27] Relatedly, we find phrases which contrast a figure's character with what they suffer; here are two, linked, examples (the latter also containing a qualified characterization):

ἡ δ' εὐκλεὴς μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀπόλλυται
Φαίδρα·

(47–8)

'Phaedra will keep her honour intact but die.'

... ὡς ὑπ' εὐκλείας θάνῃ,
καὶ σῆς γυναικὸς οἶστρον ἢ τρόπον τινὰ
γενναιότητα·

(1299–1301)

'... so that he [Hippolytus] can die in honour, and [to reveal] your wife's maddening sting of lust, or, in a way, her nobility.'

These lines are interconnected by a number of verbal and thematic links, as well as by a recurrently antithetical, or at least qualifying, phrase-pattern.[28] They are also related to other passages, which convey similar dislocations in rather different verbal forms.[29] These lines are not, of course, to be treated as representing 'the voice of the author'; they are allocated to specific figures in specific dramatic contexts, and form an integral part of the dialogue. None the less, these lines play a special role in formulating the ethos of the play; in particular, the haunting repetition of antithetical phrase-patterns underlines the kind of dislocations articulated in the lines. Central to this ethos is the dislocation between character and action, or speech, and the related difficulty in giving a single, definitive characterization of actions, persons, or indeed of qualities (such as *sōphrosunē*). As a number of critics have emphasized, the mutual destruction which occurs in the play is not the result of an open and unambiguous confrontation between figures with radically opposed characters and ethical standpoints. Rather it is one in which various kinds of misunderstanding and miscommunication render the motives and characters of the central figures obscure to each other (and in this sense obscure the





connection between character and action or word). In particular, at the heart of the play (and of its tragic quality) is the fact that Hippolytus and Phaedra largely fail to communicate to each other, or to others, the way in which they are both powerfully motivated by (versions of) the ideal of *sōphrosunē*, a failure which contributes crucially towards their destroying each other and themselves.[30] At the same time, there are significant differences between the views of *sōphrosunē* held by the different figures; and these differences are reflected in the divergent styles with which they express (or conceal) themselves. Some of the miscommunication derives from their divergent understanding of what *sōphrosunē* involves; and, in this sense, the play contains an 'argument' about the nature of *sōphrosunē*. But this is not an argument which anyone wins; no single view of *sōphrosunē* is validated by the complex causation and the outcome of the action. In this sense, the dramatic dialectic – like many Socratic arguments – is 'aporetic'.[31] Hence, as the recurrent phrase-patterns suggest, the tragic events result not only from the failure of the figures to articulate their *sōphrosunē* effectively but also from the ambivalence or indeterminacy of the quality itself.[32]

It is against this background of the play's informing ethos and dialectic that I want to place my study of the figures' self-articulation. The kind of 'selfhood' I am concerned with is one manifested in the figures' statements about themselves, and in their styles of discourse and gesture, when these are self-reflexive in character. In this drama such manifestations of selfhood are intimately connected with the figures' understanding of *sōphrosunē*, at least as far as Hippolytus, Phaedra, and the Nurse are concerned; and the self-understanding of these three figures is closely interlocked within the overall dialectical web of the drama.[33] The Nurse, as I shall suggest, sees herself essentially as an adjunct of Phaedra's existence, while her view of *sōphrosunē* constitutes a parasitic inversion of that of her mistress. Phaedra, on the other hand, sees herself as, in a sense, a 'failed' version of Hippolytus, as far as *sōphrosunē* is concerned. Thus, Hippolytus' view of himself, and of his *sōphrosunē*, forms the radiating centre for a nexus of forms of self-understanding. These features come out most plainly in two key speeches, Phaedra's account of her response to her passion (391–430) and Hippolytus' speech of defence to Theseus (esp. 991–1006, taken in conjunction with

1070–81), which I shall examine closely. But I want to begin by discussing in more general terms the interconnections between the self-understanding of these three figures.

Early in the play, we are given an image of Hippolytus' view of himself which remains valid throughout the play. He enters, a young man in hunting dress, surrounded by a group of admiring friends,[34] and, in a significant gesture, presents Artemis with a freshly picked garland, which he regards as a symbol both of his own chastity and of his special devotion to the huntress-goddess. The garland has been plucked from a 'virgin' meadow, cultivated only by *aidōs* ('shame' or 'reverence') with pure river water. The right to pluck such a garland belongs only to 'those for whom being *sōphrōn* is not a learned quality, but one which has been assigned as part of their nature in every respect for ever'.[35] Hippolytus thus presents *sōphrosunē* as a fundamental part of his nature, as something 'assigned' or 'given' to him (*eilēchen*), innate perhaps, but also, in principle, a lifelong property.[36] He also sees it as a property that is peculiarly, if not exclusively, *his*, and one which presumably underlies the privileged relationship he has with Artemis.[37] But he does not therefore take this property for granted, as being simply an intuitive response; nor does he maintain a reticent silence about it, as being something uniquely private or personal. The gesture of giving the garland and the associated presentation of himself as an exceptional devotee constitute an act of public self-display, just as does his conspicuous refusal to make any equivalent gesture to Aphrodite.[38] This stance is characteristic of Hippolytus throughout the play; his dialogue (as we shall see) is recurrently self-presenting, and the 'self' he presents is one which is peculiarly and exceptionally *sōphrōn*, that is, 'chaste', 'pure', and, in certain senses, 'virtuous', as in this opening scene.

Phaedra is also very much concerned with the public manifestation of herself as virtuous (and is very anxious to avoid presenting herself as 'base' or 'disgraceful'). Her statement of this concern (in the *rhēsis* to be discussed later) elicits from the chorus an expression of admiration for the 'fineness' of *to sōphron*, as being that which 'enjoys the fruit' (*karpizetai*) of a 'noble reputation' (*doxē esthlē*).[39] To this extent, her aspirations are similar to those of Hippolytus, allowing for the difference in the kind of *sōphrosunē*, and the kind of self-display, that is proper for a 'virtuous' wife and mother.[40] But her aspirations are





frustrated and fail because, in the first instance, of the overpowering sexual urge that makes it impossible for her to say, as Hippolytus does, that *to sōphronein* (in the sense of 'chastity') is an integral and permanent part of her 'nature'. Hence, she is conscious of having within herself 'a kind of pollution' or 'sickness'; or, to put it more exactly, she is conscious of an inner conflict between 'herself' (conceived as the would-be virtuous wife) and the alien force or 'other' within her, the 'madness' or 'goddess' (*Kupris*) that is operating on her.[41] Her characteristic style in the drama is not, therefore, like that of Hippolytus, that of self-display (except in the special context of the self-revealing *rhēsis*, 391ff.), but rather that of concealment, 'covering up', and silence, modified, by the Nurse's pressure, into obliqueness and partial disclosure, then to a not wholly disallowed communication, and finally to a (written) lie that 'shouts' in order to suppress the truth about herself.[42]

Phaedra thus sees herself as an aspiring, and in the end a failed, version of Hippolytus, as regards their shared objective of being – and being seen to be – *sōphrōn*; and this fact seems to underlie her eventual hatred of him and also, perhaps, her passionate desire for him. Her last words (that he is to 'share her disease' and 'learn not to be disdainful of [her] troubles') respond to his gloating anticipation of her future covert disgrace, and express a wish to dislodge him from the stance of self-manifesting virtue she feels she can no longer share.[43] In her first appearance on stage, she expresses in lyrics her 'mad', transgressive desire to lead the kind of life that Hippolytus regards as constitutive of his *sōphrosunē*, the life of openness and visibility, purity and simplicity. And it may be that, as Froma Zeitlin suggests, we are to see her lust as taking the form of the desire to *be* Hippolytus rather than simply to be *with* him.[44] Perhaps this last inference presses psychologizing beyond what the text can bear.[45] But, in general, it is clearly central to the drama that, for both Hippolytus and Phaedra, their conceptions of *sōphrosunē* and of themselves are locked together in a close, intense way that, paradoxically, contributes to their mutual destruction.

If Phaedra's conception of herself is, in this respect, derivative of Hippolytus', the Nurse's is still more obviously derivative, and yet subversive, of Phaedra's. Early in the play, the Nurse presents herself as an adjunct to Phaedra, bound up in a painful

but inescapable way with her mistress's continued existence.[46] Her subsequent adoption of priorities which are the reverse of Phaedra's (that is, trying to save her mistress's life at the expense of her honour)[47] is consistent with this presentation of herself. In working for this end, she not only tries to counter Phaedra's ethical stance with her own, antithetical stance, but also tries to subvert Phaedra's ethical position from the inside, so to speak, by skilful modification and inversion. Thus, in her response to Phaedra's *rhēsis*, she accentuates Phaedra's emphasis on 'keeping up appearances' (in spite of the onset of unchaste desire) and transforms it into a policy of systematic duplicity and covert self-gratification, rephrasing some of Phaedra's speech for the purpose.[48] Here and elsewhere she appropriates terms such as 'sensible', 'clever', and indeed *sōphrōn*, to commend such a policy;[49] although she is also capable of using *sōphrōn* in a way more calculated to appeal to Phaedra (meaning 'virtuous', or 'having chaste desires') in order to undermine the other's attempt to exercise *sōphrosunē* in the sense of 'self-control'.[50]

Her struggle with Phaedra is thus, in a sense, a struggle *within* Phaedra, and constitutes part of the latter's unsuccessful attempt to maintain her chosen course of action and ethical stance.[51] This struggle, which is in large measure about what is and is not to be made explicit, is also embodied in the relationship between their modes of articulation. While their characteristic styles are sharply contrasted (the Nurse's brutal explicitness confronting Phaedra's reticence and obliqueness), Phaedra twice half-allows the Nurse to act as her vehicle of disavowed explication.[52] It is one of the central paradoxes of the play that it is the Nurse's version of Phaedra's ethical stance to which Hippolytus is exposed through the Nurse's blunt, half-licensed explication,[53] that is, the version in which the points of contact between his ethic and Phaedra's are quite obscured. It is this exposure which triggers Hippolytus' violent tirade against women, which triggers in turn both Phaedra's criticism of his 'intemperance' and the counter-violence and 'shouting' of her lying death-note.[54] In this complex sequence of events, the three figures become so closely interlocked that what is said or done represents the result of their interaction (and of the misunderstandings and mis-communication in that interaction) rather than being a direct expression of the free choice and ethical stance of any one figure. This complexity represents on the level of plot the kind





of paradox and dislocation I noted in the recurrent phrase-patterns of the play, notably those relating to the gap between character and word (or action), and between inner state and outward expression.

Within this larger pattern, I want to focus on parts of two speeches by Phaedra and Hippolytus (391ff. and 991ff.) in which we find with especial clarity the articulation of the kind of selfhood that is relevant to this dramatic nexus. In form, both speeches are *apologiai*, statements of self-defence, and have a tone of insistent self-justification; correspondingly, they constitute an assertion of the speaker's view of her or his moral character and conduct. Phaedra's speech, as has often been noted, articulates an ethical world-view in which the highest priority is given to the achievement of *eukleia* ('good name') and the avoidance of *duskleia* ('disgrace') for oneself and one's family.[55] This is, in a sense, a derivative or second-hand ethic, since it gives ultimate importance to what others believe; and this aspect of her ethic is underlined in the speech in a variety of ways. It comes out, for instance, in an emphatic couplet:

> ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ
> μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.
>
> (403–4)

'I would not want my fine actions to pass unnoticed or my shameful ones to have many witnesses'; in her repeated stress on being silent about, or concealing, her illicit desires, and on her fear 'of being caught out disgracing my husband';[56] and, above all, in the compelling image of her nightmare, that of being 'seen' in the mirror of time which 'reveals those among men who are bad' (428–30). This last image, especially, encapsulates the second-order, 'reflected', quality of her ethical concern, which is, as some critics suggest, very much that of a woman who wants to fulfil her role in a world whose order is established by male authority.[57]

However, it is important, and not altogether easy, to define Phaedra's ethical stance exactly. Phaedra does not *only* want to 'keep up appearances' (regardless of what underlies those appearances); she dissociates herself emphatically from the hypocritical wives (τὰς σώφρονας μὲν ἐν λόγοις, 'virtuous only in words', 413) who live in this way. It is her heartfelt wish to *be* the kind of person whom others will properly regard as a 'virtuous'

wife; she genuinely wants to meet the standards society sets for her.[58] Hence, as she tells us, she has attempted to conquer her illicit desire by *sōphronein* (presumably meaning 'self-control', that is, *trying* to be virtuous, 398–9). Her indignation against those who seek to subvert the standards she respects (the 'nobles' to whom 'disgraceful things seem fine') is emphatic, and is one of a number of strongly personal judgements she makes about the importance of maintaining social standards.[59] Relatedly, in her account of her response to her passion, she consistently identifies 'herself' (through first-personal verb-forms, for instance) with the virtuous woman who resists the passion, or at least who makes decisions in the consciousness that she cannot resist it. The passion itself, by contrast, is not presented as being 'her', or even 'hers', but as an external force, an 'other': it is something that 'wounds' her, a 'sickness', 'folly', or 'the goddess of love' (*Kupris*).[60] There is an inherent instability in this stance, in that Phaedra defines herself in a way that completely excludes something (her passion) that is clearly, in some sense, part of her; and, later in the play, this instability becomes explicit.[61] But in this speech, at any rate, Phaedra maintains consistently a certain mode of self-presentation, identifying 'herself' with the person who acts 'virtuously' and in line with what society expects.[62]

In the case of Hippolytus, we can find comparable passages of self-articulation in the first part of his speech of defence to Theseus and in the subsequent dialogue ( 991ff. and 1070ff.). Although, as Gould points out, these speeches are informed by rhetorical strategies (and by 'the rhetoric of the situation'),[63] this does not mean that they do not also constitute a means of self-articulation by Hippolytus. Indeed, Hippolytus' understanding of his own *sōphrosunē* is an essential part of the play's central dialectic, and thus of the situation generated by the dialectic at the point in the play. Also, Hippolytus' picture of himself in these speeches, together with the style of his self-presentation, is very much in line with what we find elsewhere in the play. Whereas for Phaedra *sōphrosunē* is associated especially with keeping up appearances (though also with maintaining the standards of conduct that 'appearances' require), for Hippolytus *sōphrosunē* is conceived as something which derives from his own nature rather than from an attempt to meet social standards. His *sōphrosunē* is expressed in his relationships (with gods, *philoi*, etc.,





996ff.), and especially in the consistency with which he maintains these relationships ('I am the same person to my friends whether they are present or absent').[64] But what underlies that consistency is not simply the desire to achieve accepted standards of conduct but an 'innate' or 'integral' *sōphrosunē*,[65] and an 'inner' purity that renders him immune from the impulses other men need to resist. Responding to the accusation of rape, he insists not only on the purity of his body (which is all the case really requires) but also on the purity of his inclinations. He has no desire even to see representations of the sexual act, let alone to perform it, because he has a 'virgin mind' (*parthenon psuchēn*, 1006).

This is the strongest point of contrast between Hippolytus' self-presentation and Phaedra's. There is no tension between 'him' and his passion; his deepest desire is to act in accordance with his ethical ideal.[66] But his insistence on the innerness of his *sōphrosunē* does not prevent him from wishing, like Phaedra, to make a public display of his *sōphrosunē*. Of course, the immediate context of his speech goes some way towards explaining this wish; since he is accused of an unchaste act, he needs to show others that he is chaste. But does this need alone explain his claim that, in the whole wide world (indicated with a cosmic gesture – 'you see this sun and earth'), 'there is *nobody* more *sōphrōn* than me' (993–5)? Significantly, the worst fate he can envisage, if he is proved to be 'bad by nature', is that he should die 'without fame or name' (*akleēs anōnumos*), utterly unnoticed (1028–31). Again, in the subsequent dialogue with Theseus, what gives him most pain is the thought that 'I seem evil and am supposed to be such by you'.[67] It is the pain of misrecognition that prompts two wishes (which are both, in different ways, reminiscent of Phaedra's phraseology): that the house itself could speak and bear witness of his innocence, and that he could 'stand opposite and look at [himself]', so as to act as a fellow-mourner for his troubles. The echoes of Phaedra's lines partly serve to underline the differences between them: Phaedra lives in dread of what the house might utter and of the prospect of seeing herself caught in the 'mirror' of public censure, while Hippolytus positively wants the house to tell its secrets and longs for another self to 'reflect' his grief (which is largely the grief of someone who is not properly reflected in the 'mirror' of public appraisal).[68] At the same time, however, the echoes underline

their shared preoccupation with the confirmation, through public 'reflection', of their view of themselves as *sōphrōn*.[69] Like Phaedra, and in some ways still more emphatically, Hippolytus wants both to *be sōphrōn* (as he understands this) and to *be seen* as such; he wants not only to have 'inner' *sōphrosunē* but also to exhibit this innerness in the public domain, and the display, as well as the innerness, seems integral to his understanding of himself.[70]

In my reading of these passages, I have tried to emphasize how the speeches function as a means of self-articulation by the figures concerned, and also to show how the 'selves' thus articulated fit into the play's larger dialectic, its exploration of the nature of *sōphrosunē*, and of the way in which *sōphrosunē* is – and is not – communicated. In the remainder of this chapter, I want to reflect further on the significance of these passages within the play as a whole, and also to consider in more general terms the kind of self-articulation contained in these passages. For both these purposes, I want to draw on some intellectual texts of the period, which can help us both to define the central emphases of the speeches, and to analyse the kind of self-articulation they embody.

My reading of these passages suggests not only that it is a matter of importance, for both figures, to communicate their *sōphrosunē*, but also that *sōphrosunē*, as they understand this, depends in a quite crucial way on such communication. For Phaedra, clearly, *sōphrosunē* consists in acting in a way that manifests to one's society the fact (and it is important that it *is* a fact) that one is meeting social standards of virtuous conduct. For Hippolytus also, despite his emphasis on the 'inner' and 'natural' quality of his *sōphrosunē*, the public expression of the quality is seen as an integral part of its possession, and one whose deprivation causes deep distress. The attitudes embodied in these speeches intersect with a number of central themes of intellectual debate of the time, in so far as we can reconstruct this, including the question whether a virtue such as *sōphrosunē* depends on nature (*phusis*) or on the kind of teaching and habituation that ensures conformity with the laws or conventions (*nomoi*) of society.[71] They relate especially to a question discussed in a number of fifth-century texts, whether (as Antiphon puts it) one should act in the same way when alone and unobserved as when one acts with witnesses, and thus risks





'disgrace and punishment'; that is, whether what is just by nature is the same as what is just according to the laws of society, which purports to govern the whole range of one's actions and desires.[72] Democritus' view on this question is that 'one should not feel more shame before other men than before oneself', and that such 'self-respect' should be established 'as a law (*nomos*) for one's *psuchē*'.[73] The ethical stances, and personal styles, of the central figures in this play can plausibly be placed within this debate. Phaedra's assumption that a virtue such as *sōphrosunē* depends on the sanction of public opinion, and Hippolytus' assumption that it depends rather on one's own inner nature, but that this 'innerness' merits the reward of public recognition, can thus be situated within a framework of ethical thinking that goes beyond the play itself.

However, in placing the attitudes adopted by the central figures in this wider context of significance, it is important not to lose contact with the informing ethos of the play itself. If we were to follow through the implications of some of the ideas of the period (especially, Democritus' stress on the importance of 'self-respect'), we might be inclined to read the play as containing a critique of Phaedra's second-order ethic. In such a reading the eventual decision to destroy Hippolytus by her lying accusation in order to save her own reputation and that of her children might be taken as a natural consequence, and an implied criticism, of this ethic. Hippolytus' more self-related ethic might, in such a reading, emerge as morally preferable; and the fact that he keeps his oath not to reveal Phaedra's passion, even at the cost of his own life, might be taken as indicating his moral superiority.[74] Such a reading has its attractions; but there are also serious objections to it. For one thing, any attempt to draw a sharp contrast between their two ethics needs to be qualified by the fact noted earlier of Phaedra's strongly personal commitment to her ethic of social conformity, and by Hippolytus' desire for social recognition of his personal ethical stance.[75]

More importantly, this type of reading seems to cut across one of the informing themes of the play, articulated in its plot as well as in recurrent phrase-patterns: namely the dislocation between character and act or word brought about through miscommunication and misunderstanding. Consistent with this theme is the fact that Phaedra's 'shame ethic' only issues in her lying death-note as a result of a tangled web of circumstances, to which

the Nurse's misrepresentation of Phaedra's state of mind and Hippolytus' misguided response also make crucial contributions. To say that the final avenging Phaedra is not the same person as the earlier Phaedra (the Phaedra who is preoccupied with her own *sōphrosunē*) would be to go too far.[76] But it is true, none the less, that her revenge is not presented as the predictable reaction of that earlier figure, but as one in which her character (as disclosed in the monologue of 373ff.) is only partly reflected. Similar considerations might also apply in the case of Hippolytus. I suggested earlier that he could be judged (by the standards of Democritus' ethic of 'self-respect') as morally superior to Phaedra. But if one applied those standards more strictly, one might be inclined to see in his persistent desire for public recognition of his purity an indication that his ethic is less 'inner' and more socially grounded than it seems. And one might go on to see in his undiscriminating denunciation of women (616ff.), and his gloating anticipation of Phaedra's future discomfort (659–62), evidence of an underlying weakness in his moral character and understanding. The speech might be taken as showing that for Hippolytus it is not enough simply to *be sōphrōn* (by his standards); he has to *dramatize* his *sōphrosunē* by rhetorical self-dissociation from those who lack it and by underlining his stance as a morally superior observer of others' faults. Perhaps there is something in this suggestion; but it is important also to note that the speech is marked, among Hippolytus' utterances, by its generalizing crudeness and personal viciousness, and that the context invites us to take it as the passionate, even hysterical, response of a man in a state of shock.[77]

In other words, the play is not so shaped as to show how certain types of defective character and attitude naturally generate disastrous consequences for themselves and others. Rather it underlines, through the central action and the recurrent phrase-patterns, the paradoxical and unpredictable way in which these figures' commitment to *sōphrosunē* (as they understand this notion) contributes to their mutual destruction. Also, the *Hippolytus*, like other Greek tragedies, does not invite us only to appraise its figures and their ethical positions, but also to engage with them sympathetically, even when we have reservations about those positions.[78] Correspondingly, a reading which places the figures too firmly in a moral schema, especially one based on ethical statements drawn from outside the play, runs





the risk of misrepresenting the ethos of the play, which is at once distinctive and characteristic of the tragic genre in its emphasis on the paradoxes and moral ambiguities of human existence.[79]

The kind of self-articulation we find in the play (and also the kind of ethical 'statement' the play makes through such self-articulation) can be defined further by reference to another contemporary intellectual project, that of the Socratic *elenchos*, as exemplified in Plato's *Charmides*. Any reconstruction of the methods of the historical Socrates is necessarily conjectural; but I want to give special prominence to those passages in the Platonic dialogues where the Socratic *elenchos* is presented as an investigation of the interlocutor's mind (parallel to a medical investigation of his body), in which he is invited to 'examine himself' and to 'give an account of himself'. Typically, the interlocutor is asked to state his understanding of a given virtue (one which he can reasonably be supposed to possess) and in this way to put 'himself' into words in a way which enables Socrates to examine his understanding of the virtue in question.[80] Eric Havelock has argued persuasively that it is this aspect of the Socratic project which is the object of comic parody in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, especially in the *'encouchement'* or 'bed-bug' scene; and that this feature of Socratic method was therefore taken by Aristophanes to be one which Athenian audiences in the 420s BC would find recognizable and a source of amusement.[81]

If we accept the implications of this type of evidence, it follows that the response to the Socratic *elenchos* involves a kind of 'articulation of the self'; and, although the process involved is, on the face of it, a purely intellectual one (one is asked to define a given virtue, for instance), it is also clear that the process is thought to reveal the 'self' in a relatively broad sense. As Nicias puts it in the *Laches*, once someone starts a dialogue with Socrates, he cannot stop 'being dragged around in argument' until he has been forced to 'give an account of himself (*didonai peri hautou logon*), of how he lives now and how he has lived his life so far' (187e9–188a2). It seems clear in the *Charmides*, for instance, that the kind of definition offered of the virtue in question is intended to disclose the character of the interlocutor, and to indicate the depth or shallowness of his understanding of the virtue. Thus, the definitions offered by Charmides ('doing everything in a quiet and orderly manner' and 'being ashamed') are clearly meant to reflect his immature, 'good boy',

understanding of the virtue. Similarly, Critias' attempts at definition, together with some of the dramatic by-play of the dialogue, seem designed to reflect his aristocratic (not to say, snobbish) apprehension of it, as well as his rather shallow pretensions to intellectual sophistication.[82] Thus, in the *Charmides* as well as the *Hippolytus*, the process of self-articulation is conducted in a way that involves different styles of reflexiveness: Charmides' diffident modesty (as evidenced by his reply to whether or not he possesses *sōphrosunē*) is implicitly contrasted with Critias' ostentatious, but shallow, self-confidence.[83] Indeed, the extent to which the Socratic method, as recreated in such works as the *Charmides* and *Clouds*, shares with the *Hippolytus* an interest in self-articulation through dialogue (embodied in the content as well as the style of reflexive utterance) may suggest that the idea of 'the articulation of the self' played an unusually prominent role in the thought-world of the period.

I think it is worth pursuing the question of the similarities and dissimilarities between the *Hippolytus* and *Charmides*, in order to define with greater precision the kind of self-articulation we find in Euripides' play, and the way in which this fits in with the 'dialectic' of the work as a whole. As my comments indicate, a Platonic dialogue such as the *Charmides* has something of the atmosphere of a pre-Menandrian 'ethical' comedy, in which we feel relatively confident in appraising the character of the figures (as being modest, boastful, and so on).[84] Also, the unfolding dialectic gives us some degree of confidence in appraising the figures' definitions of *sōphrosunē* and, relatedly, in appraising the depth and shallowness of thinking that underlies these. In the *Hippolytus*, this is true only in a much more qualified way. It is true, as I have already suggested, that the unfolding dialectic of the work invites us to 'place' the figures (as regards their understanding of *sōphrosunē*) in a larger ethical framework, and also to feel reservations, of various kinds, about the quality of their understanding.[85] But it is also true, as I have argued, that any inclination to arrive at a definitive, unequivocal set of judgements on the figures is counteracted by the paradoxical and ambivalent ethos of the play and by the sympathetic engagement established between audience and central figures.[86] These factors make it difficult to (so to speak) 'discard' any of the figures from our concerns (and difficult also to discard their ethical stances and reflexive styles), regardless of the





reservations we feel about these; whereas in the *Charmides* we have more confidence in doing so.[87]

However, it is important not to overstate the differences between the two works in this respect. Although the *Charmides*, as its argument unfolds, invites us to discard the formulations of *sōphrosunē* offered by the interlocutors, it does not proceed to offer a definitive formulation of the virtue; it is thus, like most early (and some late) Platonic dialogues, aporetic in character. The aporetic character of this dialogue, as of other Socratic dialogues, is sometimes taken to be purely formal; and it is often supposed that a solution to the difficulties is implied in the argument (namely, the Socratic paradox that virtue is knowledge).[88] It is true, of course, that the argument gives a special status to certain lines of enquiry (in this dialogue to the idea that *sōphrosunē* consists in knowing what one does and does not know); but this line of enquiry, like the others, is inconclusive and is, I think, genuinely unconcluded.[89] The Socratic project, in other words, is to *press* the argument, and to explore its problematical and paradoxical implications; indeed, the so-called Socratic 'doctrines' are, arguably, to be understood as means to advance such a procedure.[90] To defend this claim fully would take me outside the scope of this chapter; but it is worth stating it in order to bring out a further respect in which Euripides' play may reflect its contemporary milieu.[91] While both the *Hippolytus* and the *Charmides* explore the nature of *sōphrosunē*, and do so through the presentation of different modes of self-articulation (and different understandings of the 'self' so articulated), neither work attempts to present a definitive model of *sōphrosunē* or of the ideal self; and, in this respect, both works (if we can take the *Charmides* as exemplary of Socratic method) may be representative of one side at least of intellectual debate in the late fifth century.[92]

## NOTES

1 I also contribute to this debate in 'The question of character and personality in Greek tragedy', *Poetics Today* 7:2 (1986), pp. 251–73, 'The character/personality distinction', in C. B. R. Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 1–31, and in a forthcoming book on *Character, Personality, and the Self: A Study in Greek Literature and Philosophy*.

2 The relationship between selfhood and articulation is one I also pursue in 'Two monologues of self-division: Euripides, *Medea* 1021–80 and Seneca, *Medea* 893–977', in M. Whitby, M. Whitby, and P. Hardie (eds), *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Bristol, 1987), pp. 25–37, and in 'Snell, Adkins, and the Greek concept of the person', an unpublished paper given to the Hellenic Society in London, 1988.

3 On the connotations of this untranslatable term, pp. 80–2.

4 See, most recently, T. H. Irwin, 'Euripides and Socrates', *CP* 78 (1983), pp. 183–97, with references to earlier discussions.

5 John Gould, 'Dramatic character and "human intelligibility" in Greek tragedy', *PCPhS* 24 (1978), pp. 43–67.

6 The assumption, which Gould seems to make, that we do *not* encounter similar problems in interpreting people in real life, has now been usefully questioned by P. Easterling, 'Constructing character in Greek tragedy', in Pelling (n.1) pp. 84–7. As she points out, referring especially to E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), our understanding of people in real life depends on the interpretative 'frame' in which we place them, and on the extent to which the conventions of their discourse are ones which make them 'intelligible' to us.

7 Gould (n.5), pp. 54–8.

8 Euripides, *Alcestis*, ed. A. M. Dale (Oxford, 1954), pp. xxiv–xxix, and *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 139–55.

9 Gould (n.5), p. 56; Gould compares the equally rhetorical pronouncements of Medea in E. *Med.* 214ff.

10 On the relationship between cinematic and literary conventions of narrative, cf. S. Chatman, 'Characters and narrators', *Poetics Today* 7:2 (1986), pp. 189–204.

11 S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1986), hereafter *RGT*, pp. 172ff.; cf. 'Goldhill on molehills', *LCM* 11:10 (December 1986), pp. 163–7, and 'Character and action: representation and reading', in Pelling (n.1).

12 Gould (n.5), pp. 44–6.

13 Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 175ff.; cf. B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Berkeley, Calif., 1964), chs 1 and 2, and R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1980), esp. ch. 2. It is a defect of studies of individual psychological terms (even a meticulous study such as D. B. Claus, *Toward the Soul: An Inquiry into the Meaning of 'Psyche' before Plato* (New Haven, Conn., 1981), or of groups of terms studied in isolation from the drama (such as T. B. L. Webster, 'Some psychological terms in Greek tragedy', *JHS* 77 (1957), pp. 149–54), that the importance of the dramatic context is not fully brought out.

14 Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 173–4, citing R. Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller (London, 1975), p. 178.

15 H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-knowledge and Self-restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, NY, 1966).





16 As does Sophocles' *Ajax*; cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 193ff.

17 To allocate these different senses to specific usages is to risk effacing the important ambiguities of meaning which the term has in the play. But here is a crude classification of the *primary* meanings of the term in different contexts (lumping together verbal, adjectival, and noun forms, of which the most common are the adjective, *sōphrōn*, and the infinitive, *sōphronein*).

(i) 'chastity': 80, 413, 494, 1034, 1100, 1402.
(ii) 'virtue': 358, 431, 667, 995, 1007, 1365.
(iii) 'self-control': 399, 731, 1034.
(iv) 'good sense': 704, 1013 (1035).

Obviously, to explore the resonance of the term fully in the play, one would need to situate it in a vocabulary of related terms, including *semnos, sophos, phronein, gnōmē, suggnōmē, aidōs, eukleia, kalos*, etc., each of which would also exhibit its own complexity of meaning.

18 Contrast his more complex usage in 1034, discussed on pp. 81–2. Presumably, even Hippolytus does not demand, as a precondition of *sōphronein*, the kind of *absolute* sexual chastity he regards as his own special quality (79–80, discussed on p. 86, cf. 1002–7).

19 Cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 132–3, who notes D. Grene's attempt, in his translation of *sōphronein* in 731 ('learn of chastity in moderation'), D. Grene and R. Lattimore (eds), *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, vol. III (Chicago, 1959), to bring out the reference back to 667–8; and, for *sōphronein* as 'be humane', 'pity', cf. North (n. 15), p. 108. See also G. Berns, 'Nomos and Physis (an interpretation of Euripides' *Hippolytos*)', *Hermes* 101 (1973), pp. 165–87, esp. pp. 177–85, who underlines the irony in the idea that Hippolytus, who insists that *sōphronein* must derive from nature not learning (79–80) should be made to *learn* to be *sōphrōn*.

20 Cf. W. S. Barrett (ed.), *Euripides: Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), ad loc.: 'What she did was to perform a single act ... her suicide, that subdued [her passion] once for all'. On this reading, *sōphronein* denotes a crude type of self-control (a type Phaedra herself envisages in 398–402, following the failure of her attempt to subdue her passion by will-power, *sōphronein*, 399). Conceivably, however, Hippolytus may mean simply that she behaved in a *sōphrōn* way because she was prevented (by him) from acting on her unchaste desires.

21 Cf. 656ff.; it is his 'reverence' (*eusebes*) that makes him keep his oath, but the effort of self-control involved in suppressing his indignation is evident in these lines; contrast the unforced, 'natural' quality of his chastity, 79–80, 1002–7, discussed on pp. 86, 90–1.

22 Thus, in yet another sense of *sōphronein*, that of showing prudence or good sense in the management of one's life (1013, and perhaps also 704), Hippolytus, in not using his *sōphronein* well, proved *not* to be *sōphrōn*. Froma Zeitlin suggests another nuance in 1035, 'The power of Aphrodite: Eros and the boundaries of the self in the

*Hippolytus*', in P. Burian (ed.), *Directions in Euripidean Criticism* (Durham, NC, 1985), p. 200 n. 80. Hippolytus realizes that Phaedra overheard his angry (intemperate) speech (616–68) and hence that, in this respect, he has not used his capacity for *sōphrosunē* (self-control?) as he should have done.

23 Lines 398–9 and context, discussed on pp. 86–7, 89–90.

24 See 616ff., esp. 664–8, 729–31; also 995, 1007, 1100–1, 1365, as well as 1035.

25 Hence, we can see the force of Artemis' judgement that Aphrodite destroyed Hippolytus because 'she was pained by [his] being *sōphrōn*' (1402), while also recognizing the force of Aphrodite's own inclusion of Hippolytus among 'those who are arrogant' (*phronousin ... mega*, 6); cf. Berns (n. 19), pp. 174–5. A. Schmitt, 'Zur Charakterdarstellung des Hippolytos im "Hippolytos" von Euripides', *Würzburger Jahrbuch für die Altertumswissenschaft* 3 (1977), pp. 17–42, seems to me to go too far in suggesting that the play moves towards establishing a single, negative, judgement on Hippolytus' self-ascribed *sōphronein*. (See, for example, 29: 'Damit scheint mir über die wahre Natur von Hippolytos' "sophrosyne" kein Zweifel mehr möglich: Sie ist eine aus der Leidenschaft kommende Verblendenheit.')

26 My translation attempts to capture what I take to be an intended ambiguity in καταστρέφου between 'subdue' your sickness and 'work it out' (i.e. satisfy your sick desires), the interpretations considered as alternatives by Barrett (n. 20), ad loc.

27 There is a double antithesis here, between πρόθυμός ('wants', 'is keen to') and ἄκοντας ('against their will'), and between μὴ καλῶς ('[do] wrong') and εὐεργετεῖν ('help', 'do good to').

28 See, esp., the parallelism between 317 and 612, with *phrēn* as the subject of the second, antithetical, clause in each case; the similar characterizations of the 'sensible' (who none the less fail to act on their 'good sense') in 313 (*phroneis eu*), 358 (*sōphroneis*), and 462 (*echontas eu phrenōn*), the phrasing of 358–9 being also echoed in first-personal form in 380–1; *nosos* is a link between 463, 477, 597, 730, and 1300 (*oistron*), thus connecting different patterns of antithesis and qualification; and dying with *eukleia* is a link between 47–8 and 1299. For further such qualified characterizations, see 331, 505–6, and the related ambiguities of 709, 718, and 721 (on the latter passages, see Reckford and Segal refs in n. 76 below).

29 Notably 385–7 on the two-fold (*dissai*) types of *aidōs* whose distinct character Phaedra would like to be made transparent through distinct names; and 925–31, Theseus' wish for two-fold (*dissai*) voices to render transparent the inner character of the true and false friend. The former passage contains the radical qualification of character that figures in 597 and 693–4 (but here applied to a quality, *aidōs*, or possibly pleasure); both passages contain the disjunction between inner and outer that figures in 317, 612, and 956–7. See further on these passages Zeitlin (n. 22), pp. 83–4,





Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 134–5, also Claus and Willinck (refs in n. 55 below) and Kovacs (ref. in n. 59 below).

30 Cf. B. M. W. Knox, 'The *Hippolytus* of Euripides', *YCS* 13 (1952), pp. 3–31 (repr. in B. M. W. Knox, *Word and Action* (Baltimore, Md, 1979), pp. 205–30), R. P. Winnington-Ingram, '*Hippolytus*: a study in causation', in *Euripide, Fondation Hardt Entretiens* VI (Vandoeuvres-Genève, 1960), pp. 171–91, H. C. Avery, 'My tongue swore, but my mind is unsworn', *TAPA* 99 (1968), pp. 19–35, and C. Segal, 'Shame and purity in Euripides' *Hippolytus*', *Hermes* 98 (1970), pp. 278–99.

31 I.e. inconclusive; cf. p. 97 on this.

32 Cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 125–6, 134–7, and Zeitlin (n. 22), esp. pp. 80ff.

33 Although Theseus is sometimes also associated with the theme of *sōphrosunē* (as being someone who *fails* to show 'self-control' over his anger at Hippolytus' alleged rape, 885–98, cf. 1320–4), he seems to me not to be so closely interlocked with the other figures in this respect, and I will not discuss him here.

34 54–5; cf. 987 and 1179–80.

35 ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδέν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν εἰς τὰ πάντ' ἀεί,
(79–80)

36 On this view of the virtue, and on the points of similarity and difference with philosophical ideas about the acquisition of virtue, see Berns (n. 19), pp. 165–9, and discussion on pp. 92–3.

37 See 82–7, esp. *monō(i)* (84), although the more generalized phrasing of 79–80 allows for the notion of a *class* of such privileged (*sōphrōn*) devotees.

38 Cf. A. Schmitt (n. 25), pp. 24–7, though noting my reservations about Schmitt's overall view (n. 25).

39 See esp. 403ff., 421–30, discussed on pp. 89–90; the chorus's response (431–2) confirms her view of the importance of the public manifestation of virtue.

40 Cf. n. 18 above.

41 See 317, 394, 398–401; cf. Segal (n. 30), p. 281, and discussion on p. 90.

42 See esp. 243–6, 279, 297–300, 317ff., 345ff., 393–7, 498ff., 706ff., 877–80; cf. refs in nn. 30 and 32 above.

43 728–31 (cf. 660ff.), discussed on pp. 80–1. As noted earlier (esp. n. 19 above), she also wants him to *learn* to be *sōphrōn* in another sense ('humane'); and in this respect she does not regard him as a complete exemplar of *sōphrosunē*.

44 See 208ff. (taken with 73ff.), noting esp. the similarity between 208–11 and 77–8, and the reiterated expressions of desire to do what Hippolytus does, as well as being where he is; cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 124–5, and Zeitlin (n. 22), p. 110.

45 In view of her subsequent radical contrast between her (*sōphrōn*) self and her lust (seen as 'mad', 'diseased', and as the work of *Kupris*

in 391ff.), it might perhaps seem misguided to see her lust as an *expression* of the desire for *sōphrosunē*. The objection, I should make plain, is not to 'psychologizing' as such (cf. my response to Gould on pp. 78–9) but to the kind of psychologizing that does not respond to the psychological concerns implied in the text. Cf. n. 69 below.

46 186–8, 253ff.

47 See esp. 490–8, 500–2; Phaedra later describes this policy woundingly as characteristic of someone who 'wants to do wrong to help friends against their will' (693–4, cited on p. 84).

48 See esp. 465–6:

> ... ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ
> τάδ' ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά.

a cunning modification of Phaedra's 403–4:

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

To this extent, Gould's claim that 'it is the shaping pressure of rhetorical form which determines the movement of the speech more than any sense that *these* arguments are native to the Nurse, or that they are chosen to penetrate the defences of *this* opponent' ('Dramatic character', p. 56), needs qualification; 467–9, which he cites in this connection, form part of the Nurse's modification of Phaedra's ethic, cf. Segal (n. 30), p. 281, n. 2.

49 See 462–3 (also 477, cf. n. 26 above), and 465–6 (n. 48 above). Later (695ff.), I take it that when the Nurse says ... οὐκ ἐσωφρόνουν ἐγώ. (704), she means primarily, 'I didn't act sensibly', that is, in line with the amoral pragmatism of 700–1, 'I didn't succeed'; although a secondary sense, more in line with Phaedra's usage (cf. n. 50 below), might be, as Barrett takes it, 'I went too far', i.e. 'I failed to show proper self-restraint'.

50 Line 494 and context; cf. Phaedra's account of her attempt to use *sōphrosunē* ('self-control') to preserve her reputation (*eukleia*) in 398–9 and 413ff.

51 See esp. 503–6, and n. 61 below.

52 345–52 and 500–24; for Phaedra's (and the Nurse's) style of explication, see refs in n. 42 above; the second passage (500–24) shows that the Nurse is capable of adopting Phaedra's style of obliqueness to further her own objective of acting as the mouthpiece of Phaedra's desires.

53 The Nurse's actual proposition is elided from the drama; but its character as a (misleading) explication of Phaedra's secret is clearly signalled in the language of 565–600.

54 See 728–31, discussed on pp. 80–1, and 877ff.

55 See, for example, C. W. Willinck, 'Some problems of text and interpretation in the *Hippolytus*', *CQ* 18 (1968), pp. 11–43, esp. p. 20 and context, and D. Claus, 'Phaedra and the Socratic paradox', *YCS* 22 (1972), pp. 223–38, esp. 230, and refs in following notes.

56 As she graphically puts it, 'it is this very thing [fear of such





disgrace] that is killing me', i.e. driving me to commit suicide (419), a declaration which follows her expression of hatred and amazement at those who can commit adultery in secret and still 'look in their husband's face' and not be afraid that 'the timbers of their house will speak' of their offences (413–18).

57 Cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 126–7, Zeitlin (n. 22), pp. 99–100; on the centrality of the image of the mirror in the play's exploration of forms of self-knowledge, see also J. Pigeaud, 'Euripide et la connaissance de soi', *Les Etudes classiques*, 44 (1976), pp. 3–24, esp. 14ff., and C. A. E. Luschnig, *Time Holds the Mirror: A Study of Knowledge in Euripides' Hippolytus* (Leiden, 1988).

58 In comparison with Amphiaraus, in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, who prefers to *be* best rather than *seem* so (592), Phaedra wants *both* to be good (as she understands this) *and* to seem so; Zeitlin (n. 22), p. 100, also cites the passage to make a rather different point.

59 See esp. 'to me' (403), 'I knew' (405), 'may she die terribly' (407), 'I hate' (413), 'this very thing' etc. (419), 'they say' (and, inferentially, 'I accept') 'that this alone competes in life (i.e. enables one to win life's competitions): the possession of a just and good character (or mind, *gnōmē*, 426–7)'. Willink (n. 55) over-assimilates Phaedra's position to that of the 'successful adulteress' of whom she is 'inwardly envious' (24), or that of the Nurse; D. Kovacs, 'Shame, pleasure, and honor in Phaedra's great speech (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 375–87)', *AJP* 101 (1980), pp. 287–303, esp. 300–2, appreciates better the sincerity and integrity of her position, but overlooks its limitations, on which see discussion on p. 93.

60 See 392–4, 398–402; for the use of first- and third-personal forms to define what is and is not 'oneself', cf. Gill (n. 2).

61 See 502–6:

> καὶ μή σε πρὸς θεῶν — εὖ λέγεις γαρ, αἰσχρὰ δέ —
> πέρα προβῇς τῶνδ'· ὡς ὑπείργασμαι μὲν εὖ
> ψυχὴν ἔρωτι, τἀσχρὰ δ' ἢν λέγῃς καλῶς,
> ἐς τοῦθ' ὃ φεύγω νῦν ἀναλωθήσομαι.

'No, by the gods – for your shameful advice is given well – do not go on in this way. I am so well worked over ["tilled", like a field] in my *psuchē* by desire that, if you speak well of shameful things, I shall be expended ["used up"] on that which I am now running away from.'

While Phaedra still sees 'herself' as the virtuous person at risk and not as the 'desire' which is operant on her, the speech as a whole, and especially the metaphors ('tilled', 'used up'), disclose that the rigid separation between 'her' and 'desire' is being undermined, as is the related adherence to the standards by which she defines her virtue.

62 Her autobiographical account underlines the point that she holds the same values that she believes her society holds: she regards as a *nosos* ('sickness') what she knows is regarded as *noson* ... *dusklea* ('a

disgraceful sickness'), 394 and 405. The account of 'the path of [her] *gnōmē*' (391) is in line with the kind of *gnōmē* which she knows men say 'alone competes in life' (427). Claus (n. 55), pp. 230 and 236–7, underestimates the extent to which the values of a 'shame-culture' can be personally felt, and, correspondingly, to which a person can identify her 'self' (in a relatively stable way) with the kind of self approved by those values.

63 Cf. Gould (n. 5), pp. 57–8, and discussion above, esp. n. 8.

64 Line 1001; this line, together with 997–1000, clearly contains a barbed, though covert, allusion to the duplicity (and lack of *sōphrosunē*) he attributes to Phaedra as a result of the Nurse's proposition.

65 See, emphatically, 79–81 (and nn. 35–6 above), the recurrence of the 'nature' theme in 995 (*sōphronesteros gegōs*), and the repeated phrase *ei kakos pephuk' anēr* (1031, 1075, 1191) – which Hippolytus, of course, denies.

66 Contrast 1002–6 (and 78–80) with 392–4, 397–402, discussed on p. 90, and also 317. ('My hands are pure, but my mind, *phrēn*, has a kind of pollution.')

67 1071–2; the repetition (*phainomai dokō te soi*) presumably emphasizes the pain he feels in seeming to be such a person.

68 1074–5, cf. 418 and context; 1078–9, cf. 428–30.

69 Cf. Zeitlin (n. 22), pp. 95, 99–100. Gould (n. 5), p. 57, tries to counter psychologizing readings of these utterances of Hippolytus, seeing in 1078–9 only 'a brilliantly conceived theatrical image which uses the form to convey his total isolation'; but the kind of psychologizing he has in view is not quite the sort attempted here (or, as I think, by Zeitlin), in which the 'psychology' of the drama is seen as embedded in its verbal forms and gestures.

70 Cf. the opening scene, esp. 78ff., 653–5, and his frequent affirmations of virtue, before and after this has been revealed by Artemis (1100–1, 1191–3, 1242, 1365, 1383–4, 1455).

71 Cf. North (n. 15), pp. 86–8, Berns (n. 19), pp. 169–73, and, more generally, W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. III (Cambridge, 1969), ch. iv. A related question is whether *sōphrosunē* consists in the kind of unforced expression of a virtuous character (as Hippolytus thinks, 79–80 and 1002–6) or in the conscious process of restraint of desires of which one disapproves (the *sōphronein* identified by Phaedra in 398–9). See, for example, an expression of the latter view in Antiphon (87) B58 and 59, H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 6th edn, vol. II (Berlin, 1952) (= DK), trans. K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 151–2; cf. Schmitt (n. 25), p. 25 n. 39, and Zeitlin (n. 22), p. 200, n. 80.

72 See Antiphon, DK (87) B44, fr. A, cols. 2–3, trans. Freeman, *Ancilla*, p. 147.

73 Democritus, DK (68) B264 (also B84 and B244), trans. Freeman, *Ancilla*, pp. 102, 113, and 115 (cf. Segal (n. 30), p. 285); see also





Critias' *Sisyphus*-fragment, DK (88) B25, trans. Freeman, *Ancilla*, pp. 157–8.

74 See esp. 716–31, 1060–3 and context; cf. Segal (n. 30), pp. 281–3, 288–92, Winnington-Ingram (n. 30), pp. 183–5, and E. R. Dodds, 'The *Aidōs* of Phaedra and the Meaning of the *Hippolytus*', *Classical Review* 29 (1925), pp. 102–4.

75 This reading is also criticized by Kovacs (n. 59), esp. pp. 300–3 (cf. D. Kovacs, *The Heroic Muse: Studies in the Hippolytus and Hecuba of Euripides* (Baltimore, Md, 1987), and Claus (n. 55), pp. 234–5, on the rather different grounds that 'The poet has given us no inducement to look behind the glittering shame-culture values that lie on the surface of the play' (Kovacs (n. 59), pp. 301–2). I agree that the poet should not be seen as placing the figures in a determinate ethical schema which is quite distinct from that presupposed by the figures themselves; but I think this tragedy (like others) is much more ethically exploratory and questioning than Kovacs supposes (cf. nn. 25 and 32 above) and therefore it should not be seen as endorsing a given ethical framework in the way that Kovacs envisages; see further discussion on pp. 94 and 96.

76 This claim is made, in effect, by K. J. Reckford, 'Phaedra and Pasiphae: the pull backward', *TAPA* 104 (1974), pp. 307–28, esp. p. 317, who sees the Phaedra of this play as, at this point, assuming the character of the Phaedra of the first Euripidean *Hippolytus*, the 'bad woman "who has taken evil daring upon herself"'. This seems to overstate the case; closer to the truth are the suggestions made by Segal, 'Shame' (n. 30), p. 289 (cf. also some of Reckford's remarks in pp. 316–17), that Phaedra, responding to the situation produced by the Nurse's disastrous intervention, becomes more like the Nurse in her ethical stance (e.g. in using prevarication and deceit to preserve her reputation, 709ff., esp. 716–21, cf. 465–6); and also that she takes up the brutal note in Hippolytus' misguided attack on female lack of *sōphrosunē* in formulating her own response to this attack (728–31, cf. 664–9, discussed on pp. 81 and 88, and 719–21, cf. 661–2).

77 Despite Hippolytus' self-characterization at 664–5 as a continual critic of women (noted by, for example, Schmitt (n.25), p. 22), Hippolytus' characteristic mode, as we have seen, is that of presenting himself as *sōphrōn*. This is sometimes coupled with incidental discrimination between himself and those who are not *sōphrōn* (as he understands this), e.g. in 79–81 and 997–1001 (cf. nn. 37 and 64 above), but it is not elsewhere coupled with *blanket* criticism of women (or of any other group) for not being *sōphrōn*; nor is it coupled elsewhere with the cruel gloating tone of 661–2 (cf. 668). The more complex and humane tone of 1034 (also 1407 and 1409) is also rather exceptional, and these lines are marked as responses to exceptional circumstances; but they are perhaps no *more* exceptional than his response to the Nurse's proposition.

78 Cf. Gill, refs in n.1 above. As in some other tragedies, the dramatic situation disposes us to have a sense of privileged access to the

main figures: we feel that we understand Phaedra as Hippolytus, certainly, and the Nurse, possibly, do not (given the Nurse's coarser ethical stance) and that we understand Hippolytus as Theseus does not; and this promotes sympathetic engagement with these figures regardless of our ethical misgivings about them.

79 On the characteristically tragic ethos, cf. R. B. Rutherford, 'Tragic form and feeling in the *Iliad*', *JHS* 102 (1982), pp. 145–60, and Goldhill, *RGT*, pp. 31–2, 285–6.

80 See, for example, Plato, *Charmides (Chrm.)*, 155e–159b, 160d–e, *Laches (La.)*, 187e, 188b–c, *Protagoras*, 352a–c, 331c, 333c; cf. the account of Socratic method in *Apology* 29d ff.

81 Eric Havelock, 'The Socratic self as it is parodied in Aristophanes' *Clouds*' *YCS* 22 (1972), pp. 1–18, esp. 11–14, on *Clouds* 694ff. The *Clouds* was performed in 423BC (in a version subsequently revised), *Hipp.* in 428BC.

82 *Chrm.* 159b, 160e, 162ff., esp. 163b–c, 164d ff., 169d; cf. T. G. Tuckey, *Plato's Charmides* (Amsterdam, 1968, repr. of Cambridge, 1951), pp. 20ff., North (n.15), pp. 156–8, Berns (n.19), pp. 169–70. See further, for the implications of such dialogue for our understanding of the Socratic project, J. Annas, 'Self-knowledge in early Plato', in D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Platonic Investigations, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, vol. 13 (Washington, DC, 1985), 111–38.

83 *Chrm.* 158c–d and refs in n.82 above.

84 On the 'ethical' quality of Menandrian comedy, cf. Longinus 9.15, and see further C. Gill 'The *ethos/pathos* distinction in rhetorical and literary criticism', *CQ* 34 (1984), pp. 149–66, 163, esp. n.79.

85 E.g. as regards the 'second-order' quality of Phaedra's ethic, and Hippolytus' insistence on the public display of his *sōphrosunē*; cf. discussion above, esp. nn.71–4.

86 Cf. discussion above, esp. nn.78–9.

87 In *Chrm.*, and in other Platonic dialogues, such 'discarding' is formalized in the work by the shift from one interlocutor to another (e.g. from Charmides to Critias), and by the increasing tendency of the argument to address itself to theses supplied by Socrates himself rather than his interlocutors.

88 See, for example, Tuckey (n.82), pp. 101–2; this approach to the Socratic dialogues is taken furthest by T. H. Irwin in *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), ch. III.

89 *Chrm.* 166c–167b and ff.; Annas (n.82), pp. 134–6, brings out the full impact of the shift from analysing *sōphrosunē* as self-knowledge to analysing it as knowledge of knowledge and suggests reasons why the latter line of enquiry is (genuinely) inconclusive.

90 The idea that the early Platonic dialogues (and perhaps the later ones too) are to be taken as genuinely aporetic and in this sense 'sceptical' has been recently explored by, for example, P. Woodruff, 'The skeptical side of Plato's method', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 156–7 (1986), pp. 22–37, and D. Davidson, 'Plato's philosopher', *London Review of Books* (1 August,





1985), pp. 15–17; these discussions develop some of the implications of G. Vlastos's 'The Socratic elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* I (1983), pp. 27–58, and 'Socrates' disavowal of knowledge', *Philosophical Quarterly* 35 (1985), pp. 1–31.

91 For some analogous suggestions, as regards the tragic genre and its contemporary intellectual context, cf. Goldhill, *RGT*, ch. 9.

92 I am grateful to the participants in the London Classical Society seminar for their comments on the paper on which this essay is based, and I have tried to correct an unclarity in my position which that discussion brought out. I am grateful especially to Anton Powell for stimulating both the oral and the written versions of this essay.

# EURIPIDES, WOMEN, AND SEXUALITY

*Edited by Anton Powell*


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