The Power of Aphrodite: Eros and the Boundaries of the Self in the *Hippolytus*

FROMA I. ZEITLIN

For Charles Segal
φανερωτάτῳ ἀστέρι

The Second Phaedra

The *Hippolytus* of Euripides may be unique in the history of the Greek tragic theater as an example of a second treatment by the same poet of a myth he had earlier represented on stage. The first *Hippolytus* has not survived except for a few suggestive fragments of the text and in the traces it has probably left behind in later works.[1] But our evidence seems to agree that the play outraged its audience by the shamelessness of its Phaedra who openly declared her guilty passion to Hippolytus, and when rebuffed, just as brazenly confronted her husband face-to-face and herself accused Hippolytus of sexual assault.[2]

The second *Hippolytus*, according to the hypothesis of the play, corrected the indecencies and improprieties of the first (*to . . . aprepes kai katēgorias axion . . . diōrthōtai*). The changes were not in the terms of the myth itself but in the depiction of the principal female character. The new Phaedra is now the opposite, we might say, of her former self. She is the unwitting victim, the respectable woman whom Aphrodite, as the goddess tells us herself in the prologue, has coldly chosen as her instrument in order to avenge herself upon Hippolytus, who has scorned her worship (47–48).

This Phaedra is now the paragon of female virtue, embodying the ideals of *aidōs*, *sōphrosunē*, and *eukleia*—the *aidōs* of shame and modesty, the *sōphrosunē* of wifely chastity, and the *eukleia* of her good reputation. Instead of a well-born Phaedra who asserted her sexual desire and therefore dangerously subverted the norms of feminine behavior in an affront to all respectable women, as Aristophanic comedy several times reminds us,[3] there is a Phaedra who knows all too well the conventions of Greek social life that relegate the woman to a silence that would be her glory.[4] The new Phaedra knows full well that women are vulnerable to blame, to the charge of being a hateful thing to all (*misēma*, 406–7), and reserves her personal hatred (*misō*, 413) for the type of disgraceful wife the earlier Phaedra had exemplified, as if she were responding directly to and identifying with the audience's reaction to the previous play.

Unlike the first Phaedra, this Phaedra will not seek to justify her love for Hippolytus, nor will she scheme with drugs and potions to bring about its fulfillment. Rather, she seeks desperately to repress her desire. She certainly will not address herself directly to Hippolytus, whose name she cannot even mention (352). It must therefore fall to an other, the devoted nurse, to adopt all these positions in her pragmatic concern to save the life of the sick and suffering woman she loves as her child. And it follows that this Phaedra would never confront her husband face-to-face, once the nurse has extracted her guilty secret and betrayed it to Hippolytus, and Phaedra has overheard her stepson's outraged reaction. Phaedra would rather die from shame, and die she does, at her own hand, before the return of Theseus. She thus concludes the resolve upon which she had determined at the beginning of the play to save the honor by which she defines herself in her own eyes and in the eyes of others. Deeming that honor more precious than life—both her own life and that of Hippolytus (721)—and responding now to the tragic impasse of a self caught hopelessly between innocence and guilt, "desire and honor, conscience and reputation,"[5] inner self and external image,[6] she too, like her wicked counterpart, lays a false charge against Hippolytus. But now she chooses the indirect form of a letter which together with her lifeless body will serve as silent and concrete testimony to her accusation.

In the end, the honorable Phaedra only seems to corroborate the supposition of woman's essentially duplicitous nature, and her defeat therefore seems even more explicitly to support the accusations flung at the entire female sex by Hippolytus in his memorable outburst against that "counterfeit evil" we call women (616). Yet if the virtuous woman is ruined, the scandal of the first play is averted, and above all, the myth is saved. Hippolytus must meet his fate in order

to confirm again the truth of the cultural dictum that no one may with impunity refuse the power of Aphrodite, not even the Amazon's child and the worshiper of Artemis. Phaedra's reversion to the role the traditional story (and the earlier play) had assigned to her only reinforces the lesson that the power of Aphrodite is indeed irresistible and justifies Aphrodite's confidence in the prologue (40–41) that the queen, as Pasiphae's daughter (as perhaps any woman), will eventually become her ally as well as her victim, if she, like the goddess before her, is scorned by the other. But in the process—because of the process—the innovations of the plot necessitated by the new Phaedra deepen the import of the myth as the play shifts its focus to consider the discrepancy in the self between character and role, between, we might say, the second and first Phaedras.[7] Through the twists and turns the drama now must take, it must also reach a level of unparalleled complexity and it is this complexity, I will argue, that is essential in itself for our understanding of Aphrodite and the correspondingly more complex part she is seen as playing in the theater and the world.

Thus we should consider the significant elements of the new plot for their intrinsic as well as their practical value in the structuring of the story. It matters, for example, that where there were shameless declarations in the earlier play, there are now only lacunae in the text, communications never made public but only judged from the reactions of those who hear (Hippolytus) or overhear (Phaedra) or read them (Theseus). The ruling theme of eros is expanded if instead of the outrageous confrontations between male and female of the first play (Phaedra and Hippolytus, Phaedra and Theseus), the burden of the plot is now carried by parallel encounters between female and female (Phaedra and nurse) and male and male (Theseus and Hippolytus). Finally, we should observe that to overcome the initial reticence, the *aidōs* that threatens to block the plot devised by the goddess, the play is obliged to find oblique strategies by which to seduce Phaedra into playing her part so that Hippolytus may be seduced into playing his. As a result, the most striking feature of our drama is that it reaches its expected conclusion only through deviation and detour, and above all, through the acting of each character for an other.

For one critic, who is concerned only with ends not means, the play demonstrates that Euripides has here turned the tables on his

"philistine" audience to suggest that the *aidōs* of the new Phaedra might be as much or more a source of evil and moral disorder as the shamelessness (*anaischuntia*) of the first.[8] But one could equally argue that the scandal caused by the first play verifies the concern that Phaedra feels for the demands of a society that will judge her solely by its conventions. The "palinode" therefore incorporates and turns to its own purposes the external social reality that marked the actual relationship between the first play and its spectators.

Furthermore, the conventions which the Phaedra of the second play seems to respect too much and which now will determine the course of her actions have more ambiguous and more suggestive implications in the larger world that the action of the play aims to represent. Conformity to social rules is always open to criticism insofar as it gives public image precedence over other, more valued, considerations of inner integrity. But on another level, respect for convention acknowledges the realities of social relations in which the self must also be responsible for the image it presents to others, an inevitable fact of life which is as true for Phaedra as she (and the structure and events of the play) will prove it to be for Hippolytus.

For the first Phaedra, who would contrive to satisfy her passion, Eros is the *didaskalos*, as she declares, the teacher of boldness and daring (*tolma, thrasos*), the god who is most resourceful (*euporōtatos*) to find a way where there is no way (*en amēchanois*, 430 N²). This is the first time, as far as we know, that Eros has earned the title of "didaskalos."[9] The novelty of this term is matched by another novelty on stage, namely, the woman who coined it, who, daring to use Eros as the teacher for her own ends, indirectly teaches others in turn by her bad example. Thus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus can reproach Euripides for having put debased women such as Phaedra on stage, claiming that "the poet (like Phaedra, it would seem) ought to conceal (*kruptein*) what is wicked and not produce or teach (*didaskein*) such things" (*Frogs*, 1049–56).

For the second Phaedra, however, who would contrive with all her power to conceal (*kruptein*) what is wicked, notions of teaching and learning recur in the theatrical context but now with different and still more novel connotations. Phaedra means to teach Hippolytus, as she says enigmatically in her last statement before she leaves the scene to write the fateful letter and to take her own life. "He will share in my disease (*koinēi mètaschōn*) and he will learn

(*mathēsetai*) to practice *sōphrosunē*" (730–31), the quality of modesty/temperance/chastity, which both have claimed and which paradoxically belongs to the domain of Artemis rather than to that of Aphrodite. Hippolytus has already spoken of a virtue that cannot be taught (79–80 but cf. 667)[10] and his father will later take up the theme of education in his angry speech against Hippolytus (916–20).

Phaedra, we may recall, whether as victim or agent, is only a means to another end. The true objective of the play (and Aphrodite) might be called the education of Hippolytus. This is the moment for the young man to complete the initiatory scenario that would make him pass from the yoking of horses to the yoking of maidens, from the hunting of game to the hunting of a wife.[11] Phaedra may incriminate Hippolytus to save her own honor (716–21) while Aphrodite intends, like all divinities, to safeguard hers, and perhaps these are lessons enough about the nature of the adult world. But in the question of passage from one state to another in which eros is culturally programmed to play an essential part, the second Phaedra has much herself to learn and in turn to teach Hippolytus in the larger scheme of things beyond the traditional functions of Aphrodite, which the play must over and over again celebrate,[12] and beyond the stereotyped interplay between the lustful woman and the chaste young man, which emphasizes the dangers female sexuality is thought to pose to the social system. These lessons the characters need not and ought not express directly because they underlie the surface operations of the plot and are conveyed by the structures and details of the play itself.

For broadly speaking, Hippolytus' refusal of eros can be summarized as the self's radical refusal of the Other. Eros is the most dangerous of all these relations: while answering most deeply to human needs of dependency, reciprocity, and empathy, it is also perceived to threaten most seriously the boundaries of the autonomous self and under the magnetic pull of desire to put the self in the power of an other. At the same time, its exercise acknowledges the force of the animal nature within us. But it is also needed, as we will see, for constructing an adequate model of that self and for defining it socially in a network of proper relations.

Hence to meet Hippolytus' challenge, the entire dramatic structure, as I hope to show, enacts through the development of its actions, gestures, and language the irresistible power of Aphrodite as it

acts upon the structure of the self and puts it, even and especially against its will, into relations with others. And we will discover that the self must learn to play its theatrical role in the complex—knotted and reknotted—plot of life itself; that is, it must enter into the necessary but inevitably ambiguous exchanges between self and other, exchanges now confused and distorted to a maximum degree by reason of that refusal to worship the goddess.[13]

Thus although Phaedra's prophetic statement about Hippolytus (723–31, cited earlier) looks to the future events of the drama, the process of education has effectively begun long before this midpoint of the play is reached. In fact, from the moment Aphrodite determines to avenge herself upon Hippolytus, not directly but through an other (Phaedra) who will act for the goddess in the human domain and yet will, through her own language, gestures, and actions, prefigure and determine the experience of the other (Hippolytus), the goddess activates a plot remarkable in its construction in that, unlike that of any other extant play, it binds all the characters together in an "inextricable nexus of interdependence."[14]

The last part of this essay will call the role of Aphrodite into question. It will suggest that Aphrodite's revenge upon Hippolytus through the displacing of desire only on to an innocent other (Phaedra) runs contrary to her typical mode of intervention in human affairs. As a result, there is a latent tension between the familiar narrative patterns to which the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus belongs and the mythic patterns usually associated with Aphrodite and the motif of her wrath. But before we can come to understand just how well this initial deviation also works in the service of Aphrodite's plan, we must follow out the intricate and various ways by which the goddess operates, especially through the images of the knot and the mirror. We must examine why she uses the woman as her instrument and agent on the stage and deploys all the theatrical means at her disposal in order to demonstrate the fullness of her power over the self. Without resorting here to a detailed summary in advance, let me simply propose that at its most inclusive level, that power will prove to be consonant with the power of the theater itself—as regards, for example, the structure and functions of plot; the representation of the body and its sensory faculties; relations between inside and outside, between seen and unseen; types and modes of communication; role playing and reversal of roles; actors and spectators,

as well as the general mimetic properties of dramatic art. As a way then of entering into Aphrodite's world (and that of the theater), let us begin by taking the measure of that phrase, "the inextricable nexus of interdependence," that was used in order to characterize the plot of the play.

The Plot: To Bind and Unbind

In exploring the complex dynamics of the play in which Aphrodite rules, I want first to demonstrate the workings of this nexus or knot, which is actually a leading image, both literal and metaphorical, of the drama. Through the idiom of binding and unbinding/loosening (and related terms), the nexus operates on a number of different levels and embraces a wide variety of references, all organized around Phaedra's despairing cry at the turning point of the drama after the betrayal of her secret to Hippolytus: "What devices (*technai*) or words (*logoi*) do I have, now that I have been tripped up, to loosen/unbind (*luein*) the knot, the *kathamma*, of the *logos*?" (670–71).[15]

The knot of the *logos* that implicates Phaeda—the *logos* that includes the speech of the nurse to Hippolytus and his response overheard by the queen—can only be undone with the fastening of another knot. This knot is first the noose Phaedra binds around her neck (770–71) and from which she will be loosened once she is dead (781, 783). It is also the knot of the new *logos* she fabricates for Hippolytus and suspends from her suspended body (*ērtēmenē*, 779, 866). That action finds its first echo in Hippolytus' own gesture when he suspends (*artēsas*) his body back upon the thongs of his reins (1222), as he strives to steer the stampeding horses who no longer turn in obedience to his guiding hand, nor to their own binding harness (*hippodesmōn*, 1225), nor to the compact structure of the chariot. But the knot of the new *logos* will in fact eventually entangle Hippolytus in the reins (*emplakeis*, 1235) and will bind him in a bond that is impossible to unravel (*desmon dusexelikton . . . detheis*, 1237). This binding results directly from the tablet Phaedra has wrapped around with cords to seal it and which Theseus must unravel (*exelixas*) in order to read its message. These bonds of Hippolytus, as those of Phaedra, will only be loosened (*ek desmōn lutheis*, 1244) at the cost of loosening his limbs from the bonds of life (cf. Eur. *IT* 692, Bacchyl. 1.43, Soph. *OC* 1720). This sequence of events which brings

death to Hippolytus fulfills perhaps the ominous etymology of his name as he shifts from the "one who binds (or yokes, 111, 1183) and loosens horses" to one who is truly Hippolytus, that is, "loosened by horses," thereby perfectly adjusting the tragic action to the name.[16]

But the action corresponds, in turn, to the condition of Phaedra at the beginning of the play. There her soul is bound fast (*dedetai*) to her sickbed (160) while at the same time, the "fastenings" of her limbs are loosened by the afflictions of her disease—eros: (*lelummai meleōn sundesma*, 199). Eros, according to his traditional epithet, is the *lusimelēs*, the one who loosens the limbs, an epithet he shares with both sleep and death[17] and from which Phaedra can liberate herself only by the fastening of the tightly drawn rope around her neck (769–75).

Binding and loosening, then, both work their destructive effects on the body itself, but the correspondences between the conditions of Phaedra and Hippolytus can only come about through the irreversible movement of the dramatic action itself. The repetition or reenactment by one character of the experience of the other is already conveyed by the chorus in the second stasimon immediately before the peripeteia of the drama and just after Phaedra's last exit from the scene (752–63). There the chorus recalls the ship that brought Phaedra from Crete to Athens long ago when she was a bride, and they describe the woven ends of the mooring cables which were bound to dry land (*ekdēsanto*, 761–63). But the word *archai* which here means "ends" in the sense of "extremities" more usually, of course, signifies "beginnings." The end point of the past journey that began the story of Phaedra long before the opening of the play is recollected at the moment when her story is to end. In turn, it inaugurates the beginning of the future journey for the other which is to lead him as an exile away from the house of his father to the shores of the sea—neither as a bridegroom on his nuptial procession nor as the young hero following in the footsteps of his own father along a road that had brought Theseus successfully from Troezen to Athens (977–80; cf. 1208–9) to claim his rightful identity. Instead, Hippolytus will take the road to destruction, determined for him in the play from the moment when Phaedra succumbs to the nurse's entreaty to "loosen" the "silent road of her thought" (*gnōmē*) (290, 391).

At the critical moment of reversal, recorded in the second stasimon, the interlinking of destinies by which the unbinding of one be-

comes the binding of the other, corresponds quite literally to Aristotle's notion of the basic structures of plot. "Every tragedy," he declares, "has a *desis* and *lusis*. . . . I call the *desis*, the knot, the binding, the tragedy from its beginning (*archē*) up to that part which is the last (*eschaton*), from which the change of fortune proceeds, and the *lusis*, the dénouement, from the beginning of this reversal until the end (*telos*)" (*Poet.* 1455b). This *desis* Aristotle also calls a *plokē*, a weaving, and this image too has its literal counterparts in the play. The woven (*plekton*) garland Hippolytus plaits for the goddess (73) (the *anadēma*, 83) finds its doublet in the woven garland (807) Theseus casts down from his own head in response to the twisted cords of Phaedra's noose (783), and leads to the last interweaving, that of Hippolytus entangled (*emplakeis*, 1236) in the reins of his horses. But how might one describe a plot that continuously and variously interweaves the two actions of *desis* and *lusis* themselves? These terms shift back and forth from one signifying level to another, from one referent to another, and persist until the end, implicating not only Phaedra and Hippolytus, but also Theseus, the third one, in a bond that must be unbound.

For Theseus the process of binding begins once he orders the bolts of the doors to be loosened (*eklueth' harmous*, 809; cf. 808) and is completed when, for the second time, he curses his son who, in keeping the oath by which he is bound, does not "loosen" his mouth to tell his father what he knows (*luō*, 1060). Theseus is bound by his own *hamartia*, his error, which causes the death of Hippolytus but from which Artemis can "loosen" (*ekluei*, 1335) him because of his ignorance. Yet at the resolution of the drama, it is Hippolytus, bound and in turn unbound, who has the power to "loosen" or "dissolve" (*luō*, 1442) the quarrel between himself and his father and to free (*eleutherō*, 1449, 1450) Theseus from the guilty pollution of his son's approaching death. In absolving Theseus, however, Hippolytus can be said to have fastened at last a durable social bond, now acknowledged by his nobility (*gennaios*) as the legitimate (*gnēsios*) son of his father (1452, 1455; cf. 309).[18]

And the cause of it all is Aphrodite. In general, Dionysus is the lord of the theater, who regulates the formal symmetries, reenactments, and reversals of tragic plots. Dionysus Lusios, we might say, is the god who presides over the tragic patterns of binding and loosening which reciprocally operate in the service of necessity, entailing

constraint (*desis*) on the one hand, and dissolution and death (*lusis*) on the other.[19] Yet this play specifies that all these operations belong to Aphrodite, for whom eros both loosens the limbs and fashions the bonds that bind the self in the nets of desire.[20] Thus in demonstrating the ineluctable necessities that Aphrodite controls, all the mechanisms of the play—structure, action, gesture, and language—enact in their tragic and negative version the terms that are fully consonant with her sphere of power.

Aphrodite, like Dionysus in the *Bacchae*, demands recognition as a divinity. She too insists that mortals recognize the alien power of passionate forces in the world as also intrinsically one's own. But Dionysus' mode of expression is collective: the *thiasos* and initiation into cultic mysteries bind worshipers to each other and to their god and loosen them from the ordinary restrictions of daily life. Aphrodite's desire is directed rather to the mysteries of sexuality and marriage whereby one self is bound to an other and the bride first binds on and then unbinds the girdle of her virginity.[21] More generally, however, her effects extend to the wider network of interdependence and interconnection for which eros provides the patterns.[22]

The intricate network of *desis* and *lusis* not only replicates the abstract notion of plot, it also serves as the particular structuring device linking the sequence of events and binding them (and the characters) into a series of reciprocal and parallel actions, as if the play were demonstrating its own premises and reproducing its message of intersubjectivity in its own composition. Still further, the range of its uses suggests that the nexus reproduces the broader principle of structure itself, whether it regulates the structure of the body in its bounded form or that of the social relations between self and other.

To refuse the bonds of eros, then, means that binding will operate upon the self as a sign of intolerable emotional and physical pressures—as external contacts made upon the body (noose, reins) and as internal constraints upon speech and action—so that unbinding, when it comes, will bring disaster to the self (and the other) but joy to the offended Aphrodite (725–29). The nurse provides the norm, when she warns in reference to her own attachment to Phaedra: "the loves of the heart (*stergēthra phrenōn*) should be easily loosened (*euluta*), both to thrust away and to draw in tight" (256–57; cf. 340 N²). Her gnomic wisdom will apply in more concrete (but still figurative) fashion to the noose Phaedra puts around her neck. But the meta-

phor of horse racing, of course, will find its literal enactment for Hippolytus, who, refusing the yoke of marriage, must find himself yoked instead to destruction (1389).[23]

To refuse the bonds of eros also means to refuse the bonds of dependence, to attempt to remain alone and aloof from an other—an asyndeton, we might say, in the grammar of life. Once again the play acts out these notions in literal gestures and language. Phaedra can resist the pressure to reveal her secret (thus activating the plot of Aphrodite) until the nurse grasps her and de-pends (*exartōmenē*, 325) from her hand. But after this human contact has worked its purpose, dependency turns back upon the single self, finding a negative echo in the isolated inanimate *deltos* that conceals the secret and de-pends (*ērtēmenē*, 857) from the same hand of Phaedra, now dead. And we recognize the import for Hippolytus in his relation to the structure of chariot and horses by which he defines himself and from whose harness he finally de-pends (*artēsas*, 1222) as he leans his body back upon the reins.

These last two instances show yet another kind of reversion to the isolated self, in which the term *harmozō*, which can designate the "fitting together of a man and a woman in wedlock," is now applied to the one who fits the noose to her neck (*katharmozousa*, 771) and to the other who fits his feet in the footstalls of his chariot (*harmosas*, 1189).[24]

At the end Artemis, the other goddess, is on stage, but Aphrodite, long vanished, is also there. She had presided at a distance over the main event that unleashed the demonic and destructive energies of eros which were manifested in the interaction between the bull from the sea and the horses of Hippolytus.[25] We also find her in Hippolytus' reunion with his father at the end. His last act, which absolves the other, is demanded by Artemis and granted by Hippolytus in obedience to his goddess' commands (1435, 1442–43). But as it now brings together those who had been divided from each other, it is likewise an act behind which Aphrodite and the complex structure of the play stand.[26] For the direct aim of eros, ambiguously concealed behind the nurse's delicate suggestion of a love charm to cure her ailing mistress (508–10), is, of course, sexual, that is, physically to "join together (*sunapsai*) one *charis* from two" (515). We can say, however, that the two principal encounters in the play (between the nurse and Phaedra and between Theseus and Hippolytus)

also show Aphrodite at work. Love for Phaedra is the primary assumption behind both encounters, as it motivates all the nurse's actions and leads Theseus in turn to condemn his son without a second thought.[27] Yet beyond this simple fact, the contents of these two interchanges imply that Aphrodite rules over other forms of face-to-face intimacy along the spectrum from *erōs* to *philia*, where reciprocity and exchange are involved and where seduction/persuasion take place. The goddess, to be sure, shows a different side in each case; appropriately enough, the nurse's persuasion of Phaedra succeeds while Hippolytus' appeals to his father are dismissed as shameless hypocrisy.[28]

In the woman's world, the nurse functions as a maternal figure to Phaedra in a relation corresponding in the man's world to that between father and son, for all of whom the linking power of Aphrodite invokes the more diffused and more ambivalent side of eros. When the nurse complains how "grievous a burden it is that one soul suffer pain on behalf of two" (258–60), the self and the other, she is referring, of course, to herself and Phaedra. But in her homely complaint, she can speak for the other characters in the play who will each have experienced this necessity.

At the end, it is the goddess Aphrodite, the one (*mia*) who has brought not two, but three together—the son, the father, and his mate (*sunēoron*) out of their isolation into the commonality of their ruin (1403), as a belated family reunion.[29] More specifically, the one who had refused contact with others and had abhorred the touch of another's hand (606, 1086), preferring his association with the goddess Artemis which necessarily excluded both sight and touch, finds at the end an embrace in his father's arms (1431–32, 1445).[30]

Having refused to cross the boundary between child and adult, thereby also transgressing the boundary between human and divine, the self experiences the transgression of its own boundaries in the plot that entangles Hippolytus in the complexities of human life.[31] Subject to the constraining bonds placed on the untouched and untouching body, first in speech and then in action, he will be released only for death. The operations of binding and loosening enacted along the seashore transform the workings of eros—the rhythms of tension and relaxation—into those of death. At the same time, it delivers him from one state to another in the modality of birth by which bonds are also loosened.[32] The child comes forth in death, on

the one hand, in filiation, on the other. And this filiation is none other than the birth into a fuller selfhood, not only socially as the legitimate son of his father, but cognitively in the experience of a tragic consciousness. This experience, in tracing its signs on and within the body, has now defined the proper boundaries of the self in the world, a self who has moved from the territory of the untouched meadow from which he had culled the flowers of Artemis' woven garland (73), her binding crown (*anadēma*, 83), to the place on the shore where land and sea define each other's boundaries.[33]

The Plot: Time, Story, and the Self

The untouched meadow, as many have observed, is the spatial analogue of Hippolytus, who, in identifying himself with the meadow and its immortal mistress, defines himself as an unworked territory—all surface and no depth, outside of time that marks the seasonal activities of human culture and the cycle of human generation.[34] Always (*aei*), alone (*monos*), and all (*panta*) (80, 84), define the self in regard to this Edenic enclosure whose perfect circles of time and space exclude the temporal and linear narrative of a human life. "May I turn around the *telos*, the goalpost of life, exactly as I began it" is the fervent wish that concludes Hippolytus' prayer to Artemis (87).

Hippolytus will indeed realize that *telos* in the action of his horses and chariot, which will bind his life to the destiny, the *moira*, appointed for it by Aphrodite (894, 1436). But, in truth, Hippolytus' wish is not granted as he would like. How can it be granted when the end is separated from the beginning by the entire chain of narrative events in the play? Hippolytus does, in fact, fall into time—not an eternity, but its diametrical opposite, the split second in which he condemned an other (Phaedra) and then was condemned in turn, when his father would not wait for time to reveal the necessary proofs of his innocence (1052–53, 1322). As a result, Hippolytus falls into narrative. And as a result, he becomes at the end the subject of a story for maidens always to tell (1428). For now the love Phaedra bore for him will be made public in a recital whose cultic repetition relegates it appropriately to the permanence of abiding time (*di' aiōnos makrou*, 1426).

Hippolytus is to be bound, not without irony, to Aphrodite and Phaedra forever, in the cult of the nubile maidens.[35] Yet given this future commemoration of his story, the mechanics of the new plot which the goddess has furnished for the new Phaedra assumes a richer significance. Without Phaedra, we might say, Hippolytus cannot be an actor in the drama of life, which the text imitates in all its baffling complexities. Alone in a perpetual cycle of ludic repetition, he can have no story, no *muthos*. The *agones* of athletic competition (1016) promise him a life without the risks (1019) which the Greeks deemed essential in the achievement of the heroic (i.e., manly) self (cf. Eur. 1052 N²). Hippolytus' activities only keep him from action, the serious *praxis* of life which, as Aristotle tells us, drama imitates (*Poet.* 1450a.12).

Hippolytus' story comes into being because the lying message Phaedra leaves behind on the writing tablet in effect reverses subject and object (I desire him/he desires me). By making him "share in her disease" (730–31), Phaedra will now have transferred her story to him so as to make him the unwitting double of herself. Accused of a deed he did not commit, he now will imitate her *praxis*, so to speak, in an *agōn* for his life and honor, as she had struggled for hers, on the level of both language and action.[36] More precisely, she has required him to stand in the place of the other, to be identified with her, to hear from the other, his father, what she, the other, had heard from him, Hippolytus. In short, he will have to live through her experience in every respect, sharing the symptoms of her "disease" in the eyes of the world until the condition of his sick and suffering body as seen at the end of the play symmetrically matches her state at the beginning. Perhaps most important of all, by playing the role Phaedra has assigned to him, Hippolytus will be required to be an other in relation to himself and, as we shall see, to suffer the consequences of his own alterity in the adult social system that requires one to verify the self through the perception of an other.

This means that, on the level of the action, the entire chain of communication in its deviations and detours, whereby everything passes indirectly through the intermediary of an other, can be understood as bringing into focus the implications of Hippolytus' having refused to allow the presence of an other to intrude upon his visual and tactile space. It means too, as far as language is concerned, that

the typical proleptic techniques of tragedy, by which the first part of a play prepares for the second and can only be fully comprehended in the light of its sequel, now have a double duty to perform in forecasting through its images the fates of not just one but also the other. The new plot finally insists that this principle of alterity be permanently installed in cult in that the male's story will later and for all time serve as the model for the female. Yet this outcome is preceded by its exact reverse: the female and her story will serve throughout the play as the model for the male.

The Feminine Body: Virgin

In the exchanging of roles, the play is, in a sense, simply acting out what Hippolytus' claim to the status of *parthenos* (1106, 1302) implies and therefore arranges his initiation into the world as one resembling the experience of the female body,[37] After all, the image of the *parthenos* plucking flowers in the inviolate meadow (73–80) already invokes its paradigmatic antecedent—the Kore figure for whom the doors of Hades will gape open just as Aphrodite predicts for Hippolytus in the prologue (56–57) and Hippolytus himself echoes at the end (1447).

Hippolytus' virginity in the service of the goddess Artemis seems to tell us that the untouched body can only be imagined as feminine, but it also suggests that untouchability bears a metaphysical charge transcending the laws of nature and even of gender. Hippolytus sacralizes virginity and the terms on which he worships the goddess to the exclusion of all others suggest the cultural values that virginity can always entail. For the self to be alone with the goddess in the pure space of the meadow implies that virginity can be interpreted as a quality that represents the self as "an image of an original identity: that is, what is objectively untouched symbolizes what is subjectively contained."[38] Yet Kore's experience reminds us that the *parthenos* cannot linger forever in the meadow, content to embody a static symbol of external and private wholeness. Rather, the mythic associations of flower, meadow, and maiden align the human maturational cycle with that of the seasons so that the *parthenos* above all is the one who is poised precisely at the place and moment of passage. The virgin must enter into the temporal flow of life, which is represented by the progress of the drama itself and

recollected within it as the retrospective experience of Phaedra, who, after all, was once a *parthenos* (429) but now is a woman.

The drama is built, to be sure, on the erotic tensions between male and female and on the contrasts between the genders, so that when Hippolytus reenacts and imitates the words, gestures, and actions of the other, we recognize the workings of the dramatic rule of reversal into the opposite which defines a tragic peripeteia. Yet Hippolytus' identity as the *parthenos* figure suggests that this *kouros*, this young man, may well be the potential bride as well as the bridegroom, and this role then logically leads him into the wider sphere of feminine experience which his secret double, Phaedra, exemplifies. In other words, the quality of "subjective containment" that the male as virgin (*parthenos*) embodies also automatically entails an intersubjective relation with the woman (*gunē*), the no-longer *parthenos*, who is Phaedra, so that these same devices of imitation and reenactment also attest to the hidden affinities between them.

This relation between the two selves is marked exactly at the turning point of the action just before Phaedra's posthumous message will ensure that Hippolytus will be called upon to play her part. There in the second stasimon, to which I have earlier referred, those *archai*, the ends and beginnings of the ropes that bound Phaedra's nuptial ship to the shore when she came to Athens as a bride, signify the end for one (Phaedra) and the beginning of the story for the other (Hippolytus) (762–63). Lamenting Phaedra's fate, the chorus starts its song with reference to the maidens who "drip their radiant tears into the purple deep" in mourning for Phaethon (735–41), who plunged to his death when he lost control of the fiery steeds of his father, the sun-god. Phaethon, as has been observed, is the male doublet of Hippolytus, as both a driver of chariots and a failed bridegroom, while the maidens' lament reflects the grief of the chorus for Phaedra and also is already foretelling the place in the cult for virginal brides that Hippolytus will receive.[39] But Phaethon, the "shining" one, who shares his fate with Hippolytus but his name and etymology with Phaedra,[40] is also the figure who mediates this intersubjective relation between the two selves. Phaethon is the mythic Other through whom the identities of the two characters are momentarily confounded just at the moment of crossing when their paths are to take linked but separate directions to their respective deaths.[41]

The Feminine Body: Woman, House, World

Eros provides the focus for confronting the more general experience of relations between two subjects because rather than effacing all differences, eros calls for a complementary opposition between one self and an other. In dramatizing the implications of Hippolytus' resistance to eros which extend outward to encompass all the relations between one self and an other, the play appropriately develops and enlarges this "intersubjective" experience in ways that involve not only himself and Phaedra, but all the characters, including the nurse, Theseus, and even Aphrodite and Artemis. One critic defines this distinctive characteristic of the play as a *discordia concors*. By this term he means that "while each character stands alone as a unique individual, he/she still shares in and mirrors qualities of his/her opposite."[42] Strangely enough, this critic's formulation has a Greek equivalent located in the text itself: its specific referent is none other than the body of the woman.

As the first choral lyric tells us, "woman's nature is a *dustropos harmonia*, a discordant harmony (or *discordia concors*), and there is wont to cohabit with it (*philei . . . sunoikein*) an ill, unhappy helplessness (*amēchania*) that goes with travail (*odinōn*) and unreasoning thoughts (*aphrosunē*)" (161–64). Through the natural processes of the body, the woman experiences herself as a diversity in unity. Biological constraints subject her to flux and change and put her at odds with herself, creating an internal *dustropos harmonia*, an ill-tuned harmony: in short, a "natural" oxymoron of conflict and ambiguity.

Woman herself can therefore be construed as a self-reflexive microcosm of the differential relations between the various characters in the play, herself included, and more generically, between one self and an other. Still further, she is, in a sense, the topocosm of the world of the here and now upon which can be mapped life's conflicts and ambiguities. Because the play locates these specifically in the area of sexuality, the "natural" construct of the woman's body serves as the proper and literal terrain for the work of Aphrodite. At the same time, this feminine body supplies the objective correlative to the broader questions of intersubjective relations explored in the play.

Woman is a character in the drama, acting and acted upon; she

struggles, in truth, against the facts and desires of the body, but she is also a sign. An enigmatic sign like the world itself in which she lives, she is difficult to interpret, requiring the services of a *mantis*, as the nurse and chorus say in the face of her stubborn refusal to speak (236, 269–70, 346; cf. 873, 729, 858). The conjectures made in the first choral lyric about the etiology of her disease are instructive beyond their interest for Greek medical ideas, as they indicate what general influences impinge upon the representative figure that is woman. The symptoms Phaedra presents are overdetermined; they can be interpreted indifferently according to each of the three cardinal zones of relations in which the self is involved: the divine domain where she might be one who is possessed by a god (141–50); the personal domain of relations within the family, either husband or parents (151–60); and, as we have seen, the body in its conflictual relation with itself (161–69) as the appropriate model for all relations. In other words, this complex organism that is her body supplies the symbolic locus for organizing the entire cultural system—physical, psychological, social, metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical—of which Aphrodite is the cosmic emblem and Phaedra her human instrument and tragic paradigm.

Yet it is significant that the chorus at this moment calls not upon Aphrodite but upon Artemis, who guards women in childbirth (166–69). It has often been noted that the women's invocation demonstrates how insufficient is Hippolytus' view of the goddess both in his exclusive claim to her and in his denial of natural procreation through the female body.[43] But I want to emphasize further why Artemis properly belongs in the world of women, whether presiding over their integral state as untouched virgins or over the moment when that "breeze" (*aura*), as the chorus refers to labor pangs, "darts through the womb" (165–66).[44] There is no contradiction in the fact that she protects the female body, whether closed or open. In her links both with virginity and childbirth, Artemis' intervention tells us that for the married woman, society insists that maternity be separated from sexuality and rejoined with chastity, closing and enclosing the body in the inner spaces of the house. This then is that other *dustropos harmonia*, the social rather than physiological fact in woman's life, namely, the cultural oxymoron of the chaste wife. Aphrodite, in truth, has no continuing visible place in married life once the bridal period is over, and appropriately in her Homeric Hymn

she leaves the scene forever after she has borne the child she now gives to others to rear. In some contexts, childbirth and sexuality overlap, both attesting to the permeability of the body's boundaries, and are often in fact conflated in image and metaphor (e.g., Archilochus, 104D), but at the same time they are antitheses, as opposed to each other as Artemis is to Aphrodite.

In defining the inner conflict of Phaedra as one between Artemis and Aphrodite within our frame of self and other, one can further justify the role Phaedra plays as model for Hippolytus, not only in formal but also in thematic terms. After all, the other is no longer truly an other. The Phaedra of this play, as many have shown, shares many traits with Hippolytus. Despite their contrasting genealogies which might polarize the sexual attitudes into two representative extremes—the child of the Cretan mother (Phaedra) and the child of the Amazon (Hippolytus)—temperamentally they are not incompatible. Both are concerned with purity of body and soul, both would maintain the integrity of their inner selves, and both display an aristocratic idealism. It is precisely Phaedra's refusal to abandon these "Artemisian" values, in fact, that leads her to engineer Aphrodite's revenge, and it is the power of Aphrodite, above all, that defines the Artemisian by situating it in a differential relationship with what she herself represents so as to make all confront the "*dustropos harmonia*" of the world in which everyone must live. Thus Phaedra's affinities with Hippolytus are indispensable to the workings of the plot. Moreover, they are indispensable because they tell us (and Hippolytus) that the simple dichotomies of Hippolytus' existence will not be able to withstand the complexities of Phaedra herself.[45]

This last observation, in the most general terms, constitutes the drama's fundamental lesson common to the experience of all tragedy: Only in discovering that the universe is one of conflict, and that words, values, and man himself are ambiguous, can one accept a problematic vision of the world and acquire a tragic consciousness.[46] Tragic man, like Oedipus, is a riddle to be solved, and Hippolytus, in his anomalous state between beasts and gods, male and female, child and adult, is yet another distinctive example of this configuration.[47] But Greek thought also tells us that the very source and origin of ambiguity and conflict that is the essence of the human condition is none other than woman herself, who steals from man the simple integrity of his original state. Defined in her nature by the mode of her creation, Hesiod's Zeus introduces her into the world to redefine its topography, which henceforth will be modeled on that of the female body: a dichotomy between outside and inside, seen and unseen. Hippolytus, in his tirade against Phaedra, will reinvoke the canonical Hesiodic characterization of this first woman, Pandora, both the lovely useless *agalma* that husbands will ruin their houses to adorn, and the deceitful conniving bitch, the counterfeit evil, in whom Aphrodite brings mischief to birth (616–18, 630–33, 642–44).[48]

One might say that Hippolytus' replication of the Hesiodic discourse at the heart of the drama defines him as the nostalgic standard-bearer of the Golden Age.[49] Even more, his fall into the human condition is none other than the experience of its deceptions and falsehoods, stereotypically contrived through the agency of a woman. The drama indeed builds on the Hesiodic foundations of human culture, which are based on the imperatives of marriage, procreation, and agriculture, and whose rules Hippolytus by his mode of life transgresses. But it also transcends these, as it must on the tragic stage, to attain its proper objective—the fashioning of a tragic consciousness, experience of which is essential to the construction of the self which is otherwise imprisoned and isolated in its world of single meanings.

The woman, as the other, is the object who embodies for men the external realities of the world. She therefore constrains and defeats the boundless desire of the male self to escape these unwelcome necessities. But, as a speaking subject, woman also embodies the prerequisites for that fuller consciousness to develop in herself. Given the social constraints under which she must live and the strains of the multiple roles and identities assigned to her, she is best constructed to experience this tragic "double bind." Breaking the silence that propriety demands from her, she necessarily transgresses in turn the social rules which would repress and deny, if they could, the best-kept secret of cultural ideology, that is, the reality of the sexual, even adulterous wife.[50] Aphrodite therefore plays a critical role. In entering into the woman and into the house as the agent of illegal and unspeakable desire, she transforms the "natural" dissonant unity of the woman's body in pregnancy and childbirth into a cognitive dissonance within the self. That self, now in struggling to harmonize its disparate aspects, experiences subjectively her own ambiguities and through them is led to an epistemological inquiry

into the world whose structures she also objectively represents (374ff.).

There is a paradox here. Woman as body may be relegated in the eyes of society to the corporeal side of human existence. But her physical structure which stresses her interior space already predisposes her to a self-consciousness that replaces the virginal quality of "self-containment" with a mature subjectivity capable of furnishing a more adequate model of the self. This self must now confront that interiority, which is made problematic as the subjective container of the secret that must be hidden within. The text even distinguishes between these physical and cognitive dissonances. To the *dustropos harmonia* of the woman's body, the birth pangs (*ōdinai*) she suffers, she replies with a passive *aphrosunē*, an *anoia* (164, 398), the surrender of mental faculties in the face of biological pressures. But the other dissonance, the anguish of her desire, demands rather the exercise of *sōphrosunē*, an active attempt of the intellect to constrain the irresistible forces of instinct and desire (399), and it evokes from Phaedra the cry of pain (*odunāi*, 247) for the effort to set her mind aright.[51]

Without Aphrodite, the ambiguities of women's lives pass unnoticed as they freely come and go in widening circles from the house to the outside spaces that the women describe in the parodos and which they leave behind offstage. The idyllic vignette of women washing clothes in the water's dews of the river's stream (124–30) contrasts both with its preceding counterpart in which Hippolytus defines his meadow (which *aidōs* metaphorically tends with its river dews, 78) and with Phaedra's subsequent imaginings (which simultaneously overlay longings for purity with erotic desire, 209–11).[52] In the women's scene, the dripping water is said to issue from Oceanus, that is, it is fed subterraneously from the primordial source, and sends forth a running stream. Here all is flow and flux, surface and depth, as the women dip their pitchers into the water and wet the crimson cloaks to cleanse them, laying them to dry upon the back of the sunny rock. Purity is not original or constant, but in the cycle of household tasks, it can be restored in the washing of clothes that having touched the body were subjected to the ordinary pollutions of daily life. But with Aphrodite, purity and pollution split into irreconcilable opposites. And with the revelation of Phaedra's secret, the simple details of women's work will reveal their deeper affinities with the tragic situation which is foretold by that split.

The women's contact with the clothing, described as *teggousa*, wetting, will find its analogue in the tears that will wet their flooding eyes in grief over the misfortunes of the house and the bereaved husband (128, 854). But this contact implied by *teggousa* is earlier invoked by the nurse who, reproaching Phaedra's silence, laments that her mistress is not at all softened or persuaded by her words (303).[53] Women are expected to mourn for the sorrows of others and, like the clothes they soften in the water, to be pliant and permeable themselves. *Teggousa* already intimates the potential dangers to come, but there are other signs more ambiguous still. The water that drips from the rock will echo in the desire that drips by the agency of eros from the eyes (121, 526). And the benign heat of the sun (128–29) both suggests the passions of eros itself (cf. 530) and is later recalled in the invocation of another spring, the mouth of Dirce at Thebes, which sets the stage for the erotic encounter where "Aphrodite gave Semele as a bride to the flame-girt thunder" when she was pregnant with Dionysus (554–55).[54]

In the second stasimon sung by the chorus at the midpoint of the drama (mentioned earlier) the language of the parodos reappears. Fiery sun and water are now transformed into the amber-gleaming radiance of the tears (*dakruōn tas elektrophaeis augas*, 740–41) which the mortal maidens let fall in grief for Phaethon as objectified tokens of their subjective emotions.[55] And the ambrosial springs that pour forth unhindered (748) are meant now only for the erotic paradise of the Hesperides where the bed of immortal Zeus and Hera is, a land that offers no road to sailors at the boundaries of the world, beyond mortal limits where heaven and earth meet.[56] This is the point that returns us to the very context of the parodos and the implicit contrast between purity and pollution. There the chorus shifts immediately from the description of their outside scene to think upon Phaedra, who lies sick within the house from that as yet unknown disease, eros. The robes the women have exposed upon the sunny rock (126) give way to the robe with which Phaedra shades her face to hide the secret shame that pollutes her (131–32).

Now the women will leave the stage no more and Phaedra, except in her fantasy, will make only the briefest journeys from and to

the house. The world narrows down to the space of the stage and what lies behind it as she oscillates between secrecy and revelation in the conflict she experiences between the virtuous wife and the desiring subject. These spaces are therefore intensified, as it is that oscillation that exerts pressures on the normal unquestioned relations between inside and outside, bringing these tensions and ambiguities into play to recode into complex psychological enclosures the private areas that are the woman's body and the isotopic house she inhabits.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE The drama exploits to the fullest the symbolic potentials of Greek scenic conventions, which in setting the actions on stage before the facade of the house arrange a dialectic of space between outside and inside, seen and unseen, open and closed, exposed and hidden. In one respect, the secret finds appropriate shelter in the inmost recesses of the house (as it does within the deepest marrow of the soul, 255), the place that harbors other undisclosed secrets of women's lives that modesty protects. In another respect, of course, this secret of adulterous desire is incompatible with the house and the social values it objectifies, so that woman is no longer "at home" with herself or in the space that is commensurate with her own anatomy. Rather, the secret, confined and repressed, confines her to her bed, and blocks all the normal forms of domestic exchanges and those of the body itself in that food can neither enter in nor can the secret issue forth.[57]

The door is the significant boundary between the two zones. Once Phaedra has crossed its threshold from interior to exterior, her dramatic action already informs us that the secret, if not yet revealed, is at least now out-of-doors. Only outside can she find her voice and begin to speak. And what she says in riddling terms, as she recodes her erotic passion into passionate longing for the Artemisian spaces of remoter regions (208–38), demonstrates how far from domestic territory is the site assigned to female desire. Phaedra's exit indicates in advance the homology, which the text will later make specific, between the door and the mouth as apertures to the interior which can either be opened or closed. In the idiom of the play, these operations are principally those of *desis* and *lusis*, binding and loosening,[58] which are to prove the determining factors of the plot. Indeed, only through the first *lusis*, that is, the exit of Phaedra from the house and the ensuing "exit" of the secret from her mouth, can the true *desis*, the binding of the plot, begin and the door become the pivotal point of passage and exchange. This is the same door, let us recall, at which Aphrodite had stood in the prologue, unrecognized and unaddressed by Hippolytus (100–101), and this is a stance that Phaedra will herself exactly repeat (cf. 575).

Phaedra leaves the house at the beginning and enters it again permanently as the place of her death. Hippolytus, on the other hand, enters the house upon his arrival on stage and leaves it in indignation at the nurse's proposal communicated to him within. He is never to enter it again. Once his father has discovered the secret, Hippolytus is banished not only from the precinct of the house but from that of the land itself, all because three times Theseus performs a significant act of opening: the doors of the house (*chalate kleithra . . . pulōmatōn/eklueth' harmous*, 808–9); the unwrapping of the *deltos*, the tablet (864–65); and the utterance he can no longer contain within the "doors of his mouth" (*stomatos en pulais*, 882).[59]

For both Phaedra and Hippolytus, the house has become the purveyor of death. The house reclaims one of them literally for its own and expels the other beyond its limits, until he is brought back at the end, when on his deathbed he beholds, as he says, the "doors of the region below" (*nerterōn . . . pulas*, 1445–46; cf. 895). Aphrodite's ominous statement closing the prologue, "he does not know that the doors of Hades are gaping open for him" (56–57), corresponds, as noted earlier, to Hippolytus' dying utterance. But Hippolytus' passage from the beginning of the text to its end has indeed taken him through the doors of the house itself, whose interior secret spaces anticipate its sinister analogue—the house of Hades.

This relation between inside and outside which correlates the self and the house is continued through an important gesture shared by Phaedra at the beginning of the play and Hippolytus toward the end, namely the covering of the head. In social life, the woman ordinarily veils her head as a distinctive mark of feminine *aidōs*, modesty. But the context of the play deepens the traditional meanings associated with this sign of social invisibility. Before her entrance on stage, the chorus had described the queen on her sickbed, who, shading her head with fine garments, was doubly enclosed in her resignation to silence and death in the interior of the house (131–40). Once outside, however, Phaedra alternatively removes her headdress to

speak and then covers her face with her cloak to hide her shame (243–44, 250), suggesting as Artemidorus later confirms,[60] that there is an analogy between the house and the cloak as coverings for the self, both connoting a spatial relationship between inside and outside. Hippolytus, as has been observed, repeats her gesture at the end when he calls for Theseus to cover his face with his robe (*pepla*, 1458), not only showing that, as Phaedra predicted, he shares in her disease,[61] but also making the appropriate sign to greet approaching death, which will indeed cover over the body.[62] From this perspective, one could say that Hippolytus' final physical gesture at last, even if only for a moment, creates on the open stage an interior dimension for the body that by now has experienced for itself the boundary between inside and outside.[63]

What in fact determines this conclusion is the other enclosure, the miniature *deltos* which, like a pair of doors, must be opened and which, in both content and form, mediates the analogy between the body of the woman and the house. The *deltos* is an inanimate object. Like the house, it cannot actually voice an utterance. But when it is opened, like woman, it can, in its message of erotic violence, speak the language of the intimate body. Even closed, the *deltos*, allied to the triangular *delta*, can be identified as the external sign of the woman's inward parts, exposed yet still concealed.[64] Artemidorus' observation is particularly relevant here: to dream of a *deltos* is to dream of a woman because all sorts of imprints, *tupoi*, are left in her.[65] Phaedra has effectively bound herself again to the interior of the house in the noose she attaches to its rafters. And she completes the image of the chaste wife, not only in the *tupoi* that presumably are the *grammata* inside the *deltos*, but also through external signs. For Theseus explicitly refers first to the imprint, the *tupoi*, of her signet ring on the outside (862) and second, to the encircling embrace of the seals (*peribolas sphragismatōn*) by which she has refastened the tablet. As keeper of her husband's house (cf. 787), the woman keeps safe and sealed for him both the treasures of the house and herself to which he alone has private access.[66] It is therefore entirely proper that Theseus first imagines her message will implore him not to allow another woman into his house and bed (860–61). It is equally fitting that he open the doors of the house and then the *deltos* as well as open his mouth to utter the curses against the male he believes has trespassed upon his domestic space.

On the level of the action, the *deltos*, which constitutes Phaedra's plot to cover up her shame, plays a pivotal role in the plot as a whole. It is also the nodal point investing all the other acts of opening and closing in the play with their wider associations. Mouth and genitals, speech and sexuality, exterior and interior, exposed and hidden—all these converge in this metonymic condensation of the feminine that is displaced onto the inscribed object. The *deltos* therefore is the most concrete sign of the pervasive conflict between inside and outside which the woman resolves only through death—for herself and for the other.

For this other, Hippolytus who is now barred from the house, her message will bring about a new relation between inner and outer space to be projected on a vast cosmic scale, in effect converting the entire landscape into an enclosure. For the messenger describes how first the giant wave that was to bring forth the bull from the sea towered up to heaven so as to obscure the sight of the Scironian shore and to hide the Isthmus and Asclepian rock (1207–9), and he ends his recital with the words: "the horses and the terrible prodigy of the bull were hidden somewhere, he knew not where, on earth" (1247–48).

Between the two moments, the first, when the engulfing wave has confounded the boundary of land and sea, and the last, when Hippolytus covers his head as he approaches the boundary of Hades whose doors he now sees before him, Hippolytus comes to an experience of the body which replicates that of the sick and suffering Phaedra seen at the beginning. Her prediction that he would "share in her disease" comes to a violent physical fulfillment here when the combined action of the bull from the sea and the stampede of his own horses have subjected his body to what might be called a demonic parody of eros. The congruence is even more striking as Hippolytus goes out to meet his fate in terms that recall precisely those used to describe the body of his secret double, the woman.

That *dustropos harmonia*, the "*ill-turned fitting together*" with which the woman is wont to *dwell* (*sunoikein*, 161–63), supplies the model of a conflicted self, a condition Hippolytus imitates literally in two ways: first, in his relation to the ensemble of chariot and horses which represents the spatial extension of the self; and second, in the experience of the body itself. Hippolytus first *fits* (*harmosas*) his feet into the matching footspaces in the chariot (1189),[67] fusing

himself, as it were, with the object representing his own integral structure (cf. *kollētōn*, 1225), while it is with the ways of horses that he is said to *dwell* (*sunoikōn*, 1220). With the advent of the bull, the horses do not *turn* with (*metastrephousai*, 1226) the bindings of their harness or with the compact structure of the chariot, but are *turned* back (*anastrephein*) by the bull until the disaster ensues.[68] Then once Hippolytus is separated from the entangling reins (1244), the chariot and horses are separated. The chariot is broken, like the body of Hippolytus (1239), and the horses disappear together with the bull (1247–48).

Brought back on stage in a pitiful state, pain brings him to a direct experience of a physical interiority, and he expresses himself through language that imitates the symptoms of such a *dustropos harmonia*. He cries out that pangs dart through his head (1351) as they were said to dart through the belly of the woman in travail (164–66) and that a spasm leaps up in his brain (1352); a little later, he voices his desire (*eramai*) for a two-edged sword to divide his body in two and "put his life to bed" (1375–77). In conflating the language of childbirth and sexuality,[69] Hippolytus has come to mime these two aspects of female experience. As a result, he is compelled to acknowledge the permeable boundaries of the physical self, both those of the head and of the body. We recognize here the power of Aphrodite which, when refused, converts rapture to pain and eros to death. But we know too that this physical experience is the culmination of the longer and more significant process by which her power affects the self in mind as in body, mind through body, as a more complex perception of interior space.

The body Artemis will bid Theseus to take into his arms (1431–32). At this moment, however, when the physical and mental are still unified in a living organism, she has already distinguished between the effects of eros on body and mind. For she identifies the passions of Aphrodite (*Kupridos ek prothumias orgai*) which have violently invaded the body (*demas*) (1417–18), but in predicting the prenuptial rites of Aphrodite in which Hippolytus will have a future share, Artemis gives him the spiritual recompense for that somatic suffering which his good *phrēn*, his mind, has earned (1419).

The text has earlier suggested how extensive are the ways by which Aphrodite works in a remarkable phrase uttered by the chorus just after Hippolytus has left the stage to begin his last journey. This

phrase significantly reorganizes those topological spaces with which Hippolytus had identified himself—the woods and the meadow. In the prologue, Aphrodite had spoken of Hippolytus who consorts always with the *parthenos* (Artemis) in the verdant wood (*chlōran d'an hulēn*) and we recall too the garland whose flowers Hippolytus says he had culled from the virgin meadow (*plekton stephanon ex akēratou leimōnos*, 73–74). Now the chorus, lamenting Hippolytus' irrevocable departure from these Artemisian spaces, combines the two previous allusions by referring to the "deep verdure," the *batheian . . . chloēn* of the resting places of the maiden of Leto (i.e., Artemis) which no longer will receive their customary garlands (*astephanoi de koras anapaulai/Latous*) (1137–38). This is the only instance in the entire play of the word *bathus*, "deep," and at this critical moment in the text it is a subtle but significant clue that a corresponding shift from surface to depth has taken place in Hippolytus himself.

The context of the phrase is still more suggestive, because the chorus follows this leave-taking from Artemis with their regret that, by his exile, the maidens have lost their bridal rivalry for Hippolytus' bed (*numphidia . . . hamilla*) (1142–43). In this erotic setting of what we might call an "anti-epithalamium" (since the chorus of Hippolytus' agemates divides into male and female parts)[70] the phrase "the deep wood" may already foreshadow the sexual connotations of what will happen to Hippolytus by the shores of the sea through the bestial violence of the bull and the horses.[71]

Yet through the language it uses in the preceding stanzas, the ode integrates more fully these overlapping levels of mind and body. The chorus reflects on what has earlier transpired for Hippolytus to bring him to this moment of leave-taking and they translate his experience into the expression of their own subjective feelings. Here at the moment of Hippolytus' own peripeteia, the chorus is moved to ponder the general peripeteias of the world (1104–10). They allude to their own interior perceptions, their *phrenes* (1104), and they speak of a consciousness (*sunesin*) which they hide (*keuthōn*) in their hopes within the self (1105). Praying for a spirit (*thumon*) that is untouched (*akēraton*) by pain (1114), they find, when reviewing Hippolytus' story, that their own *phrēn*, their mind, is no longer pure (*katharan*) (1120), and like him, that their innocence is forever polluted.[72]

The Secret and the Construct of Self

The depth, therefore, by which the chorus qualifies the wood and the meadow must surely recall the preceding initiation of Hippolytus into this interior life, which began at the moment Phaedra's secret was transmitted to him. Then, through its violation of his sensibilities, he feels the first penetration of the self, and under the secret's burden, he begins to develop a consciousness (*sunesis*) that must properly be hidden within the self.[73]

The point of entry is the orifice of the ear, whose pollution he would cleanse with purifying streams of water (653–54). But the wounding effects of the knowledge the *logos* imparts cannot be undone. Having heard these words, as he declares at the end of his long speech, he seems no longer pure to himself (654–55). Henceforth he is conscious of a frontier between being and seeming; he is aware of the body's surface as a boundary between outside and inside. As a result, the Edenic harmony the body had enjoyed with its natural territory in a relationship of unquestioned identity is forever disrupted.

By its very nature, a secret alienates the self from its exterior space and divides the self into two. For in disjoining that which can be said from that which cannot, the action of the secret creates a distinction between public and private, self and other. It therefore brings into being an interior space to contain what must be hidden within. This space, coextensive with the organic interior of the body, is henceforth also a "cognitive mental region" dividing inner thought from outer expression.[74]

In Hippolytus' case, Phaedra's secret is doubly divisive because it reorients the image of the body in more specific ways. The secret enters the self as an alien intrusion from an other, which, bearing a message of illegal desire, is utterly antithetical to its new owner. Its effects therefore pollute the self at its deepest level, alienating the self from what it perceives as its true essence and mobilizing its defenses for resistance.

Still, *despite* his resistance, Hippolytus has already become a sharer in the disturbing circuit of communication by which he now possesses the secret of an other, which had been betrayed to him by yet another. Like its original owner (Phaedra), Hippolytus also must

oscillate between the necessity of retaining the secret within and the desire to betray it too to still another. But *because* of that resistance, we perceive the first sign of the duality of the self in Hippolytus' famous cry: my tongue (*glōssa*) has sworn, but my mind (*phrēn*) has not (612). A gap has now opened up between inside and outside, inversely matching the earlier confession of Phaedra: my hands are clean (*hagnai*) but my mind (*phrēn*) is polluted (*miasma*) (317).

There are formal resemblances between the two statements, but the paradox of Hippolytus' words is more profound. In confronting the differential between the absolute speech form (the oath) and its context (the secret), he momentarily repudiates the oath to protect the integrity of the self. At the same time, he is betraying that integrity because an oath guarantees at all times that the self is forever bound to its word/Moreover, an oath in itself can be viewed as an autonomous self-validating act, as fidelity to its terms in the human domain is an obligation of the inner self. Its public pronouncement must be matched by an internal determination to remain true to what it has sworn. Hence, although it is the nurse who has required his pledge of silence, oath taking is an act entirely appropriate to Hippolytus. For it is commensurate with that autonomous "subjective containment" that virginity can represent, and the virtue of keeping that oath in the moral sphere finds its logical equivalent in the virtue of keeping the physical body pure.

His moment of hesitation, however, is irrevocable; his story has now begun. There is a brief period between his lapse and recovery during which he castigates the duplicity of the other. He reasserts the external dichotomy in the world, as he had done before (80–81), between those who are good and those who are wicked. This time, however, he defines the latter pole as exclusively female (616, 629, 642, 649, 651). In this interval, before the tongue that has sworn accepts the limits that the barrier of the oath has imposed upon its freedom to speak, a torrent of language spills forth from within. Here Hippolytus defines the self at the furthest remove from the other, denying, if he could, the right of speech to the other (645–48), as he strives to heal the cleavage he now feels in his being. Yet at the same time, he has, in effect, left open for the overhearer a potential space in himself where he too might "hide one thing in his heart and

say another" (*Il.* 9.312–13) and where his unswerving attitude might yield to change and reversal (cf. also 1109–10, 1115–17).[75]

As the objective interpreter of the secret, Hippolytus confirms for Phaedra what she already knows. The world will judge her as it does all women, reading her divisions not as a conflictual ambiguity between self and role but only as a generic duplicity. When Hippolytus reiterates that Hesiodic position, he prompts her to close up this enigmatic space between self and role. Her aim is to defeat the image of the counterfeit woman he had assigned to her but she ends in fact by sustaining it. To resolve the "knot of the *logos*," her "double bind" has indeed turned into double dealing. In acceding to the stereotype of feminine nature, the woman reduces complex duality to simple reversal from inside to outside and plots a revenge that comes as close as it can to the general definition of all revenge: that is, "to repeat what was done to you but reversing it on to the other."[76] Because both women and the young occupy spaces on the margins of male society, they are also deemed more marginal to its dominant standards. Their ambiguities therefore leave them both more open to suspicion of their actions and motives. In the case of Hippolytus, the correspondence between them is even closer as the counterfeit charge against Phaedra finds its direct equivalent in his social status as bastard, *nothos* (309, 962, 1083).[77] Phaedra's lying message can therefore persuade Theseus of its veracity because it substitutes one stereotype (adolescent) for the other (woman) and in the process subjects Hippolytus to those same conflicting pressures from inside and outside to which she herself had succumbed.

Thus in the open space on the stage before the oath secures the secret within the self, Hippolytus has unknowingly already included himself as a sharer in Phaedra's scheme. Rejecting complicity with the other (Phaedra), he has, in fact, collaborated in the broader scheme of Aphrodite which, when eros is denied, aims to confound the identity of one with the other by replacing radical separation with hidden identification. When he who has judged is judged in turn on the same terms and then discovers the misfit of inside and outside, only then does he subjectively experience the same cognitive dissonance and acknowledge it too for the other.

The sign of that cognitive dissonance Hippolytus shares with the other is precise and formal, indicated as a purely semantic shift and appropriately placed at the end of his long speech before his father:

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

She practiced virtue (*sōphrosunē*) not being able to be virtuous, while we, having the capacity for *sōphrosunē*, did not use it well. (1034–35)

In the light of Phaedra's own closing words, "he will share in my disease and will learn to *sōphronein*" (730–31), Hippolytus' statement seems to fulfill her prediction *to* the letter, and *in* the letter. Indeed his words seem to distill the issues of the play into a semiotic lesson on the potential of the signifier to include more than one signified and that of the speaker to distinguish between competence in the abstract rule (*langue*) and individual performance in the speech act (*parole*). This lesson is nevertheless far from elementary considering the general relationship between language, thought, and consciousness, and the particular relationship language has, as a mode of communication between self and other, with the problems and plot of the drama.

The syntactical relations of Hippolytus' two verses are therefore especially illuminating. The structure divides (or doubles) for each the concept of *sōphrosunē* and then through chiasmus makes one the inverted double of the other. As the grammatical near-asyndeton between the two tells us, they are not interlinked but are rather situated together in a relation of identity in difference. In one sense, we can say that Hippolytus now shares with Phaedra a recognition of verbal paradox that for her revolved around the allied concept of *aidōs* (shame), which although bearing two different and opposing meanings, as she lamented, is nevertheless composed of the same letters (385–87).[78] Hippolytus' statement advances still further. The play on a single word extends from a single observation on the experience of one character (*aidōs* for Phaedra) to a relational term, that of the differential experience of two (*sōphrosunē* for Phaedra and Hippolytus). And in so doing, his statement also recasts as a phenomenon of language (the oxymoron) the psychic phenomenon of a divided self which each had expressed earlier in separate but parallel terms (my hands are pure, my mind is not [Phaedra]; my tongue has sworn, my mind has not [Hippolytus]).

This recognition is critical for acquiring that tragic consciousness which the action of the drama achieves, compelling the self to

relinquish the dream of a pure and univocal language. Such a language would correlate the speakable with the true and would eliminate any semantic confusion between signifier and signified that might make interpretation problematic, subject to the charge of being *asēmos* (nonsignifying, 269, 369) or *parasēmos* (falsely signifying, 1115). Human nature aspires to live in this utopia of signs, either to be reserved as the private property of a single individual and a single point of view or, according to Theseus' dream of two voices (one true, one speaking anything else, 928–29), to serve as a communication to an other whose relation to its speaker would be immediately transparent.

The lessons of language may be viewed as a gain when we consider that "if everything we know is viewed as a transition from something else, every experience must have two sides; and either every name must have a double meaning, or else for every meaning there must be two names."[79] Phaedra is therefore essential to Hippolytus, we might say, for only through the exchange of roles with her does he come to acknowledge that *sōphrosunē* indeed has a double meaning—for himself and for her—and that for this expanded definition, there are indeed two names, Hippolytus and Phaedra, who are entitled to share it.[80] On the other hand, there is loss, if ambiguity can be said to contaminate this ideal of a pure and innocent language and to violate unity of word and meaning either with confusing admixtures or, alternatively, through fragmentation and dispersal of its "original" signification. In this sense, our drama amplifies the tragic lesson by choosing for word play the specific terms for purity (both *aidōs* and *sōphrosunē*) and adjusting that game to the demands of Aphrodite in the links it makes between speech and sexuality.

The secret—the knowledge of adulterous desire—which both now share and both would deny, would seem to be the route in this play to articulating a language and hence a consciousness more adequate to the complex geography of body and world than the shallow surfaces of the untested meadow and the unchallenged language of the self would allow. Double speaking is inevitable in the face of adulterous desire, which indeed contaminates social meanings and confuses interpretation of social roles. It is unspeakable for Phaedra in terms of the proprieties of the social code which calls it *aischrologia* (shameful talk). It is unspeakable now for Hippolytus through the

oath that constrains his speech. Hence language is thickened through the riddling ambiguities to which he must resort and opens plain speaking to the charge of duplicity. And there is no way in this system of controlling language (or eros), least of all another oath, which as a transaction between self and the world beyond (because gods, not mortals, punish perjurers) has no human context to support it.

Double speaking is perhaps a disease that the bewildered Hippolytus suspects is being attributed to him (933) when Theseus himself first enigmatically utters his wish for the two voices that would distinguish in the self the true from the false word (927–29). But it is an inevitable disease, inflicted first on Phaedra as the secret of Aphrodite, which in arousing simultaneous desire for its fulfillment and its repression, necessarily recodes language into the double entendre. And, as Aphrodite's secret of desire, owned or disowned (by both Phaedra and Hippolytus), it, like desire itself, cannot be contained but instead finds devious paths of language in order to entice the one who has refused Aphrodite into the mysteries of worldly communication.

Hippolytus had been privy to the sacred mysteries of Demeter, as the text tells us when it arranges Phaedra's first glimpse of him at the moment when he came to Athens for initiation (25), thereby directing our attention to the potential parallel between sacred and profane secrets, both of which are *aporrhēta*, unspeakable in their respective milieux.[81] That mystery of Aphrodite will eventually reveal itself as the supernatural epiphany which the goddess shares with Poseidon and which initiates the body of Hippolytus into a demonic version of eros. But the initiation had begun far earlier with the "mystery" at Troezen: that is, the secret desire of the silent Phaedra, which organizes the entire play around the notions of hiding and revealing, speech and silence, because "the *muthos* is not *koinos* (shared) in any way" (609; cf. especially 293–96) and Phaedra is ruined once she has revealed her woes to the light (368). The nurse says enigmatically that she will speak only "to those within" (524), a mystic formula that conceals her plan to address Hippolytus in the secret interior of the house, while the chorus, hearing Phaedra's report of the muffled words of Hippolytus (which are uttered still inside), responds with the pronouncement: he has revealed the secret, that is, has shown forth the hidden things (*ta krupt' ekpephēne*,

594). Theseus continues the theme of unspeakability in another way when he responds with horror to the sight of his dead wife (*ou rhēton*, 846) and once he has read the message of the *deltos* (*ou lekton*, 875 [pace Barrett]). But it is Hippolytus, bound by his oath of silence, who must play the initiate, because in confronting his father he may not reveal what is forbidden (*ou themis*) to tell to those who do not know (1033).[82]

At the beginning of the play, the servant had inquired of Hippolytus: do you know what *nomos*, what rule is established for mortals in regard to social relations? and Hippolytus had replied: "I do not know" (*ouk oida*, 90–91). But when all his words have failed and he leaves the stage, he goes as the true initiate, that is, one who knows but cannot speak. Now his last despairing cry, "I know this but I don't know *how* to declare it" (*oida d'ouch hopōs phrasō*, 1091), suggests that with her mysteries Aphrodite has also revealed how his refusal of eros has affected his general status as a speaking subject in his society.

Eros and Logos

From this perspective let us reexamine the judgment, shared by many critics, that language in the play operates in a "pessimistic and regressive frame as an instrument of seduction and entrapment, of compromise and theft, or as an impotent means and a dismal failure" in human relations.[83] It is true, of course, that the play offers a wide spectrum of different forms of communication, all of which end in what might be called a "failure" of *logos*. But such an assessment perhaps states the problem in reverse, in that it does not consider relations of cause and effect: that is, the failure of *logos* is directly related to and determined by the prior "failure" of eros. In order to understand what happens in the domain of the *logos*, it is the extent and significance of this first failure that we must rather measure.

Eros itself is the representative form of communication, of reciprocity and exchange in the world. Physical in nature, it is culturally regulated as a communication between the proper partners in the social system of marriage. That system, like a system of language, articulates its own proper grammatical rules and in the social differentiations it enforces, it is designed to produce unambiguous meanings. In this system, "women, like words, are signs to be communicated and exchanged among men," but "women too, as persons, are generators of signs. . . . In the matrimonial dialogue of men, woman is never purely what is spoken about; for if women in general represent a certain category of signs, destined to a certain kind of communication, each woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent, before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet. In contrast to words, which have become wholly signs, woman has remained at once a sign and a value."[84]

In refusing eros, then, Hippolytus has refused to enter into that other system of communication in which the self in all its senses might be integrated. Instead, with the horses whose ways he shares (1219–20), whom he can both see and touch, he may speak perhaps but they cannot reply in kind. On the other hand, he reserves his language (and only his language) for the ears of the goddess whom, according to the rules that govern relations between mortals and immortals, he cannot see and cannot touch. In that virginal enclosure of the meadow (or mountains or shore), he is still outside human communication with others not exactly like himself, and more particularly, outside contact with that other goddess, who, as the servant reminds Hippolytus at the beginning of the play, wishes, like all mortals and all gods, to be addressed by an other (*en d'euprosēgoroisin*, 95). To honor the goddess here means to address her image that stands at the doors of his house (99) because, as the servant says, she is *semnē* (august) and *episēmos*—that is, significant—bearing the mark of a sign, like a device on a coin. But Hippolytus has no words for her except to wish her a long goodbye (113).

This modest dialogue is worth recalling when, after the nurse has revealed the secret to him, Hippolytus utters his long denunciation of all women. Just before he expresses the wish to cleanse his ears with pure running streams, he utters another more dramatic wish: no servant should be able to come near a woman. Rather women should dwell together (*sugkatoikizein*) with savage beasts who have no voice. In this way, he would never have to address (*prosphōnein*) any one of them nor receive in return from them any voiced utterance (645–48). The reason is specific: "But as things are," he says, "the women sit *within* and in their wickedness contrive wild schemes and these their servants bear to the world *outside*" (649–50). His indictment is also generic. Hippolytus, we might say, desires to

repress all the "speaking signs" that are women. While reserving the right of speech for himself, he forbids women to communicate in any system of exchange and reciprocity. The earlier part of his long diatribe supports this interpretation: there he reveals how intimately this desire for linguistic univocality and control is linked to his repression of eros.

Woman indeed is a sign for Hippolytus, but a counterfeit sign and therefore an unworthy source from which to beget children. Rather he proposes that "mortals deposit in the temples of the gods either bronze or iron or gold in order to buy the seed of children, each man according to the amount appropriate to his assessment. Then one could live in houses that are forever free of the female" (616–24).

In purchasing children in the temples, Hippolytus bypasses that shadowy ambiguous interior of the woman and the house in favor of the domain of the sacred. And he bypasses that ambiguous realm of social relations in favor of a direct and unerring judgment of the gods on a man's value. Instead of matrimonial exchange and reciprocity, he prefers the commercial exchange of coinage—palpable tokens of the self's worth. He thus indicates his desire for a world without dissonance and without dialogue, refusing any resignation to ambiguous mixtures which the Hesiodic view accepts as the human condition once men have been separated from the gods. Like Hesiod, Hippolytus describes woman in terms that recall the creation of Pandora—a beautiful form, an *agalma*, like a statue that one must adorn (631), but a counterfeit evil within (616). In the Hesiodic economy, however, man cannot dispense with that beautiful evil with which he must dwell. Although she sits within the house and drains his resources, she is nonetheless essential precisely because of her reproductive function by which a man continues the paternal line. Hesiod accepts the compromise that requires a man to accept an other into his house, and through the contract of marriage to bear legitimate children he can claim as his own. But Hippolytus rejects this solution, which only fictively fulfills the "dream of a purely paternal heredity that continually haunts the Greek imagination."[85] This counterfeit woman cannot bear true children, that is, true to the autonomous masculine self whom they cannot perfectly reproduce. Instead, Hippolytus fashions another fiction that would guarantee progeny as continuing signs of the self. As objects exchanged for true and durable coins, they would then forever bear the stamp of a single original identity which can never be lost.

In Hippolytus' world, then, woman is truly the other with whom dialogue is refused. Alone in this world, he is free to speak as he is free to roam in those external spaces where Phaedra's verbal imaginings also wander in order to escape from the imprisoning word of the secret. But in the social system of communication, it is Hippolytus, in truth, who is the other. He is the one who in essence is not a "speaking sign"; figuratively, as I have indicated, because in maintaining his virginal status he has excluded himself from the system, and literally in the fact, as he will later acknowledge, that he is unaccustomed to speak before those who are not identical to himself (986–87). The unspeakable secret is alien to him. Yet paradoxically, the silence its repression requires better exemplifies the permanent aspect of "nonspeaking" that his virginal condition of "subjective containment" implies. In addition, the oath demanded by the nurse, which formally restrains his speech, corresponds in its inhibiting effect on verbal expression to the condition of physical restraint that the denial of eros imposes. This oath of silence to the nurse serves the more direct needs of the plot, but the second one, volunteered by Hippolytus in his own defense, shows in yet another way why an oath in itself is appropriately now his only verbal recourse. For in general, an oath, construed as a speech act, is an isolating form of utterance as it breaks with dialogic exchange and its value to the other depends wholly on the representation of the speaker who swears it. How could its use not then only condemn Hippolytus further in his father's eyes? (1025–40; 1054–57; cf. 960–61).

The oath, apart from a context in which the self is known to its society, might be termed a disembodied voice. It corresponds on a symbolic level to the strategies of the plot, which works its baneful effects through speech detached from the physical presence of its original speaker and destined to circulate without that face-to-face contact which might guarantee its trustworthiness. The text explicitly formulates this principle in Phaedra's statement that applies to her, but still more to Hippolytus: "For there is nothing trustworthy (*piston*) in the tongue, which knows how to admonish the thoughts of someone else but which itself by itself (*autē d'huph' hautēs*), wins a multitude of troubles" (395–97).

Those critics who study the status of language in the play, focus-

ing either on the abstract dialectic between speech and silence or taking inventory of the varied and intricate forms of communication which the drama employs, have much to teach us about Euripidean attitudes and techniques.[86] But to grasp more fully why and how communication operates in the *Hippolytus* as it does, we need to look to the larger questions involving the plot—how does it operate and what purposes does it serve? In this perspective, Hippolytus himself is the determining factor, who, as the precision of tragic justice requires, needs (and receives) a plot made expressly for him. That is, the plot must reply to his first refusal to address the statue of Aphrodite on stage, which he will only greet from afar (102), and to the nature of his relation with Artemis, whose voice (*audē*) he hears but whose eye (*omma*) he cannot see (86). Hippolytus will feel, as we know, a rift between the tongue and the *phrēn*, but the more fundamental cleavage in his system is that between the tongue (or the ear) and the eye.

The Tongue, the Ear, and the Eye

Hippolytus fetishizes the ear, as it were, first, as we have seen, through his anguish at its penetration by the secret and then again when he enquires of Theseus whether one of his friends has slandered him (*dieballe*) "into" his father's ear (932–33). And it is no coincidence that the first sign of the demonic epiphany is that terrible chthonic echo, that deep-booming roar, terrifying to hear, to which the first response is that of the horses, who prick up their ears and raise their heads to heaven (1201–4). In the first part of the play, all long to hear the secret (270, 344), and in the revelation of the fateful name, Hippolytus' words about Artemis—*kluōn audēs*—recur exactly when the nurse asks: do you speak of (*audāis*) Hippolytus? and Phaedra replies: you hear it (*klueis*) from yourself, not from me (352–53). The chorus immediately responds in the same acoustical code: you have heard (*aies*), you have heard (*eklues*) of the sufferings of our mistress which are unhearable (*anēkousta*), unfit to hear (362–63).

But Hippolytus will indeed hear these things inside and his voice will in turn be overheard by the other, first from within, when she eavesdrops at the door of the house, and then when she remains unperceived on stage while he speaks outside. The scene at the door

is a remarkable coup de théâtre between the chorus and Phaedra which, let us note, focuses on the voice which can be heard but whose author cannot be seen.[87]

Phaedra hears the voice first, indistinct, and then identifies it as that of Hippolytus, who "is speaking terrible evils," while the chorus, further away, now hears the voice, although not clearly. They perceive only the cry coming through the doors until Phaedra finally repeats the message she hears, as he speaks forth (*exaudei*, 590).[88] These painstaking details serve more than a purely theatrical function. Indeed, we will not overlook their significance if we recall that the tragedy now fully begins with the voice of Hippolytus himself. For he has come out upon the stage where he and Phaedra are both present for the first time—but not to each other—so that she *hears* every terrible word he utters but he does not at all *see* her eye. We understand therefore why these earlier fateful lines must echo again at the end, when the chariot overturns and Hippolytus' head is crushed against the rocks. Now one last time he will speak forth in the same way (*exaudei*), uttering terrible things to hear (*kluein*, 1239).

Consider too that before this, Hippolytus will have come again having *heard* the shout of his father, and *not knowing* the news, he will, just like the nurse with Phaedra, wish to *hear* it from the other (904; cf. 344). Theseus, on the other hand, his patience exhausted, will cry out to his servants: Won't you drag him away? Have you not *heard* me now for a long time addressing (*prounneponta*) him for banishment (1085)? almost exactly repeating the servant's admonishment of Hippolytus to address (*prosennepeis*) the figure of Aphrodite (99).

Hippolytus will wish at the moment of direst need that the house could utter a voice and bear witness for him, but it would be a voiceless witness, as his father reminds him, because it is the deed itself that speaks (1077).[89] What he requires, most of all, is an eyewitness since Phaedra no longer lives, no longer "sees the light" (1023). It is worth observing that not any witness will do, because what he wants most of all is not an other who is truly an other but a carbon copy, one, he says, "just like himself" (1022). By contrast, the nurse can call upon the chorus to witness her zeal in her mistress' misfortunes (287), as the women are present face-to-face with her upon the stage. And the chorus, in turn, assumes that Theseus, were he at

home, could judge the nature of Phaedra's symptoms by looking at her face (280). But now that Phaedra herself is a witness (the clearest witness of all because she is a corpse) present on stage before his eyes (972), Theseus must wish that there would be some clear token of proof (*tekmērion*) for mortals of their friends and some means of distinguishing their minds (*diagnōsin phrenōn*, 925–26). "What oaths," after all, Hippolytus' father had said, "what words would be more powerful proof than this body?" (960). Conversely, Hippolytus realizes that if he indeed "loosens his mouth" (*luō stoma*, 1060) to break the oath he had made to the nurse, he could still never persuade the other, his father, of the truth.

Here in this juridical procedure, when Hippolytus must present his face to his father, the split he has made in his life between voice (*audē*) and sight (*omma*) assumes its fullest implications. At one end of the visual spectrum is eros, which drips desire from the eyes (525–26) in accordance with Greek psychological notions that persistently associate eros with the eye of the other. Phaedra had been possessed in her heart of a terrible eros when she saw Hippolytus at Athens and dedicated a temple to her passion on the rock of the Acropolis which stands as a silent lookout (*katopsion*) of her love, gazing now over the gulf to Troezen (26–34). Not to see or be seen then means not to love but rather to stand outside the range in which the attractive magnet of desire works its effects. In the general sphere of social relations, however, not to see or be seen also means to have no reciprocity of regard by which one can accurately judge when looking at the face of the other and conversely, by which one can find an other, an eyewitness, to verify the self, whether to judge—or to pity and mourn.

Without that other, one might wish that the house whose facade is visible on stage could take voice and speak as a witness (1074–75). Or one might long for the impossible—to divide oneself into two: "Would that I were able to stand opposite and look at myself (*prosblepein*), so that I could weep for myself at the woes I am suffering" (1078–79).[90]

Let us clarify this problem of sight and the eye. It is not, of course, that Hippolytus does not see. Rather, it is the mode of his seeing that counts. His own words give us the clues: "I do not know the *praxis* of eros, except having heard of it by speech (*kluōn logōi*) and seeing (*leussōn*) it in painting (*graphēi*). For I am not eager to look upon (*skopein*) these things, having a maiden soul (*parthenon psychēn*," 1004–6).

His is an observing and distanced view of life; he sees objects rather than subjects—an appropriate mode for one who greets Aphrodite from afar. Hippolytus knows the body of the other as a sculpted form, as an *agalma*, like the statue of Artemis which stands in for the goddess, and he is guardian, in fact, of all her images (*phulax agalmatōn*, 1399). For him the woman is also an *agalma* which her husband adorns as Hippolytus had adorned the statue of Artemis with the garland of flowers. As a passive object endowed with little sense, this type of woman is little less repugnant to him than the other kind—the intelligent woman (*phronousa*) who, in his view, will use her wits only for contriving evil (641–44).

It is in Phaedra's interest, of course, to leave behind these "clearest proofs" (972), the visible evidence of the body and the objectified speech of the *deltos*. But Hippolytus too, in his plans for acquiring children, expressed his wish for a clear proof of identity, the material substance of coinage which answers to an external standard of value. Even more, Phaedra's action returns against him a caricature of his image of the feminine: an *agalma* that is the lifeless body and the *deltos* which conceals its duplicity. Now, as a "dead letter," she can truly be only a "speaking sign" (cf. 857). It is appropriate too that this tableau of sculpture and inscription will prove to destroy him, because his view of the world allows him to see only secondhand, through pictures and books.[91] But we are in the theater now where the spectator too may see from afar. Let us turn then to the "viewing place," the *theatron*, to take the measure of its potential lessons for the self.

The Theater, Identity, and the Self

The spectacle Phaedra arranges as her last appearance on stage is well devised as an act of theater—her body as a bitter spectacle, a bitter *théa* (809). Theseus is the first to behold the sight (the *théa*) when he has the doors opened in order to view it. He has just returned from a mission as a sacred observer, a *theōros* (792), but now discarding the woven garland that was the sign of his happy errand, he can only declare himself an unfortunate *theōros* (806–7). Hippolytus is the next to view this *théa*. Having left her, as he says,

still "looking at the light," he regards her face-to-face for the first time now that she is dead and expresses amazement, the *thauma* that all spectacles arouse in the beholder (905–8).

Reference to theatrical spectacle will recur in a cognate word at the end of the text when the epiphany of divine power is truly revealed, as it brings together those two sensory affects of sight and sound which Hippolytus had earlier sundered. First, sound alone: then sight and sound together. At the first subterranean roar, the wave rose up to heaven "so that my eye," says the messenger, "was deprived of seeing the shores of Sciron" (1207–8). But what follows next, once the wave has cast up the bull from the sea, is another terrible sound, which fills up the whole earth; and for those who were looking, there appeared a spectacle (*theama*), too great to behold, which terrified the horses into their mad stampede (1215–18). The bull keeps appearing before them (*prouphaineto*, 1228), but now as a silent vision it redirects the horses and chariot to ruin until in the manner of epiphanies it finally disappears with the horses, who vanish too.

For the messenger, the apparition had provided a great and terrible spectacle, which he viewed from afar in company with the other onlookers and which he can carry back as an eyewitness report to share with those other spectators on stage. But for Hippolytus, it provided the most dramatic moment of his life, when he acted and was acted upon in confrontation with the forces of beasts and gods.

Aphrodite and Poseidon, it is true, arranged this remarkable ordeal for Hippolytus. Theseus was its more immediate cause, but Phaedra, of course, was its true agent. Thus to grasp the import of this epiphany within the visual code we have been following, let us look back to an earlier moment in the text for another word from the theatrical lexicon, a word, in fact, among the last that Hippolytus utters in his long speech against women. "I will go away and keep silent, but when my father returns, so will I, and I will be a spectator (*theasomai*), looking at the way that you will look at (*prosopsēi*) him" (661–63).[92]

What happens is that she will be the *théa*, the spectacle, that all will behold and it is Hippolytus who will be obliged to present his *prosōpon* before his father (947; cf. 1458). Now he has been assigned the leading part in the drama. Accused of committing an act he did not commit, he becomes an actor in both senses of the word—as one

who puts on a *prosōpon* to assume the identity of an other (Phaedra) and as one who must now enter into dialogue with an other (Theseus) which will lead to the final action of the play. Scheduled to play a role that the other had transferred to him, he will find himself accused of only playing a role, showing a *prosōpon* that will be viewed merely as a mask, offering a false mirror of the self in the eyes of the other.

The wish cited above, "would that I could stand opposite and look at myself so that I could weep for my sufferings" (1078), can never be fulfilled except with the experience of the mirror, which teaches the self the first lesson of perspective on its own alterity. For in viewing oneself in a mirror, one sees oneself both as a subject seeing and as an object being seen. Through it therefore one takes the first step toward recognizing that the identity of the self must always include "the representation of its subjectivity in relation to an other."[93] "The mirror," as Vernant remarks, "is the means to know oneself, to lose oneself, to refind oneself, but on condition of separating oneself, dividing oneself, posing oneself at a distance from oneself, as self to other, in order to attain an objective figure of the subject."[94]

Narcissus finds a mirror in which he misrecognizes the self for the other. But Hippolytus, when others misrecognize the self, discovers for the first time the need for a mirror to return to him an objective acknowledgment of the self's experience. Yet Narcissus and Hippolytus meet at the same point: in the absence of the other, the self can only divide (or double) and can only hopelessly yearn to play both parts of self and other. Narcissus wastes away, caught in the specular fascination of impossible desire, doomed only to gaze at the surface of the water but never to experience its depths. Hippolytus, however, as he mounts the chariot and takes up the reins of the horses who will lead him to disaster, goes on to act out the consequences of having refused to meet the eye (or touch) of the other in human contact, and he does so, as we have already seen, through an active reprise of those terms belonging to his secret double, the woman—terms that exemplify the culture's perception of her body: that *dustropos harmonia*, that divided self, which suffers in eros and childbirth.

The horses with whom he identified himself indeed prove to be the other—creatures alien to the self—though, as he reproaches

them, they were his own, reared and nurtured by his own hand (1240, 1356). And in the same breath (1242) he now calls for an other—a man—who would be beside him to save him. But the others, his companions, are left far behind (1243–44), no longer even able to witness the final spectacle of his ruin.

Upon his return to the stage after the disaster, Artemis is waiting there, having already bidden Theseus to *hear* the story she will recount (1283, 1296, 1314), and the last implications of "hearing her voice, but not seeing her eye" are revealed. We note that now when she addresses Hippolytus, he no longer responds to her presence by referring to the voice he is used to hearing. Rather, he acknowledges her proximity by alluding to the perfume of her divine emanation (*osmēs pneuma*, 1391–92), and his stress now falls on the aspect of sight. Although the rules had precluded his sight of her, the converse need not, of course, apply to the goddess. Now Hippolytus insists that he be seen by an other: first, Zeus (1363), whose eye Theseus had accused him of dishonoring (886), and then Artemis herself: "Do you *see* me, miserable in the state that I am?" (1395). What he demands from her is that she play the role he could not accomplish by himself—to be the other who stands opposite and looks at him so as to weep for his sufferings (1078–79). "I *see*," she says, but according to the same rules, "it is not *themis* for a goddess to shed tears from her eyes," still less permitted to pollute the immortal eye with the sight of the dying (1396, 1437–38). Such are the restraints in the system, then, that necessarily limit the value of a divine regard in the human world.

Hippolytus will obtain, however, a version of that earlier wish. Continuing to weep for himself, he goes forth with his comrades to meet his ruin (1178).[95] But once he no longer "looks upon the light," there will be others to weep for him. The chorus in their closing lines will refer to the common grief (*koinon achos*) that all the citizens share and to the tears that will follow hereafter (1462–64). In the cult that is founded for him for the future, the *muthos* has indeed become *koinos* (cf. 609); it is the one, however, he has shared with Phaedra (cf. *koinēi metaschōn*, 731). The others, the maidens, will forever mourn for him as the other, mourning in truth for themselves.[96]

Once the drama, the spectacle, is over and the body has gone to

the "hiding places of dark earth into the house of Hades, the unseen," (Theog. 243), then and only then will hearing and the voice by itself come into their own. In his second oath sworn before his father, Hippolytus had prayed that if he proved a base man, he should perish *akleēs* (without *kleos*, renown) and *anōnumos*, without a name (1028, 1031). The oath did not save him from destruction, but Artemis' prophecy, by answering the terms it proposed, saves the power which the oath must have to guarantee the truth. For as she says, "there will always be a concern for making song (*mousopoios . . . merimna*) for you on the part of the maidens, and not without a name (*anōnumos*) will the eros of Phaedra for you be kept silent" (1428–30).

After death, only the name and the story remain: in short, a *kleos*—for others to tell and for others to hear (*kluō*)— in the long span of time—the *muthos* of himself and of Phaedra whose own longing for *eukleia*[97] brought all the events to pass.[98] By these terms, Hippolytus achieves the immortal status he had longed for, given to him as a gift by the one whose voice he had heard but whose eye he did not see. And the process has already begun in the grief we witness on stage; it extends into the future through Theseus' last words, those he addresses to Aphrodite: I will remember (*mnēsomai*) the evils you wrought (1461).

Theseus' promise provides the transition from personal experience to collective commemoration in the name of Aphrodite and fittingly closes this last scene in which Hippolytus, in his last mortal moments, repairs his relationship with the other, his father. That is, he now reverses the otherness his father had assigned to him: first, as bastard, and more recently as a *xenos* (stranger/exile), the status that marks the extreme limit of alienation in social relations (1085).

The previous dialogue with his father showed at the end what it meant to have no other—as witness or mourner. But the exchange of roles that Phaedra brought about introduces Hippolytus to the principle of reciprocity. When required for the first time to stand in the place of the other (Phaedra), he is also required, for purposes of persuasion, to invoke a rhetorical identification with the other (Theseus). Hence he must reverse the roles between speaker and hearer in order to share the perspective of the other. "If I were the father and you were the son . . ." (1042), he says. The technique does not succeed,

but it does prepare him for the future when, in their shared suffering, he and his father exchange sentiments of mutual pity. Thus to Hippolytus' statement, "I grieve for you more than for myself," his father replies, "If only I could be the corpse in place of you" (1409–10). And on these same terms, the son can forgive his father, for "to forgive" in Greek is *suggignoskein*, "to know something with" someone else, and through the consciousness of that shared knowledge, to forgive. In return then for the curses, whose verbal power Theseus has released (*ephiēmi*, 1324) to destroy his son, Hippolytus now grants him release (*aphiēmi*, 1450) from blood guilt, sealing his word with Artemis as his witness (*marturomai*, 1451). Before he could only release (*aphiēmi*) his tongue to speak through necessity in his own defense (991), a tongue constrained by the oath he had sworn to the nurse. But now he validates at last the power of his own *logos* through his shared experience with the other.

This scene also repairs that other sensory defect to which his relation with Artemis had consigned him, that is, of touch. For having refused the touch of the other, he could not himself be touched until he had lived through the sequence of events that followed from seeming to have "touched" what he was forbidden to touch (652, 885, 1002, 1044, 1086). Given the premises of his existence, his earlier *logos* can only fail, for the one who is not open to eros is also not open to persuasion, and on that same principle he will also have no convincing means by which to persuade the other. Instead, when he tries to exercise *peithō* (persuasion), the other judges his words as deceptive seduction and false rhetoric.[99]

By the same logic, the one who is open to contact with others is also open to eros, and open finally too to persuasion. As a result, the entire chain was set into motion by the touch of another's hand, when the nurse supplicated Phaedra. She held fast to her hand, vowing never to let go (326; cf. 335), demanding that the queen *look* at her (300) and *touching* her first with the simple mention of Hippolytus' name (310). Yet the chain also depended on the one from whose eyes tears were able to fall and who would turn her own eye away in shame (245–46). So to protect herself lest she be seen among the wicked among mortals (428, 430), Phaedra became, in turn, an evil to him (729). Accusing him of "dishonoring the majestic eye of Zeus" (886), she gave him that *prosōpon* that mirrored her own.

Time, the Mirror, and the Virgin

The mirror effect is the operative term in the drama that will finally prove to govern the more general patterns of imitation. I invoked it just now metaphorically so as to bring us back to the text itself. We have already seen the import of Hippolytus' impossible wish "to stand opposite and look at himself" (1078–79) and how it can be read with reference to a mirror. But in view of an earlier direct mention of a mirror (*katoptron*), his turn of phrase gains in significance as an oblique reminder to us of that first allusion and its context. Phaedra is the speaker and the statement that closes her great speech on the mysteries of life is strangely enigmatic: "Only this, they say, competes in life, a good and upright judgment (*gnōmē*) for the one who has it, but the wicked among men time shows forth, when it happens to, when before them as before a young virgin, time sets up its mirror. Among these may I never be seen" (426–30).

The mirror, as Barrett remarks, is both self-revealing where one sees oneself, or other-revealing, where one is seen, revealing it to another.[100] But the notion of the mirror is far more extensive, since it applies not to one character but to two, and the image that links together time, the mirror, and the virgin concentrates in its optic all the significant problems of the drama. It holds the key to its structures and to its underlying mythic patterns, as we will see, making use of all the dazzling complexities that a play of mirrors affords. Unlike Hippolytus, Phaedra as a woman indeed has knowledge of the mirror in all of its meanings—for herself and for the other, most especially in its capacity to double the self in its reflected image. The drama is built on the contrast in access to modes of vision, perception, and knowledge as it counters Hippolytus' preference for the ear over the eye with Phaedra's heightened awareness of the uses of seeing and being seen, exemplified in the contradictory, even antithetical qualities associated with the mirror.

A brief inventory of these will suggest why Phaedra's curious remarks merit closer inspection and why, at this late stage in our study, it is worth looking over the ensemble of the drama from the perspective afforded by the key symbol of the play that is the mirror. The mirror is that which reveals the true and yet offers a deceptive illusion. It reflects back the image of feminine vanity, but it offers too

the means for deep introspection. It poses at its most problematic conjunction the division between being and seeming, between seeing oneself for oneself and how one is seen by others.[101] In embracing the whole of the phenomenal world, *ta phainomena*, the mirror encompasses the spectrum of that which one sees with the eye of eros and the eye of knowledge. Thus it includes in its purview the illusion of appearances with their refractions and distortions of the real, but it also shows us what is revealed outside, what is brought to light in the spectacle of divine epiphany and its aftermath.

Phaedra's struggle is between that interior self and her external image in the eyes of society, and she chooses finally to dishonor herself by honoring the conventions that regulate her life. At stake, let us not forget, are her children, who require their parents' *eukleia*, good name, in order to speak freely in the world (421–25). At stake too is the self that will feel radically dishonored by the words of an other. But in its new representation of Phaedra, the play can probe the dialectic of reality and appearance, of being and seeming,[102] and can through the mirror that belongs to Aphrodite pose the fundamental epistemological questions of human life.

Let me clarify what we might infer from the mirror of Aphrodite by contrasting it with another mode of knowing, one more typical for tragedy, namely, that of Apollo. In Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, we meet the sixth combatant, Amphiaraus, the seer who alone among all the warriors carries a blank shield, without a visible sign to the outside world, because he would rather *be aristos*, than *seem* so, "reaping the deep furrow through his mind (*phrēn*) from which trustworthy counsels burgeon forth" (*Sept.* 591–94). In the eyes of the Theban Eteocles, he is acknowledged as possessing the four essential virtues. He is *dikaios* (just), *agathos* (brave/good), *eusebēs* (righteous), and above all, *sōphrōn* (prudent, 610), because he knows how to speak the appropriate words, *legein ta kairia*, 619, having the stability of an interior self that knows what to bring forth from his mouth and what to keep hidden within. But he is also the great prophet of Apollo, who mediates between divine and human worlds. As seer, he has a synoptic vision of past, present, and future. He knows his mortal limits—knows them too well—for he prophesies the very day of his death. But he knows too the cult that awaits him when he will be buried in the earth of the other city that is

Thebes (*Sept.* 587–88). Thus to speak *ta kairia* means that he controls for himself the polysemy of language but also that he has the capacity to speak the ambiguous language of oracles to an other (Eteocles) whose fate will validate the veridical Apollonian word which comes forth from Delphi.[103]

In Aphrodite's play, Eros takes the place of Apollo (and Zeus), as the chorus seems to tell us after the nurse has taken Phaedra's secret inside the house and they begin a great hymn to this god who "drips desire from the eyes" (525). In vain, they say, we offer sacrifice by the Alpheius (Olympia) and at Delphi, but Eros, the tyrant of men, we do not worship. Rather than to the inmost shrine at Delphi from which prophecy issues forth, one must give reverence to the keeper of the keys of the inmost chambers of love (*philtatōn thalamōn kleidouchon*, 540) where the *logos* has no *mantis* (seer), the *kairos* (the opportune time/place) is not clear, and no one knows how to read the signs without error (269, 346, 386, 585).[104]

The seer, as the bearer of Apollo's word, needs no other and can see without being seen (the blank shield). The woman, however, as the agent of Aphrodite, is at the opposite end of the spectrum; she needs the polished surface of the mirror because society requires, above all, that she see herself through others' eyes. But the language of furrow and field as well as the seer's contact with time and process are borrowed from the agricultural world where the feminine earth sown and reaped by man now supplies the metaphorical field he finds within himself, a process that the Greek idiom more typically exemplifies through the career of the *parthenos*. Like the meadow, she must not lie unworked for too long, but must be transformed from its flowering surface to a deep furrow. The woman, like Amphiaraus, has a *sōphrosunē*, but, as the chorus says immediately after Phaedra's allusion to the mirror, its function is to reap noble *doxa* (glory/reputation, 431–32), a trait that includes the visible phenomena of the social domain.

In Aphrodite's world, the woman has insight drawn from her experience of the social and physical body, because time has taught her much from which she can take her counsels (375–76) and has given her a mirror as an instrument of double vision:[105] first, as the truth and the semblance of the true, and second, as the eye of the self and the eye of the other. Time will indeed reveal her to herself. Yet because self and other coincide in the image of the *parthenos*, reminiscent of

an anterior state in her life but corresponding to the present moment of his, Phaedra possesses the only means by which Hippolytus can, as the *parthenos*, see the self, particularly in a perspective of time.[106]

REVERSING THE IMAGE That medium is the mirror and we can only grasp the full extent of its power in the play if we recall the simple fact that the mirror not only reflects but that what it reflects must also be a *reversed* image which is returned to the one who gazes in it (cf. e.g., Pl. *Ti.* 46a–b). In invoking the image of the mirror and linking it to time, Phaedra has indeed activated the dynamic mechanism of the plot, which works precisely by reversing the image of one for the other and by playing out in the dramatic sequence of events the interrelations of being and seeming to which the mirror naturally lends itself. In the vision of the reversed image that governs the play, what is the peripeteia here, that formal reversal of one state into its opposite, if not a turnabout that reverses the image of the self and projects it onto the other? And what is the message on the *deltos* ("he desires me" versus "I desire him"), if not a species of reversal we might call "mirror writing"? And the rhetorical play with *sōphrosunē*, which I earlier called a chiasmus, might well be recoded in visual terms to suggest that the first sentence is but the mirror image of the second.[107]

Better yet are the words of the servant in the prologue addressed to the statue of Aphrodite once Hippolytus has left the stage, asking her to pardon (*suggnomēn echein*) the foolishness of the young man, for "one must not imitate or play the part (*ou mimeteon*) of the young who think in this fashion" (117, 114). Rather, he implores her to be *wiser than mortals* and "to *seem* not to *hear* him" (*mē dokēi toutou kluein*, 119). Aphrodite does not reply but Phaedra, her substitute, does as the one who will play the goddess' role in the human domain. For the servant's plea proves to be an exact reversal of what will actually occur in the dramatic structure of the play. Phaedra must *seem* to Hippolytus not to have heard the words he speaks at the door although, of course, that is just what she does. And the result is that she will arrange for the young now to imitate the adult, by giving him the role that the reversal of *prosōpa* will require him to play.

Why should this be so? Because Phaedra rejects the nurse's practical morality which names those as *wise among mortals* who overlook those things that are not *kala* (465–66). After all, says the nurse, "how many do you suppose of those who have good sense, when they see adulterous affairs (*nosounta lektra*), *seem* not to *see*?" (*mē dokein horan*, 463). But among these Phaedra will emphatically refuse to be seen (or to seem to be). That is, she refuses to be an actor—masking the self through playing another's part (413–18). She refuses too to imitate the gods by using as models their mythological amours which the nurse's sophistic rhetoric would have her believe it would be hubristic to reject (474–75). But with the mirror as her instrument, Phaedra does in fact become the *pikra thea*, not only the bitter *spectacle* (*théa*) but paronomastically, the *pikra theá*, the bitter *goddess* (cf. 727), who can make one the unhappy mimetic double of the other, when like the goddess before her she feels Hippolytus' scorn. Phaedra may discover that her own image rejoins the reflection of that other self, her double in the first play, which she had been determined to resist. But through her inversion of the mirror's image, Hippolytus will discover, as we have seen, what it means to have no mirror of the self and an other.

What Phaedra brings about in the play through her concern for the mirror would seem to provide a premature and ironic commentary on a famous text of Plato in which Eros is shown to provide the route to that knowledge of the self through the metaphor of the mirror. As Socrates observes, "the face (*prosōpon*) of the person who looks into another's eyes (*theōmenos*) is shown forth in the optic confronting him as in a mirror, and this we call the *korē* (pupil), for it is the *eidolon* or image of the person. . . . Then an eye viewing another eye and looking at its most perfect part (the *korē*) wherewith it sees, it will thus see itself" (*Alc.* 1.132e–33a).[108]

Phaedra, who brings together time, the virgin, and the mirror, would seem indeed to be the first *korē*, the *parthenos* of the past, who sailed from Crete to Athens for her nuptials with Theseus. And she provides the *prosōpon* for the other *korē*, the *parthenos* Hippolytus, who will pass through the identity of the first one as through a mirror—of illusion and not of truth. Time at the end will show her forth, as she says, a *kakon* to him, and her prediction will also turn out to include Theseus, as the third, in the same charge.[109] But in the temporal span of the drama, when time *seems* to show Hippolytus forth as wicked, the mirror of Phaedra suggests that confronting the interplay of truth and illusion is an essential phase of development

that teaches to all the critical lessons of perspective and configures the self as an entity with both internal and external dimensions. Such an interplay continually subtends the dynamics of daily life in the encounters and exchanges between one self and an other. It also lies at the heart of the experience of the theater as it involves the relations between actors and uses the resources of the stage as well as that of the curious status of theater itself as the frontier between the fictional and the real, the perceived and the true.

The theatrical process opens the way for Hippolytus to achieve an objective status as a subject in the world where Aphrodite, as the play says, rules alone (*mona kratuneis*, 1281), a world of realities that would otherwise lie beyond his ken. The ending of the play with Hippolytus restored to his father and his honor vindicated on stage by the goddess Artemis along with the promise of his cult for the future suggests the validity and necessity of the workings of the plot. The experience is required, it would seem, for authenticating a filial self whose bastard status would have forever cast a long shadow in the social domain on his claims to nobility. More broadly, his implication in the demands of this world also provides the opportune occasion for resisting them, and in so doing, to prove the valor of remaining steadfast to the ideal of a self he continues to cherish. Only by these actions can his life take on meaning as he makes the transition, once his span of time on earth is ended, from a mortal youth doomed in the here and now to the role of perennial cult hero. His experience of pain will provide the symbolic model for the physical experience of the others, the nubile maidens on the eve of their weddings. But weeping for him, as they retell his story of eros refused, they are acknowledging at the same time that his story is one they themselves must not literally imitate.

If the world of Aphrodite replicates, often with startling fidelity, a version of the real world in all its confusions and contradictions, it would also seem to be equivalent to the theater itself, whose play with realities offers the ideal medium for such an initiation. Illusion is what the theatrical effect aims to achieve through its mimetic conventions in order to deceive the audience with its visual representations of the real. That is its formal function. But in cognitive terms, the question of illusion goes still deeper into the content of this drama, where in the binding/unbinding of its plot, it must stage a two-leveled "imitation of an action" in order finally to bring to

light what lies behind the facade of the visual spectacle. Only then is the anagnorisis complete and does ignorance give way to knowledge and illusion to truth.

Yet what is that knowledge and what is that truth if not the acknowledgment that illusion and deception are necessary components of reality for the self in the world, without which that self cannot be constituted?[110] Hippolytus had been tripped up when his chariot overturned through the action of the bull from the sea (1232). But this event comes to pass because, as Theseus says to his son at the end, "I was tripped by an illusion, a *doxa*, that emanated from a divine source" (1414).[111]

The true anagnorisis is, of course, that Aphrodite was the agent, a fact revealed to the audience in the prologue but imparted to Hippolytus only at the very end as the last of all the characters to know. "*Phronō*," I understand, he says, "the divinity who destroyed me" (1401), thereby acknowledging at last, if only for an instant, the power the goddess has had, even over himself. Anagnorisis comes late and hard and finally only through another goddess, Artemis, who will reveal the truth first to Theseus and then to Hippolytus. Without her there would be no full anagnorisis because the characters in the drama could never attain the requisite knowledge from their own participation in the events of the play.

The obstacle, of course, is Phaedra herself, whose desire to repress and deny her secret ultimately leads her to install the fundamental mis-anagnorisis at the heart of the play when she reverses the terms of the message on the tablet and disappears forever from the scene. But the real obstacle, I suggest, lies even deeper in the very structure of the play, which is organized from the outset around a more fundamental reversal, one that the chorus signals to us in the parodos.

There in their conjectures on the possible causes of Phaedra's disease, the women pose a set of questions which are early exemplars of the reversing mirror effect that will regulate the drama. They query whether her husband tends a secret love in the house (151–54), when we know the proper subject is Phaedra herself. Or perhaps some news from faraway Crete (155–159), they suggest, when the cause of her woe, Hippolytus, has just been present on the stage. But it is the preceding strophe that furnishes the essential clue, where the chorus logically begins its enquiry by speculating on a divine

cause for the queen's illness. There are two possibilities. Is she in fact *entheos*, possessed by a god, whether Pan or Hecate or the Corybantes or the Mountain Mother (141–44)—all apposite choices as they are supernatural agents often presumed responsible for erratic behavior. Or, they enquire, is the cause an offense against Dictynna, the Cretan Artemis, for a fault committed in the neglect of her worship? (145–47). This last query, let us note, doubles the mirror effect, offering not one but two pivots of reversal. The goddess in question is, of course, Aphrodite and not Artemis, her polar opposite (and the Artemis of our play, we might even add, is not Cretan but in Troezen). An even more critical point is that it is not Phaedra but Hippolytus who has neglected the worship of a divinity. The nurse, upon discovering the nature of the queen's secret, reads the situation as anyone might expect: "the wrath of the goddess has swooped down upon Phaedra" (438; cf. 476). But, as Aphrodite informs us in the prologue, her wrath has Hippolytus as its target and it (her *orgai*) is to rush down upon his body (1418), as Artemis describes his pitiable physical condition at the end.

The new Phaedra is remarkable, as I have emphasized throughout, in that she resists the dictates of desire and therefore those of the myth itself. Because of that resistance, she obscures the truth that she knows, the secret of the love she bears within her heart. But how could Phaedra know the full truth—that is, the reason this passion afflicts her? How in fact could anyone else on stage know, as the plot Aphrodite has devised reverses the usual mode of her intervention in human affairs?

The Wrath of Aphrodite

According to the inexorable law of the talion that regulates the logic of Greek myth, one extreme attitude or form of behavior is countered exactly by its equally unacceptable reverse, and the offender is punished exactly according to the nature of the offense. Thus the one who refuses eros or scorns Aphrodite is typically smitten in turn with an immoderate eros—transgressive, illicit, or impossible to fulfill.[112] The retaliation may take the form of a simple reversal, as when Atalanta and Melanion, both of whom had resisted marriage, consummate a passionate and sacrilegious union in the temple of the goddess herself.[113] The madness that afflicts the daughters of

Proetus and sends them running wildly to the mountains is erotic in its nature and results directly from divine punishment, this time by Hera (or Dionysus), for an offense that suggests they have been loath to marry.[114] The emphasis in other cases may fall on a disastrous choice of love object, the theme that directly concerns us here. Polyphontes, for example, is struck by an outrageous passion for a bear.[115] But more subtly and more faithful to our own understanding of psychological dynamics, the refusal to desire an other will mean that desire, when it comes, will turn not outward but rather within—to the self as an unattainable object of love like Narcissus, or to those intimately connected with the self in the interior of the house. Myrrha falls in love with her father, Leucippus with his sister, *kata mēnin Aphroditēs*,[116] and by this logic, we might expect Hippolytus to long passionately for his father's wife. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, nowhere else except in this play, the second *Hippolytus*, does Aphrodite punish the one who has rejected desire by inspiring an illicit passion only in an innocent other.[117]

The particular manner in which Hippolytus meets his end, as a driver of horses done to death by his own mares, is a retribution quite appropriate for one who, in refusing the yoke of marriage, finds himself instead bound to the yoke of destruction, thereby reconfirming the familiar Greek associations between sexuality and horse taming. The myth of Glaucus Potnieus, who was devoured by his own horses, supplies a significant parallel as the tradition reports that he too had offended Aphrodite.[118] Let us remember, however, that although Hippolytus fulfills his appointed destiny through Phaedra and Theseus as human actors in the drama, it is achieved at the end through the direct agency of another deity, appropriately enough, Poseidon in his role as Taraxippos, the frightener of horses.[119]

Scholars have long pondered the peculiar anomalies of this story of Hippolytus in which several different motifs oddly converge. The familiar theme of Potiphar's wife, which occurs in Near Eastern sources and elsewhere in Greek myth; the relations of the pre-Greek mother goddess with a young consort; and the combined effect of the bull from the sea and the stampeding horses. Little of the tradition, however, is known before Euripides, although the cult of Hippolytus at Troezen is attested from other sources (e.g., Paus. 2.32.1–3). Such research is valuable for the general study of how mythic traditions develop historically and how the variants of a

given myth as well as the motifs shared by figures of other myths can be integrated into a larger signifying system.[120] My interest here, however, lies in the implications we can draw from the completed ensemble that Euripides presents to us and in how it addresses the particular questions with which tragedy as a genre is concerned. To this end, I want to make problematic the direct intervention of Aphrodite herself as a character in the drama and the fact that the motif of her wrath is explicitly invoked. Given what we know about the earlier version, this motif would not have been at all necessary to the first play. Quite the contrary. Phaedra there, as the "bad woman," is determined to satisfy her desire for Hippolytus at any cost. In this earlier drama, it is generally agreed that Phaedra and the nurse exchanged roles so that, like the nurse in our play, it is Phaedra who would have invoked Aphrodite with sophistic arguments to justify her outrageous actions.[121]

But in the light of the new Phaedra, Aphrodite's appearance in the prologue becomes indispensable for our plot. Practically speaking, we need her to reveal to us the simple fact that Phaedra would not reveal—that is, her love-sickness. For the broader dramatic point, it is essential that Aphrodite reveal herself as the cause of Phaedra's affliction and that it be declared an affliction the queen has done nothing to deserve. Without the framing device of the goddesses whose omniscience situates them outside the domain of human action, the play, as has often been observed, makes ample psychological sense in its treatment of the false accusation as the revenge of the woman scorned and love turned to hate. This story pattern of Potiphar's wife contains all the ingredients necessary for a suspenseful and engrossing tale, pitting lust against virtue and falsehood against truth in ways that explain in part its continuing popularity as an episode in later Greek romances.[122] Moreover, the flirtation with Oedipal themes involving an older woman, a young man, and an angry paternal figure also assures its perennial appeal. But I would argue that the wrath of Aphrodite, which obeys the logic of its own rules, works as a significant countercurrent against the predictable structure of the Potiphar's wife story so that the drama may exploit for its own purposes the interplay of these two levels.

On the one hand, the structure of the drama reveals with unblinking clarity the tragic gulf between human and divine domains, and Aphrodite's careless dismissal of the plight of her innocent intermediary has been construed, not without justice, as evidence of Euripides' typical critique of traditional Olympian theology. In formal terms, however, what the wrath of Aphrodite means is that Phaedra's accusation of Hippolytus, *if taken at its face value*, strictly fulfills the terms of Aphrodite's typical mode of intervention. That is, Hippolytus' refusal to assume the proper role of *erastēs* is reversed into its logical opposite—or rather, the *semblance* of that opposite—when he is compelled to play the role in the theater of the *erastēs* who has acted out an illicit and "unjust" passion.[123] In this way, he can end with the punishment that fits his original offense against Aphrodite through the action of the horses and the torment of the body that has refused union with an other.

The mirror of illusion Phaedra provides for the male *parthenos* is therefore, according to the latent mythic pattern, the proper optical medium through which to view the entire network of associations clustering around the organ of sight in its social, sexual, and cognitive domains. Hippolytus must *seem* to have committed the offense of "dishonoring the eye of Zeus" and of witnessing the feminine mysteries which are unlawful (*ou themis*) to view. Pentheus' secret wish that Dionysus brings out of hiding in the *Bacchae*, when the god touches his adversary with the power of his divine madness, is none other than the desire to see the other, and Pentheus goes off, literally dressed in the costume of the female other—to play the voyeur at the secret rites. More generally still for Hippolytus, the typical transgression of the hunter who remains in the entourage of Artemis is to come upon the naked goddess bathing and to suffer the consequences of his illicit viewing. Actaeon, Pentheus' mythic counterpart, invoked as a paradigm in the *Bacchae* (230, 336–40, 1227, 1291), is punished by Artemis herself, who turns his hounds against their master to destroy him, a fate not unlike that of Hippolytus himself.[124] But the nature of Hippolytus' relation with Artemis (i.e., not seeing her eye) precludes him from replicating Actaeon's (or other hunters') offense, as a result of which Artemis, we might say, would be compelled to join forces with Aphrodite.[125] The spectator, as we have described Hippolytus, is no voyeur of the other and hence is unable on his own to initiate the sequence that leads from sight to desire and from desire to contact with the other. Hence the indispensable role of Phaedra. From the perspective of the mythic pattern we have been exploring, she therefore might be viewed (in yet another

turn of the mirror) as the one conscripted into playing the part that should rightfully be his, which she is, in this sense, justified in returning to him.

We may assess this whirl of mimetic reflections by examining one last instance of mimesis, which occurs in the beginning of the play, when in the dramatic sequence of events it is Phaedra who follows *after* Hippolytus, who has preceded her appearance on stage. Does she not then express her desire to imitate Hippolytus? That is, to recline on the grassy slope and drink the pure water of the spring, to follow the hunt and the hounds, with spear and javelin in hand, and finally, to race the horses in Artemis' territory, taming the Venetian mares (208–11, 215–22, 228–31)? But as spoken by Phaedra this text, needless to say, surpasses any simple or single mimetic identification. In its impossible ambiguities, it demonstrates the confusions introduced into the system when the *kouros* appropriates the role of the *parthenos* and, through Aphrodite, attracts the eye of the *gunē* (woman). Hippolytus has, in fact, reversed the typical courting pattern, so that when he at last leaves the stage, the chorus of maidens lament that they will no longer be able to compete for his hand in marriage (114–41). Phaedra's fantasies express the mixture of masculine and feminine, active and passive, subject and object, (even mortal and immortal), as well as the fundamental overlapping of the chaste and the erotic. Who does she want to be? In desiring and desiring to be desired in turn, and also desiring not to desire, she plays all the roles—herself (now woman, once virgin), Aphrodite, Hippolytus, and Artemis, the eternal *parthenos*.

But such a mimetism lies only in the theater of the imagination as projections of the mind's eye. Thus while she sets the stage for those far-off places where she desires to cast the javelin (*eramai . . . rhipsai*, 220), the nurse recodes her image as text, interpreting the *epos* that Phaedra has "cast" (*erripsas*, 232) as evidence only of her wandering wits (*paraphrōn*) until the actions of the nurse herself lead her to reinterpret, to find new *logoi* in order to unbind the knot of a still more complex *logos*. This Phaedra accomplishes by resorting to the devices of theater to stage for the other a plot—an "imitation of an action" none other than the drama itself whose events we witness through eye and ear. In this she proves indeed to be the *didaskalos*—the teacher *and* the producer—who binds Hippolytus

into his *muthos*, and who, through her insistence that he share in her disease, reminds us of the fundamental role mimesis plays in the making of the self, which, as Aristotle tells us, is the source of the first learning for all (*tas matheseis . . . prōtas, Poet.* 4.1448b).

Directions in Euripidean Criticism

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

EDITED BY PETER BURIAN

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