on unrealistic data which we accept without qualm: for example, Medea's relationship to Helios (a frequently stressed motif which helps to prepare for the chariot) and the remarkable nature of her magical power. Yet throughout we are invited to take Medea seriously as a real human being, and even this final scene is perfectly consistent with the rest of the play in its handling of her motivation; it is only the spectacle of her in the chariot, high above Jason, taking with her the children's bodies that he may not touch, that makes her seem to have been transformed, in Murray's words, 'into a sort of living Curse . . . Her wrongs and her hate fill the sky'.[32]

The sense that Euripides seems to be making out of all this is as comfortless as the conclusions to which he points in *Hippolytus* or *Bacchae*. What a vulnerable thing is civilization, when man's passions are so powerfully destructive. When he makes the insensitive Jason praise Greek society and values and when he gives the barbarian witch the ideals of a traditional Greek hero he is surely suggesting that there is no safe dividing line: civilized life is always most precariously poised, continually threatened from within.

One of the play's recurrent themes is that of song and the Muses: it comes in that curious passage at the end of the *parodos* where the Nurse meditatively wonders why poets have not devised songs to cure human miseries instead of accompanying their pleasures (190 ff.); in the first *stasimon* when the chorus reflect how poetry has always represented the man's side of things (421 ff.); most prominently in the great passage in praise of Athens after the departure of Aegeus (824 ff.). Athens, city of the Muses, the ideal of civilized splendour, where *Sophia* and the Loves are in harmony: is this merely a fine compliment to an Athenian audience, or is it related more intimately to the deeper meaning of the play? All these passages draw attention to the ambivalence of human intelligence and creativity, which is potentially a source of beauty and harmony, but liable, too, to break out in destructive violence under the influence of passion. Medea in her *sophia* exemplifies this ambivalence: we see her great expertise and intellectual power turned, because of her betrayed love for Jason, to destructive—and self-destructive—ends. And her heroic sense of identity is used to bring out the tragic nature of what she does and suffers.

[32] Murray 1910, xi f.

10

Hippolytus: A Study in Causation

R. P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM

Why did the events happen as they did? This is no problem to Aphrodite or to Artemis. Bitter enemies though they may be, on one point they are agreed—that what takes place is the work of a god; and the responsibility which Aphrodite claims in the Prologue is endorsed by Artemis in the closing scene. Yet the human characters seem to choose their courses and to work out their disasters on the plane of human circumstance and motive, so that Wilamowitz could say: 'Aphrodite is not necessary for our understanding of the action.' (Though I should myself prefer to ask whether the action is not necessary to our understanding of Aphrodite.) Another critic finds it the very purpose of the play to demonstrate that human freedom is illusory. Various views have been held by various scholars; and at the moment I do not wish to express one of my own. Though I would ask a question. Where else does Euripides use a god or gods as the spokesmen of his deepest insight? (In the *Bacchae* do we not learn far more about Dionysus from the Chorus and the Messengers than from anything Dionysus himself says?) However that may be, the degree of truth which may reside in the utterances of the two goddesses can only be determined by close study of the action as a whole.

I have chosen my original question as the starting-point for a survey which will range widely. The play is rich, complex, subtly-patterned (as are few of Euripides): in a brief paper one can only single out certain aspects and certain details, hoping that the selection does not too seriously falsify the total work of art. I shall from time to time give warnings against over-simplification, but I know that I shall myself be guilty of this critical fault, which I hope may be corrected in the discussion that follows.

Aphrodite and Artemis. The symmetry of the two goddesses, whose appearances frame the disastrous action, is a striking formal device, which must be significant. Here are two divine powers—one

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of sexual passion, the other of sexual purity. With the two principal characters they form a pattern. It may be useful at the outset to make clear that this pattern is not a simple one. This is no clash between two characters who are, severally, adherents of one and the other goddess. In the first *Hippolytus* it seems as though Phaedra was as committed to the camp of Aphrodite as Hippolytus to that of Artemis, but in our play she has no such loyalty. Nor is there a clash between the goddesses in the soul of either character. While there is psychological conflict in Phaedra, it is not precisely a conflict between what Aphrodite and Artemis stand for; and there is no conflict in Hippolytus at all. And that is interesting, if we compare the *Hippolytus* with the *Bacchae*. Dionysus takes his revenge by releasing in those who have rejected him the instincts which they have repressed. That is what happened to Agave and her sisters. The case of Pentheus is even more relevant, if (as I think) he is represented as having repressed his sexual instinct. In our play it is not Hippolytus but Phaedra who represses—or attempts to repress—her instincts, not out of puritanism, but out of respect for social obligations. Hippolytus is untouched by sex, and his ruin is not worked out in terms of his own conflicts, which do not exist. There was no psychological reason whatever why Hippolytus should not have gone on indefinitely with his young friends, breaking in horses, hunting, eating hearty meals, competing in the games, and communing with Artemis in the pure meadows. It was a life eminently and (at least while youth lasted) indefinitely satisfactory within the closed circle in which he sought to live. Why then does he come to grief? Was it through external causes only—through Phaedra, through Aphrodite? Or did he contribute to his own undoing? If so, it was not through any inner discord in his own heart.

Like Euripides, I have been careful to bring Hippolytus first upon the stage, particularly since Phaedra will hold it for so long! Hippolytus in the perfection of his harmonious life. Ascetic in point of sex alone, he goes off to eat a hearty meal (112)—to be succeeded by Phaedra, who out of love is starving herself to death and reduced to the extremity of bodily weakness. Why then did Phaedra come to grief? She was a woman of fine intelligence and admirable principles. Yet her efforts to master her disgraceful passion were vain, and she was led into a series of disastrous actions. Why? Because Aphrodite is irresistible, ἢν πολλὴ ῥυῇ ('if she flows in full force')? Because in the face of passion intelligence and resolution are futile? And Socrates was wrong when he equated virtue with knowledge?

As a key to the interpretation of the play as a whole, these formulations suffer from their exclusive relevance to Phaedra. Even in relation to Phaedra they strike me as inadequate by reason of an excessive generality. The devastating power of emotion in human life—that is indeed something by which Euripides was obsessed, not least during the period in which he wrote the *Hippolytus*; and he was hardly sanguine about the ability of men, individually or collectively, to control this power by intelligence. But Euripides is not merely concerned to show Phaedra being worsted by emotion—another of a class with Medea and Hecuba—but also to show *why*, in the specific circumstances of her case, she was so worsted.

Why human beings fail to carry out their virtuous resolutions was a question to which Phaedra herself had given some attention. (373 ff.) 'Women of Trozen . . . in time gone by I have reflected in the long watches of the night on how man's life is ruined. And it seems to me that it is not in the nature of their intelligence (κατὰ γνώμης φύσιν) that they go wrong—for many have sound sense (τὸ εὖ φρονεῖν). No, one must look at it this way. We know quite clearly what is good, but we do not carry it out, some from inertia, others because they put some other pleasure before the right. And life has many pleasures.' This passage has been discussed acutely by Professor Snell,[1] who finds in it not only a reaction to the Socratic paradox that virtue is knowledge but evidence for dating the first formulation of that paradox. I have no wish to challenge this conclusion, which seems plausible, if not certain. Where I join issue with him is in his assertion that the passage is only loosely, if at all, related to the situation of Phaedra. He can of course point out that the force which frustrated Phaedra's good resolutions was her love for Hippolytus—a passion, a sickness, a madness. Whereas she goes on: 'Life has many pleasures. Long gossips and leisure—that delightful but dangerous thing. And modesty (αἰδώς).' And she proceeds to distinguish between two kinds of 'modesty' or 'shame'—one which is honourable, the other 'a burden on the house'. But Snell's argument is surely double-edged. For, if (on the face of it) these factors—inertia, the pleasures of gossip and idleness and modesty, are not relevant to the passion of Phaedra, are they not also strange examples to select in order to illustrate the principle of *video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor* and to refute the Socratic paradox? It would seem singularly

[1] Snell 1948, 125 ff.

incompetent on the part of Euripides to choose instances which do not fit either his dramatic or his undramatic concerns.

I think there is a simple explanation. If Euripides had been arguing with Socrates in the market-place, these would be strange examples to select. Yet it is natural for Phaedra—a woman speaking to women (cf. 405 ff., and particularly 395–7)—to select them, for they are part (one might almost say the whole) of her experience.[2] We can see then what Euripides is doing. As Phaedra follows her train of thought, the dramatist is revealing to his audience something of dramatic importance. He is revealing her environment; and that, I suggest, is an essential factor in the causation of the tragedy.

Human beings are the product of heredity and environment. That is how we might put it, but there is nothing specifically modern in the idea. For the Greeks there was φύσις, the hereditary endowment; and there was τροφή and παιδεία, a notion which extends from the upbringing of children to the whole trend of the cultural environment. One aspect in which this distinction greatly occupied the thoughts of the contemporaries of Euripides was in the sophistic antithesis between φύσις, 'nature', and νόμος, 'custom' (a theme to which we shall recur). Euripides, who was aware that no human being can be fully accounted for without reference to his heredity and environment, has given Phaedra both.

When she has decided to reveal her love for Hippolytus to the Nurse, she cannot bring herself to make the revelation directly. The first step is to indicate that she is in love. The way she does it is too subtle for the Nurse, who does not see the point of these references to Pasiphae and Ariadne. 'You mean the love she had for the bull' (338)? The references are meant for us: they are meant to bring home to us the heredity of Phaedra; and that is the meaning of her remark (343): ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς οὐ νεωστὶ δυστυχεῖς—the roots of her misfortunes are in the past. It is not a question of inherited guilt, but of inherited sexuality.[3] In fact, both the principal characters have hereditary backgrounds relevant to their character and behaviour. Hippolytus is the son of an Amazon (a fact emphasized at salient

[2] 'The woman speaks, the queen, her life brings these pleasures with it' (Wilamowitz 1880, 516 and 1891, 203). The inclusion of αἰδώς among pleasures is a difficulty. It may be that, as Wilamowitz says (1891, 203), there is 'a slight zeugma'. That anything has gone seriously wrong with the text I do not believe.

[3] Pasiphae's bull is no less a symbol of sex than that which came out of the sea to destroy Hippolytus.

points in the play); and the poet intends, as has often been suggested, to indicate that it is from his mother that he has inherited his peculiar temperament. Phaedra is daughter of the woman that loved a bull and sister of Ariadne. This too is surely the point of the repeated references to Crete—to remind us of this background. When the secret is out, the Chorus end their short song of horror with the words: (372) ὦ τάλαινα παῖ Κρησία, 'Unhappy child of Crete'. What happened to this ill-starred child of Crete, Pasiphae's daughter, when she came to Greece? What environment did she find? That, I suggest, is just precisely what is told us in the long speech which Phaedra now makes.

The audience liked such speeches, and Euripides liked writing them. They may strike us as undramatic, but we should not be in too great a hurry to discount them as rhetorical exercises. The form is rhetorical, but the content is often (I do not say always) closely relevant to the drama. This is certainly true of Phaedra's speech. It opens with a generalization about the failure of human beings, despite their intelligence, to act rightly. But this turns out to be illustrated with emotional factors, with 'pleasures', which are part of her experience. More than that, they give a picture of her life (corresponding to the picture which we gain elsewhere of the life of Hippolytus) and so provide a background to the account she now gives of her struggles. Phaedra is a lady, a queen, and belongs essentially to the palace.[4] There she lives surrounded by her servants. She has nothing to do, but passes her time in sweet idleness, in long gossiping conversations and (as we have seen) introspective reflections upon human life. She lives in a house upon which αἰδώς lies like a burden (but more of this hereafter). Is it excessively and inadmissibly 'psychological' to suggest that Euripides knew well that these were fatal conditions and that, despite the clearness of her intelligence and the sincerity of her intentions, Phaedra was defeated from the start. 'Secondly', she says (398 ff.), 'I took thought how I might bear my insane passion nobly, overcoming it with self-control (τῷ σωφρονεῖν)'. An impossible task, surely, for an idle brooding queen: for one devil she expelled, seven were waiting to take its place. And of course she found it impossible. 'Thirdly, when I did not succeed in mastering Cypris by these means . . .'

[4] A point brought out earlier in the play by contrast both with Hippolytus and with the Chorus (cf. 121 ff.).

My point is simply this. Euripides is not demonstrating that passion *in abstracto* is too strong for intelligence *in abstracto*, but showing how, given certain antecedents and circumstances, it is too strong. Given certain circumstances. But the idle palace does not constitute the whole environment of Phaedra. Among the environmental factors which determine our lives can be counted (can they not?) the moral standards of the society and class to which we belong. Phaedra had her moral code and her ideals: σωφροσύνη—εὔκλεια—αἰδώς ('self-control—good repute—*aidōs*').

About εὔκλεια ('good repute') and its paramount importance this aristocrat—or should we say this typical Greek?—had no doubts (unfortunately). By αἰδώς she was puzzled (385 ff.):

> δισσαὶ δ' εἰσίν, ἡ μὲν οὐ κακή,
> ἡ δ' ἄχθος οἴκων. εἰ δ' ὁ καιρὸς ἦν σαφής,
> οὐκ ἂν δύ' ἤστην ταὔτ' ἔχοντε γράμματα.

There are two kinds, one not bad, the other a burden on a house. If we could be sure of what was opportune, there would not be two of them spelt with the same letters.

What is the good and what the bad *aidōs?* And are they both illustrated in the play? The passage has been much discussed.[5] It has been suggested that the bad *aidōs* was that respect for the suppliant which caused (if it did cause) Phaedra to reveal her secret to the Nurse. This did indeed lead ultimately to disaster. But Phaedra was not to know this yet. There is no sign whatever that she regrets the revelation; she is still firm in her resolution to die, already taken. The *aidōs* of Phaedra towards the Nurse cannot in any case be the ἄχθος οἴκων ('burden on a house') here—because it was the cause of action; and Phaedra is giving the reasons why people (why women) fail to act.

A passage in the *Ion* may throw light. 'Listen then to my story', says Creusa (336 f.), '—but no, I am ashamed (αἰδούμεθα)'. And Ion replies: οὐ τἄρα πράξεις οὐδέν· ἀργὸς ἡ θεός ('Then you will not accomplish anything; that goddess is lazy'). Phaedra is puzzled. She has been brought up to regard a proper modesty as a virtue, particularly in a woman, particularly in an aristocrat, and yet she feels that this modesty, this reserve, this fear of criticism, can be indulged to the point of obstructing virtuous action. That is all Phaedra means.

[5] e.g. Dodds 1925, 102, and 1929, 97 ff.; von Erffa 1937, 166 ff.; Snell 1948.

But just as, in the references to inertia, gossip and leisure, Euripides is depicting the environment which has contributed psychologically to Phaedra's plight, so too with *aidōs*, except that *aidōs* is a mental attitude, a moral standard and an ideal. *Aidōs* was the feeling of modest shame, which dictated silence. It was the shame that Phaedra felt (244), when she had revealed her love obliquely through fantasy (208 ff.). She was ashamed, because, however oblique the revelation and however little understood, it was a betrayal of the first of her resolutions: (394) σιγᾶν τήνδε καὶ κρύπτειν νόσον ('to be silent and conceal this sickness'). Hence (240): ποῖ παρεπλάγχθην γνώμης ἀγαθῆς; ('how far have I swerved from my noble resolution?). It was a noble resolution. But at what cost could repression succeed, if at all? Euripides knew the human mind well enough to answer that question. The answer is given by the neurotic state in which Phaedra is presented to us at her first entry,[6] torn between her shame and her longing to reveal herself. Paradoxically, then, it is the noble *aidōs* of Phaedra that has contributed to the state of mind (and body) which makes possible the whole disastrous sequence. No wonder that (at 247 ff.) she feels the choice too much for her; and we see her death, not (as she would later—402—have us see it) as κράτιστον . . . βουλευμάτων ('the best of plans'), but in the light of an abdication of choice: ἀλλὰ κρατεῖ μὴ γιγνώσκοντ' ἀπολέσθαι ('it is best to lose all consciousness and die').

In this interpretation of that passage I am confirmed by Mr Bernard Knox (in his original and important 1952 article), who points out that this attitude of mind foreshadows the crucial abdication of choice by Phaedra, when she allows the Nurse to take charge of her affairs. But, before we come to that scene, *aidōs* has a different role to play, in close partnership with another article in Phaedra's code. Εὔκλεια ('good repute') has recently been described[7] as 'the most important Leitmotiv in the play'. This may be going too far, but the theme is certainly of primary importance, particularly in the later phases of Phaedra's catastrophe. It first emerges at 329 ff. It emerges in the form of a dilemma. The Nurse is pleading with her and has adopted the posture of a suppliant. Why does Phaedra yield? There can be no doubt that the fundamental reason is the deep longing that she has to make the revelation. But the way must be eased for her. It is eased by the Nurse's suppliance, so that Phaedra can represent her

[6] Well described by Dodds. [7] Strohm 1957, 104 n. 1.

yielding as an act of *aidōs*, even of εὐσέβεια ('reverence': σέβας γὰρ χειρὸς αἰδοῦμαι τὸ σόν, 'for I respect the reverent power of your hand', 335). But it is eased also by the Nurse's argument, which is bound to move her. 'It will kill you to hear', says Phaedra (329); 'yet what I am doing does me honour'—ἐκ τῶν γὰρ αἰσχρῶν ἐσθλὰ μηχανώμεθα ('for I am devising nobility from shame'). 'Then speak, and your honour will shine the brighter (τιμιωτέρα φανῇ).' Phaedra is exposed to a dilemma inherent in her ideal: if honour is everything, what is the point of virtuous action, if it is known to none—neither in your life-time nor after your death? In revealing her love and her honourable resistance, not only to the Nurse but to the women of Trozen, Phaedra can (in the words of Mr Knox, who has dealt admirably with this topic) 'have her cake and eat it too'. She makes her long speech, which breathes the spirit of her sense of honour (cf. 403 f., 407 ff., 419 ff.); and she receives the tribute of the Chorus (431 f.). Little harm seems to have been done, and some good.

I must pass rapidly over the following scene. Under the assaults of the Nurse Phaedra still clings to her ideal of εὔκλεια ('good repute') (488 f., cf. 498 f., 503 ff.). But the very violence of her reaction is a sign that she is weakening. The Nurse sees that the time has come to go to Hippolytus. She speaks of a magical cure for Phaedra's love. 'I am afraid . . . that you will tell the son of Theseus'. And, because she longs for this in the very depths of her soul, she lets the Nurse go in—yet without herself taking any positive decision or accepting any responsibility.

When Phaedra addresses the Chorus (373 ff.), she can still die—and will be honoured for it. When Hippolytus has been told and has spoken, she *must* die (599 f.): but how can she now die with honour? It is in Phaedra's last scene that the theme attains its greatest prominence.[8] 'Leave it to me, my child', the Nurse had said (521): ταῦτ' ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς ('I will arrange these matters well'); and Phaedra, like a child, had left it to her. But καλῶς ('well') to the Nurse meant one thing only—that the life of her beloved child should be saved. This was her one standard of value (cf. 252 ff.), in comparison with which all moral considerations counted for nothing. The result she produced was οὐ καλόν ('not good') by any standard. At 706 ff.

[8] Note that within 30 lines we have εὐκλεεῖς, καλῶς, οὐ καλῶς, καλῶς, εὐκλεᾶ ('of good repute', 'well', 'not well', 'well', 'of good repute'): 687, 694, 706, 709, 717.

Phaedra resumes control over her own destiny, with the words: ἐγὼ γὰρ τἀμὰ θήσομαι καλῶς ('I will arrange my own affairs well'). And by καλῶς ('well') she means 'honourably'. By applying her standards of honour, will she produce a result which is less disastrous? Or even one which is truly honourable? In fact her sense of honour leads her into an act of cruel deceit by which her honour has been tarnished down the ages. Which is ironical.

But Phaedra's mind is never simple. At 335 she responded simultaneously to the appeal of the suppliant, to the desire for outward recognition, and to the deepest cravings of her love-stricken heart. Now, in the closing lines of her part (728 ff.), love comes once more to the forefront—but turned into hatred and the desire to make Hippolytus suffer as she has suffered. This note is heard once and once only. It may be that, as W. Zürcher[9] has suggested, this is 'Motivtrennung', a technique which he finds in other plays, by which different impulses ascribed to the same character are kept, as it were, insulated from one another. In view of the psychological complexity of the earlier scene, however, I am inclined to think that Euripides has deliberately reserved this theme for the climax—to let us see in the last moment a deeper level of Phaedra's mind. In any case, we see once more in combination within her the instinctive and the conventional springs of action and once more (I would suggest) the conventional serving the purposes of the instinctive.

In this long account of Phaedra I may be thought to have fallen into more than one heresy. To some my account may have seemed too psychological: I offer no defence except that I believe the psychology is to be found in Euripides, in the form and language of the play. If, however, I have given the impression that this is primarily a play about Phaedra (a view which has been maintained), I plead not guilty. A case can indeed be made for regarding Hippolytus as the principal hero, but I think that Professor Lesky is right, when he says:[10] 'our play is the tragedy of a double destiny', and that the role of Phaedra is of far from subordinate importance. The reason why I have devoted so much time to it is that, of the two leading roles, it is the more subtle and complex; and that, in order to develop my main theme (of which I assure you I have not lost sight) it was necessary to examine in some detail the causes of Phaedra's behaviour, as I conceive Euripides to have revealed them.

[9] Zürcher 1947, 86. [10] Lesky 1972, 323 (1964, 167).

Let us return to the goddesses. 'Aphrodite', says Mr Knox, 'tells us not only what will happen but announces her responsibility and explains her motives. It is a complete explanation and one which (even if it were not confirmed in every particular by another goddess at the end of the play) we are bound to accept'. It is indeed confirmed by Artemis: but what does she say? She says in effect (1301 ff.): 'Phaedra was driven mad by Aphrodite; she tried to overcome Cypris by her intelligence (γνώμῃ), but was destroyed by the craft of the Nurse against her will'. I would not go all the way with the late Professor Norwood in pouring scorn on the intellectual incompetence and moral obtuseness of Artemis. But is it not clear that she is giving a grossly over-simplified version of a highly complex affair—a version designed to give the maximum of pain to Theseus. (οὐχ ἑκοῦσα, 'not willingly': was that true? how far was it true? Euripides can tell us, but not Artemis.) What does Aphrodite say? Her preparations, she tells us, are far advanced (22 f.). If I may put it rather grotesquely, those preparations turn out to have been very elaborate indeed. She has caused Phaedra to fall in love with Hippolytus: well and good, that is within her province. Phaedra's inheritance of passion can also count as within her province. But, if she is to be responsible for the whole action, she must also have placed Phaedra in the fatal environment of the palace and (more important still) provided her, through the wider social environment, with a set of moral ideas which proved inadequate to the situation. For all these things played a part in her downfall. Aphrodite goes on to say that she will make the truth known to Theseus, and that Theseus will curse his son and kill him. But this involves the Nurse, her single-minded devotion to her mistress, and *her* moral limitations. It involves Theseus being what Theseus was—and a relationship (or rather a complete lack of relationship) between Theseus and Hippolytus, who himself has more aspects than the scorn of Aphrodite for which he is so cruelly punished.

This is rather a grotesque way of putting it; and I may seem to be grudging the dramatist the mechanics of his plot. But I think it goes deeper than that. There is a depth and solidity in this tragedy upon the human plane that cannot adequately be expressed by two angry and sexually preoccupied goddesses. There are comments upon human life and human nature which are quite out of their range. Let us return to Phaedra and Hippolytus.

We have seen the importance of social factors in the tragedy of Phaedra: environment and ideals—εὔκλεια, σωφροσύνη, αἰδώς ('good repute, self-control, modesty'). What is the case with Hippolytus? Take αἰδώς, for instance. It is in its origins a social emotion, a social virtue; and it was as such that it was felt and exercised by Phaedra. But when Hippolytus speaks of an Αἰδώς which waters his sacred meadow, the abstraction must symbolize an innate quality, like the *sōphrosynē* ('self-control') which alone qualifies a man to cull its flowers (79 f.):

> ὅστις διδακτὸν μηδέν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
> τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάνθ' ὁμῶς.

those who have nothing taught, but in whose nature virtue (self-control) in all things always has been assigned a place.

Is *sōphrosynē* φύσει or νόμῳ ('by nature or by nurture')? Can virtue be taught? In the age of the sophists these questions were much in the air and must have been raised in the minds of the audience by this play. Is there a *sōphrosynē* that comes by nature—and a *sōphrosynē* that is the product of convention? And does the former stand the test better than the latter? This is a possible formula on which to interpret the play.[11] But here again we must beware of over-simplification.

Can virtue—can *sōphrosynē*—be taught? Is it the product of nature or of nurture? Hippolytus believes that it is a gift of nature; and, so far as he himself is concerned, he is broadly right, for his chastity is a matter of temperament. Yet that is not the whole story, even of Hippolytus: or why should he first be introduced to us, not merely as the Amazon's son, but as the product of chaste Pittheus' education (ἁγνοῦ Πιτθέως παιδεύματα, 11)? If Pittheus is largely ἔξω τοῦ δράματος ('outside the play'), Hippolytus' present social environment is not. He is first seen by us as a member of a *kōmos* ('band of revellers', 55), and he is escorted on his last journey by his ὁμήλικες ('friends of similar age', 1098). He has his friends and his social life (cf. 987, 997 ff.).[12] He has surrounded himself with a circle of

[11] Cf. Pohlenz 1954, 269 f.

[12] This speech is an excellent example of how dramatic points can emerge from conventional rhetoric. Note particularly the turn given to the forensic cliché at 986 f. 1016 ff. is a commonplace, but the reference to the games contributes to the picture of Hippolytus.

like-minded contemporaries; and by this environment his innate qualities are fostered and confirmed![13] Phaedra has a φύσις ('nature') which is both passionate and intelligent; and, if she was in some sense chaste by convention, it was convention equally that helped to destroy her chastity. Since nature and convention—innate characteristics and social influences—*both* make their contribution to the virtues and the disasters of *both* Hippolytus and Phaedra, I doubt if we can find in the play some simple formula for the right kind of *sōphrosynē*.

Having said this, we must not deny the moral failure of Phaedra, the moral triumph of Hippolytus. There is a point at which Phaedra gives the wrong answer. We come back now to the theme of εὔκλεια ('good repute'), for this too is a link between Phaedra and Hippolytus. Phaedra is virtuous, but she would have her virtue known. She reveals it, with results so disastrous that she can only save her honour by an evil act. When the Nurse has urged submission to desire, Phaedra rebukes her for her specious words (488 f.):

> οὐ γὰρ τὰ τοῖσιν ὠσὶ τερπνὰ χρὴ λέγειν,
> ἀλλ' ἐξ ὅτου τις εὐκλεὴς γενήσεται.

One should not say things to delight the ears, but what will lead to good repute.

She does not (as at 427) speak of γνώμη δικαία κἀγαθή ('a just and noble resolution'), but only of εὔκλεια ('good repute'). Perhaps she does not distinguish clearly between them at all, and that was the moral trap into which she fell. Hippolytus too has his honour at stake. He finds himself indeed in the position envisaged by Glaucon in *Republic* 361c: μηδὲν γὰρ ἀδικῶν δόξαν ἐχέτω τὴν μεγίστην ἀδικίας ('although he has done nothing wrong, let him have the greatest possible reputation for wrongdoing')—a position from which he could only extricate himself by breaking his oath, which he refuses to do. He is touched to tears by his plight (1071): εἰ δὴ κακός γε φαίνομαι δοκῶ τέ σοι ('if I seem wicked and you think me so'), but he does not make his honour an excuse for a breach of *eusebeia* ('piety'). He sticks to his principles. It is Artemis who ensures that the man of virtue and piety (1419, cf. 1454) receives his honour in the end.

[13] We may compare *Ion* 643 ff. On *Ion* and *Hippolytus*, see Matthaei 1918, 83.

Looked at in this light, Hippolytus does indeed emerge with greater moral credit than Phaedra. I should be surprised, however, if this moral verdict was among the primary purposes of Euripides, whose detachment from his characters is so marked, and who was even less interested than most great writers in awarding certificates of merit.

Time does not allow me to study the role of Hippolytus in the same detail as that of Phaedra. Besides, I am rather frightened of the subject: it can rouse strong emotions. Those to whom, by reason of temperament or religion, Hippolytus makes a strong appeal, may resent any account of him which appears detached and even in some points critical. So I will be brief and (I hope) tactful.

That critic would indeed be deaf to poetry who could deny the beauty of the life of Hippolytus, as Euripides has depicted it; he would be insensitive, if he did not see that in the devotion of Hippolytus to Artemis there was something of the stuff of true religion.[14] If the beauty and the religion are not felt, then the pathos and the irony go for nothing, when the beauty is crudely destroyed and the man of religion is brought low by the operation of divinities. It is of the essence of the life and religion of Hippolytus that they are limited and narrowly enclosed. His religion cuts him off, for good or ill, from a large part of mature human experience. His life is led, with extreme satisfaction, in a small closed circle, among those of similar bent. For these limitations he receives a rich reward. He can ask for nothing better—and to be nothing better than what he is. But is there not a state of mind, of which mystics are warned, called spiritual pride? And may not the *semnotēs* of Hippolytus, which frightened his servant and antagonized his father, be something akin to spiritual pride? Further, when the worshipper identifies himself so closely with the worshipped, is there not another danger? (1080) πολλῷ γε μᾶλλον σαυτὸν ἤσκησας σέβειν ('You schooled yourself far more in self-regard') . . . Certainly we must not take the taunts of Theseus at their face-value. But this taunt follows two of the most striking lines in the play. (1078 f.)

> εἴθ' ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον
> στάνθ', ὡς ἐδάκρυσ' οἷα πάσχομεν κακά.

If only I could stand facing myself and look at myself, so that I could weep at the evils I am suffering.

[14] Cf. Festugière 1960, 10 ff.

Opinions will differ, but I cannot help feeling that Euripides is suggesting that there was some element of *self*-contemplation and *self*-worship in the devotee of Artemis. Did Hippolytus die in some degree a martyr to his own idea of himself? I shudder away from this hypothesis, and turn to that point in the play where he can truly be said to have contributed to his own destruction. For, when the closed circle is broken, he finds himself in just those circumstances with which his nature and way of life have most unfitted him to deal. That he should be horrified and revolted by the proposals of the Nurse is both natural and proper, but his tirade against women which Phaedra hears is not only harsh but crude and childish, spoken (as one critic has put it)[15] 'from the depths of inexperience'. And by turning Phaedra's love to hate it helps to bring about his death.

The dialogue with Theseus has no direct bearing upon his fate, since the curse has already been pronounced, but from it we gain the same impression of Hippolytus as a man belonging to a world apart, striving incompetently to communicate without common ground. This brings us to another factor in the causation of the events. They fell out as they did, because Theseus was the man he was. Of course Aphrodite played a part. As Theseus gives lyrical expression to his love for the dead Phaedra, we see the goddess working in him to further her purposes. He was a man of passion. It was because he was also a man of action that he sought release of emotion in an immediate act by cursing his son. It was because he was a man of action, well qualified to deal with such as Sinis (976 ff.), that there was a complete incompatibility between him and his bastard son (whom Aphrodite had caused him to beget).[16] It was because of this incompatibility that he was predisposed to believe in the guilt of Hippolytus. M. Rivier has put it well:[17] 'Entre le père et le fils la mésentente est totale, et sans doute préexistait-elle à la crise.' Had Theseus stopped to think? But he was not a thinking man. And that too contributed to the disaster.

And so we come back to the goddesses and their claims. Broadly, what I have been trying to do in this compressed and incomplete survey of the play is to show something of the depth and solidity, in

[15] Lucas 1946, 68.

[16] Hippolytus read books! The only γράμματα ('letters') that Theseus ever read were written by Phaedra. Hence the irony of 954.

[17] Rivier 1944, 68.

terms of human psychology and human society, which Euripides has given to the action which he presents. When we compare them with the concrete details of the play, the explanations which the goddesses give are thin and over-simple. They suit the context of power-politics upon Olympus better than they suit the complexities of human life. It might seem, then, that what the goddesses provide is not so much an adequate account of the tragedy as its raw material, and that Euripides, by framing the action, as he has done, between Aphrodite and Artemis, has used an artistic device which turns out to be significant, but rather less significant than might at first appear. Nevertheless, I think it would be wrong to look at the matter in this way.

Clearly it is quite impossible at the tail end of a lecture (which has already gone on too long) to embark upon a discussion of the nature and functions of Euripidean gods. Gods play many roles—different roles in different kinds of play; and different kinds of gods play different kinds of role. And it is no accident, in my view, that in what many regard as the two greatest plays of Euripides—the *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchae*—the gods who appear in them and work in them are also forces which are manifestly seen to be moulding human life. Whether Euripides believed in the objective existence of Dionysus and Aphrodite apart from the manifestations of their power I do not know and I do not suppose that anybody will ever know. And I do not greatly care. Enough that they are real, that they are powerful, that they are superhuman, and that they involve man in tragedy. It is by the tragedy that we understand the gods, not by the gods that we understand the tragedy. It is by the tragedy that we understand the conditions that are imposed upon human life and the limitations under which we live.

Mr Knox has argued that the tendency of the *Hippolytus* is to demonstrate that human freedom is illusory. I think that is too strong, too positive a conclusion. But the facts to which Mr Knox appeals are true facts. Analysing the play on rather different lines from those which I have chosen, he points out, with great acuteness, a pattern which strikes me as valid and illuminating. He shows how each of the characters is confronted with the alternatives of speech and silence; how they choose—or evade choice; how they change their minds; how they apply or refuse to apply the faculty of reason. 'The alternatives . . . first and second thoughts, passion and judgement, silence and speech, are chosen and rejected in a complicated pattern which shows the independent operation of . . . separate human wills

producing a result desired by none of them.' I think he has demonstrated beyond doubt that this pattern was deliberately developed by Euripides. (I have myself tried to show some other patterns inherent in the play.) And, although I feel that he lays too much stress on Aphrodite as an 'external directing force', when he speaks, on the other hand, of 'the futility of human choice and action' he is not far off the mark. Nor is Professor Norwood, when he speaks[18] of 'the grim muddle that we make of life, no less by our virtues than by our faults'. The tragedy, as always perhaps in Euripides, lies in what an English poet has called 'the wearisome condition of humanity'. It is no wonder that human beings are restive under this condition and would have things other than they are. I come to one last theme—one last pattern—in the play.

Escape. It is remarkable how insistently this theme runs through the tragedy. During the suicide of Phaedra, the Chorus sing their famous ode: (732 ff.) *ἠλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι γενοίμαν* ('if only I could be in the hidden hollows of the high cliffs'). But this they cannot do: they must wait and watch, while an even more terrible event unfolds. Phaedra longs (208 ff.) to be in the meadows and the forests, where Hippolytus is. But it is only through a sick fantasy that she can escape from the reality of her hopeless love. When she finally escapes, it is only into death (828 f.):

> *ὄρνις γὰρ ὥς τις ἐκ χερῶν ἄφαντος εἶ,*
> *πήδημ' ἐς Ἅιδου κραιπνὸν ὁρμήσασά μοι.*[19]

For like a bird you have vanished from my hands in your swift and nimble leap to Hades' house

Not even Hippolytus, in pursuit of an ideal, can with impunity pick and choose (104) and turn his back on what he does not care for. For his way of life is in some sense also an escape, but the element which he would exclude from his life is as remorseless in its revenge as the bull which drives him to destruction on the sea-shore (1226 ff.). Nor can Theseus banish him (1053) *πέραν γε πόντου καὶ τόπων Ἀτλαντικῶν* ('beyond the sea and the Atlantic regions')—that is, out of the whole human world, where Aphrodite holds sway (3)[20]—out to the Garden of the Hesperides (743–7)

[18] Norwood 1954, 110. [19] A reminiscence of 732 f.?
[20] (3 f.): *ὅσοι τε Πόντου τερμόνων τ' Ἀτλαντικῶν | ναίουσιν εἴσω φῶς ὁρῶντες ἡλίου.* | ('All those who dwell within the sea and the Atlantic limits and see the light of the sun').

insistently – naléhavě, neustále, nápadně

> *ἵν' ὁ ποντο-*
> *μέδων πορφυρέας λίμνας*
> *ναύταις οὐκέθ' ὁδὸν νέμει,*
> *σεμνὸν τέρμονα κυρῶν*
> *οὐρανοῦ τὸν Ἄτλας ἔχει,*

Where the sea-lord of the dark waters no longer permits a way for sailors, reaching the holy boundary of heaven which Atlas keeps,

where happiness is to be found, but for the gods alone (751).

Of this total reality from which there is no escape the gods are symbols. Artemis and Aphrodite stand in their place, not only as the major instinctive forces operating in the tragedy, but as proper and artistically satisfying representatives of the realities which condition human life.

What can the gods do for men, except destroy them? The chorus which begins with: *ἦ μέγα μοι τὰ θεῶν μελεδήμαθ' ὅταν φρένας ἔλθῃ λύπας παραιρεῖ* ('The care of the gods [for mortals], when it comes to my mind, greatly assuages my sorrow', 1102) works round to *μανίω θεοῖσιν* ('I rage against the gods', 1146). What can Artemis do for Hippolytus? In life she gave him joy and an object of devotion. In death she can restore his reputation and deplore his destruction. But it is Hippolytus, not Artemis, that dwells on the beauty of their unequal partnership. Of the two specific consolations which she offers one is an act of vengeance which will show her as cruel as her rival; the other a commemoration which is not without irony, for the virgins of Trozen will sing of him when they are about to pass to the maturity which he rejected and they will sing of Phaedra's love. The end of the play belongs to Theseus and Hippolytus. With the reconciliation between them a gleam of light irradiates the tragedy. Human beings can at least forgive one another, even if the gods cannot forgive (117 ff.).