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Higher Powers: The Metrics of Divine Will and Agency in Euripides' Hippolytos and Herakles

Trigg Settle

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Higher Powers: The Metrics of Divine Will and Agency in
Euripides' Hippolytos and Herakles

by

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B.A., Classical Studies, University of New Mexico, 2009

THESIS

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Dedication

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum?

To Judith B. Settle, my mother, whose love and support are too immense for imagining.

Thank you for your endless support and for always believing in me, no matter what.

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I would like to extend a special thanks to all the members of my thesis committee, whose hard work, dedication, and sound advice not only pushed me to do the best work that I could, but also taught me how to become a better scholar: to Dr. Brian Herrera, for giving me the tools I needed to say what I wanted; to Dr. Lorenzo F. Garcia, Jr., for your patience, keen eye, and for your endless support and encouragement; to my indomitable advisor, Dr. Monica S. Cyrino, for the countless hours you have spent pouring over my sometimes unforgiving and laborious prose, for your patience and forbearance, and for the great wisdom you have imparted to me over the years, both in words and by example. To all of you, I am struck with the deepest sense of gratitude for all that you have done for me. You had a hand in everything worthwhile in this thesis. Any mistakes and infelicities are, by all means, my own. I would also like to thank the entire cohorts classica at the University of New Mexico in its various forms throughout my time there, especially: Jessie wells, Caley Mcguill, Scott Barnard, Daniel Bellum, and some guy at Stanford, whose conversations and support have sustained me, *Maximas vobis gratias ago*.

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ABSTRACT

Certain gods in Euripides' *Hippolytos* and *Herakles* exhibit a high level of control over mortals. Each play has one primary god whose statements of will, identity, and offense control the actions of other characters. Each play features a distinct god/human dialectic, in which certain actions performed by mortals threaten or affirm divine identity, as defined by the primary god or her surrogates. Secondary gods react to the primary god's will and in so doing help assert/re-assert the primary god's identity, as does mortal suffering. I apply Austin's concept of perlocution, an utterance's action or effect, to define divine motivation and control. In both plays, the primary god's statements of will and identity have perlocutionary force in the motivation of mortal actions. Mortal offenses toward the gods similarly motivate divine revenge. Through the perlocutive effect of divine will, mortal characters perform divine identity, through bodily suffering and death.

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Introduction

Overview

While Aischylos, Sophokles, and Euripides all wrote plays featuring the appearances of gods, the extensive use of divine characters is a hallmark of Euripidean style, especially to the extent that Euripides employs them as narrators, or essential tools in the formation of plot.¹ In this thesis, I will examine what I view as a specific type of Euripidean drama involving the extensive use of divine characters, wherein gods serve critical narrative functions, and motivate the tragic experiences of the play's mortal characters. While other plays may fall into this category, my analysis focuses on two of Euripides' plays, the *Hippolytos* and the *Herakles*. In many respects these are vastly different plays, especially in terms of their structural arrangement and thematic preoccupations. However, they have two very important similarities that warrant a detailed comparative analysis. First, each play features explicit divine appearances that are in some way essential to the development of the plot, and in particular the way that Euripides has chosen to present his version of the traditional story. Second, not only do gods appear and contribute to each story in unique ways, but they also exhibit a high level of determination and control over mortals in a manner that invites the audience to draw direct causal relationships between the gods and their mortal victims. The manifestation of these causal relationships, as represented both in the language and

¹ For an overview see Mastrorarde 2010: 153-161. Lefkowitz 1989: 70-72 discusses the controversy surrounding Euripides' unique presentation of gods, beginning with Aristotle's criticism of use the *deus ex machina*, and extending into the scholarly debate regarding his religious orientation in the present day.

bodies of gods and men, will be the central focus of my analysis. I argue that there is one primary god in each play whose will serves to motivate and control critical actions on the part of other characters; these actions are performed, whether knowingly or not, in response to the primary god's will. I devote my analysis to a close reading of statements of will and identity by the primary god or her surrogates, and how they say mortal characters have offended them. Further, I examine how primary characters inscribe and elicit the speech and actions of other characters. This is followed by an analysis of how the other characters reiterate, perform, or re-establish divine identity by fulfilling the will of the primary god. A brief overview of the theoretical foundations of this approach, especially in regard to the connection between divine speech and mortal bodies, will help clarify how it will be applied to the specific plays in question.

Theoretical Background

Judith Butler's work on the role of the body and performance in the formation of gender identity provides an important basis for my analysis of the performance of divine will and identity. Her distinction between the "natural body," the culturally neutral body described by its inherent physiology, as opposed to the "historical body," the body as defined by culture, is especially pertinent to the presentation of gods in mimetic performance, since the divine body is purely historical and has no natural counterpart.² Therefore the divine body is defined through a set of culturally inscribed differences from the human body, as Jean-Pierre Vernant observed.³ I argue that Butler's work on the connection between the body and performance and the formation

² Butler 1988: 520- 523.

³ Vernant 1991: 27-49.

of gender identity holds true for the formation of divine identity, and is a useful tool for understanding the relationships between gods and men in tragedy. By drawing from Butler's work, I contend that just as the culturally created divine body is defined as the negation or opposite of the human body,⁴ so too is divine identity formed in reference or comparison to the status and position of mortals, in large part through the speech and actions of mortal characters. In the *Hippolytos* and the *Herakles*, as I argue, there is a distinct dialectic between gods and humans in which certain actions performed by mortals can either threaten or affirm key aspects of divine identity as they are defined within the context of explicit divine appearances.

In addition to Butlers' work on performance and identity, I apply J.L. Austin's speech-act theory to explore further the relationship between divine speech and mortal bodies. Austin defines three important theoretical aspects of the speech act: "locution," the precise words uttered in a statement; "illocution," any implied meaning beyond those specific words; and "perlocution," the action or effect of an utterance, especially to the extent that a statement elicits or inhibits behavior in others.⁵ In my analysis of divine appearance and power, I maintain that in both plays the primary god's statements of will and identity have perlocutionary force in the motivation of mortal actions, and that mortal characters' offenses toward the gods assume a similar perlocutionary force in the motivation of divine revenge.

⁴ This opposition is evident in the prevalent use of alpha-privative compounds such as ἀθανατός (lit. one that does not die), and ἀγήρωσ (lit. one that does not age) to describe the gods.

⁵ For the clearest treatment of these terms, see Austin 1962: 94-107.

Divine Character Types

My work on divine character types owes much to the efforts of Donald Mastronarde to categorize the types of gods that appear in tragedy. In his comprehensive treatment of Euripidean tragedy, Mastronarde notes that Euripides' gods, and gods that appear more rarely in the plays of the other tragic poets, typically appear and speak at the beginning or the end of plays, and can thereby be defined as prologue gods and epilogue gods, respectively.⁶ This generic categorization, which Mastronarde uses to characterize the broad spectrum of Euripides' works, perfectly describes the pattern of divine appearance in the *Hippolytos*, and has led many to view the unparalleled appearance of Iris and Lyssa in the middle of the *Herakles* as a second prologue.⁷ Mastronarde, in an earlier attempt to categorize divine appearances in Greek tragedy more generally, applied a different taxonomy, separating visible deities into three distinct types according to their function: gods who punish, gods who save, and gods who inform.⁸ Already, these two different attempts by Mastronarde to categorize divine character types demonstrate a tension between the structure or arrangement of divine appearance and the role or the narrative function of the divine character. As separate avenues of inquiry, structure and content are useful tools for understanding and interpreting divine appearance; however, a more holistic approach can show how both the structure and role of divine appearance work together to emphasize prominent themes within the plays, and to highlight aspects of each divine character and their relationships with mortal characters.

To be clear, the deficiency of Mastronarde's taxonomies is not in affording

⁶ Mastronarde 2010: 174-195.

⁷ Papadopoulou 2005: 1-5.

⁸ Mastronarde in Gregory 2005: 327.

multiple ways to describe the divine character and his or her function within the play, but that such labels cannot adequately describe the relationships between different characters, mortal and immortal alike. In divine revenge narratives with explicit divine appearances, an analysis of the specific relationships between offended gods and the mortal targets of divine revenge makes it possible to define divine characters with greater clarity. By defining divine characters as primary gods according to their role in motivating mortal actions, or by relegating a god to a secondary status according to their reactionary role, a much clearer picture of divine action emerges. Turning to the two plays I am analyzing, the definition of divine characters and actions in reference to the primary god's will clarifies the meaning of the more extraneous attributes that Mastronarde's approach identified. For example, Aphrodite's role as a motive force is far more essential to understanding the plot of the *Hippolytos* than her function as a god who punishes or informs. Nonetheless the description of Aphrodite as a primary god does not exclude these other roles, but accurately represents how they fit into the larger scheme of the play. Artemis, on the other hand, could be viewed as an epilogue god, and a god who informs, according to Mastronarde's rubrics. As her role is essentially limited to that of commentary, Artemis' speech is focused on the removal of blame from the various actions of mortal characters, and its relocation solely on the will and actions of Aphrodite. In this context her speech serves not only to reveal the hidden nature of Phaedra's illness, but also to reiterate the power and importance of divine will in the play, a distinctly reactionary role when compared to the force of Aphrodite's will.

In the *Herakles*, the analysis of divine appearance and character types benefits

greatly from a comparison with the more structurally and functionally distinct divine character types of the *Hippolytos*. An understanding of the connection between Aphrodite's primary role and the narrative function of the prologue, and the retrospective vantage point of the epilogue in relation to Artemis' reactionary status, reveals how these same elements operate even within the more compressed and complicated arrangement of divine appearance in the *Herakles*. The structure of the *Hippolytos* allows the performance and realization of Aphrodite's will to play out in a protracted process that emphasizes the importance of speech and speech acts. The thematic focus of the *Herakles*, on the other hand, is oriented much more in the body. Thus the nearly immediate and highly physical response of Herakles to Lyssa's effect on him, as well as the conspicuous absence of Hera, the play's primary god, bring the body to the foreground in a manner that informs Herakles' traditional heroism.

Structure and Presentation

My analysis is laid out in two chapters, one for each play, beginning with the *Hippolytos*, the earliest in order of production.⁹ Each chapter begins with an overview of the structure and scheme of divine appearance within the play, as well as its prevalent themes, especially as they are viewed through the lens of divine appearance and the mode of interaction between gods and mortal characters. Each chapter is designed to follow the linear progression of the drama as much as possible, in order to preserve the story's narrative integrity. This is especially important since intra-textual relationships between characters are essential to my argument, as are the connections between

⁹ The *Hippolytos* is believed to have been produced ca. 428 BCE, the *Herakles* ca. 416. See Bond 1981: xxxi; Barrett 1964: 1, 13.

related actions and speaking contexts by different characters, even though they are sometimes separated by a large amount of intervening narrative and dialogue. Chapter subsections contain analyses of particular movements, themes or tropes, which all contribute to the overarching argument of the project. Each chapter ends with a conclusion that reiterates the main arguments of the chapter as a whole, and summarizes what I view to be the major themes and issues of each play. These are elucidated by my analysis of the manner, and arrangement of divine speech and appearance as it relates to the suffering of mortal characters. My emphasis on the relationship between divine speech and mortal bodies, and my approach to the definition of divine character types, provide useful tools for analyzing the specific relationships between divine and mortal characters in the *Hippolytos* and the *Herakles*. As analytical tools, they are most productive in that they provide the metrics for the comparison of divine characters and the dynamics of divine will and identity. It is my hope that my analysis will afford a greater understanding of the prevalent themes of each play, as well as constructions of divinity, and the divine body, in mimetic performance.

Chapter 1. *Hippolytos*: Theme and Structure

The structure of divine appearance in the *Hippolytos* fits the usual pattern of Euripides' plays, where gods appear in the prologue and epilogue.¹⁰ Due to this structural arrangement, the enactment of Aphrodite's will is far less immediate than that of Hera and Lyssa in the *Herakles*, where Lyssa describes her possession of Herakles as it happens, and his behavior under her influence is seen almost immediately afterward. Due to these differences, the offense and revenge narrative so crucial to the relationship between gods and men focuses much more on the thematic importance of speech and language in the *Hippolytos*, as opposed to the importance of presence and absence, and action and inaction in the *Herakles*. In the *Hippolytos*, the major issues surrounding divine offense and the enactment of divine will center on the dichotomy between speech and silence, while the connection between the goddess and her mortal victims is anchored and framed by the language of the play and the thematic importance of language itself. Much of this chapter will be dedicated to an analysis of how the play's language serves to connect the experiences of mortal characters to Aphrodite's statements of identity and will.

Despite the *Hippolytos*' similarity to the scheme of divine appearances in the rest of the Euripidean corpus, there are also many thematic and structural innovations in the play. While Aphrodite and Artemis are set in direct conflict through Hippolytos' use of extreme speech, the appearance of each goddess occurs alongside a hymn in praise

¹⁰ See Mastronarde 2010: 174-195.

of the other, arranged in a structural *chiasmus*.¹¹ As a result, each goddess' appearance is conceptually linked to the other, and mitigated through human song and praise. Such inversions are one example of how the placement and use of language serves to connect different actions and speaking contexts to Aphrodite's statements of identity and will. Through the performance of hymns, human characters reiterate the reciprocal power of the speech act in the relationship between mortals and immortals, as well as the connection between divine will and mortal speech and action. This sense of connectedness is perhaps best described by Froma Zeitlin, who noted a "complex web of interdependence"¹² in the play: "It reaches its expected conclusion only through deviation and detour and, above all, by means of one character acting as intermediary for another."¹³ In such an arrangement, Aphrodite's opening words describe and motivate a series of connected actions performed by the play's various characters which, when taken together, form a larger compound action: Aphrodite's desired revenge upon Hippolytos. A close reading of Aphrodite's speech in relation to the execution of her revenge will show not only how constructions of will and action operate within such a complex web of interdependence, but also the central role of speech within that dynamic.

Aphrodite and The Performance of Identity

Aphrodite is the primary god of the *Hippolytos*, in that she provides the central motive force of the tragedy. As her only observable action, the goddess' prologue

¹¹ 1-58, Aphrodite speaks; 58-87, Hippolytos enters with a procession of servants singing a hymn to Artemis; 1268-1281, the chorus sings a hymn to Aphrodite and Eros; 1282-1439, Artemis speaks.

¹² Zeitlin 1996: 224.

¹³ Zeitlin 1996: 221.

address to the audience provides vital information about the setting and circumstances of the play, but it also serves to establish her role as the primary god, and emphasizes the central thematic importance of speech itself. Beyond its narrative and informative function, which has typically been the central focus of the analysis of her appearance, there are three key aspects of her prologue speech that serve to initiate the events that follow and to describe the vital connection between the goddess and her mortal victims.¹⁴ First is the articulation of her identity at the beginning of the speech, where she presents an image of herself as fundamentally powerful and confirms the importance of mortal speech and honor in the maintenance of that identity. Second is her declaration of Hippolytos' offenses against her, which directly challenge the terms of her proclaimed identity. This declaration of affront forms a key instance of divine speech that is subsequently and explicitly demonstrated by mortal action, as Aphrodite pronounces her anger at Hippolytos and soon afterward he is seen exhibiting the types of speech that have offended the goddess.

The third and final aspect of Aphrodite's speech is the pronouncement of her will that Hippolytos should pay for his offenses against her.¹⁵ This declaration initiates a key process of divine speech and mortal embodiment, which centers on the body of Phaidra and the insemination of a terrible *eros* within her. Phaidra, in her death, enacts the destruction of Hippolytos by restating his offenses, as she accuses him of crimes and actions completely antithetical to his true offenses described by Aphrodite in the prologue. By attributing her own affliction to Hippolytos in the written words of the

¹⁴ Barrett 1964: 154-155. For more on the narrative mode of tragedy and the descriptive voice of divine characters, see Segal 1992: 85-92. An examination of the narrative and literary functions of seen and unseen gods can be found in Mastrorarde 2010: 153-206.

¹⁵ A similar division of the prologue can be found in Dunn 1996: 89, where he emphasizes the uniqueness of Aphrodite's statement of will based on its finality, which he regards as prophecy.

deltos attached to her corpse, Phaidra transfers the stigma of her shameful *eros* onto Hippolytos in the eyes of Theseus. Not only does the tablet speak against Hippolytos, but so does Phaidra's body. Displayed in full view on the stage and endowed with its own voice, the "speech" of Phaidra's body is understood by Theseus as incontrovertible proof of Hippolytos' guilt. The curse of Theseus forces Poseidon to act against the god's will, creating a chiasmic inversion of the play's typical dynamic between the will and speech of the gods and the action of mortals. Hippolytos' dying body acts as the final proof of Aphrodite's supreme power and will, and the ultimate re-assertion of her identity, as the full extent of her involvement is clearly revealed in Artemis' speech.¹⁶ Thus, both Hippolytos and Phaidra, through their actions and experiences while living, embody in different ways the key notions of divine offense and will. In death, their bodies "speak" to the core idea of Aphrodite as a higher power. This process begins and ends with the central idea of Aphrodite's identity as proclaimed by the goddess herself in the prologue.

Aphrodite's reputation is the focal point of her introduction, and she presents herself proudly in the opening lines of the play:

πολλή μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος
θεὰ κέκλημαι Κύπρις οὐρανοῦ τ' ἔσω

Great among mortals and in heaven, and not without fame,
I am called the goddess Kypris.

(*Hipp.* 1-2)¹⁷

As Barrett notes, the essential information required by the narrative is the central

¹⁶ Segal 1993: 110-111 offers a succinct overview of the display of dead or dying bodies on stage and the theatricalization of myth in tragedy.

¹⁷ All Greek text is from Diggle 1984. All translations are my own.

identifying factor of the statement: her name and divine status.¹⁸ The verb καλέω is often used to denote the act of summoning in legal and religious contexts.¹⁹ As such, it evokes a complex field of ceremonial and symbolic speech — including prayer and ritual — and calls attention to Aphrodite’s divinity.²⁰ The gesture toward the importance of speech implied by καλέω is supported and further developed by the adjective ἀνώνυμος, meaning literally “nameless”: here the word is negated by οὐκ to mean “not nameless,” and the use of litotes serves to emphasize her widespread fame. While κέκλημαι and ἀνώνυμος present the goddess’ importance in terms of what is said about her, πολλή, the most prominently placed adjective, further underscores the operation of speech in two different ways. On the surface, πολλή is oriented toward a qualitative usage, and refers to the greatness or power of the goddess, while connecting the importance of speech to the central concept of power. But, alongside the qualitative meaning of πολλή is also its more common quantitative use, which, according to Ferguson, picks up the thematic importance of speech elsewhere, and means something like “much named,” or “spoken of often.”²¹

While Aphrodite answers the essential question of who she is in the first two lines of the play, she does so in a way that incorporates the importance of mortal speech into that statement of identity. The connection between gods and humans is further developed in the next lines:

¹⁸ Barrett 1964, ad loc. Barrett also notes the emphasis placed on πολλή by its prominence at the beginning of the sentence.

¹⁹ Ferguson 1984: 45 contends that here the perfect passive has a meaning roughly equivalent to the verb εἰμί, but this ignores the fact that such uses are typically linked to statements of kinship and/or status, such as at *Il.* 2.260, 3.138, 4.61, 10.195; *Od.* 6.244; and in tragedy at Aisch. *Pers.* 242, Soph. *Elec.* 366. Indeed, the force of the verb cannot be completely removed from its connection to the act of speech.

²⁰ See, for example, Soph. *OC* 1385 where Oedipus speaks of summoning or calling down (καλοῦμαι) curses (ἄρας), and at Aisch. *Eum.* 417, where the Furies of the chorus are summoned or called (κεκλήμεθα, pass.) as curses (ἄραι).

²¹ Ferguson 1984: 45.

ὅσοι τε Πόντου τερμόνων τ' Ἀτλαντικῶν
ναίουσιν εἴσω, φῶς ὀρῶντες ἡλίου,
τοὺς μὲν σέβοντας τὰμὰ πρεσβεύω κράτη,
σφάλλω δ' ὅσοι φρονοῦσιν εἰς ἡμᾶς μέγα.
ἔνεστι γὰρ δὴ κὰν θεῶν γένει τόδε
τιμώμενοι χαίρουσιν ἀνθρώπων ὕπο.
δείξω δὲ μύθων τῶνδ' ἀλήθειαν τάχα.

And however many dwell within both the Black Sea
and the bounds of Atlas, looking upon the light of the sun,
those showing reverence to my strength, I honor,
but I take down however many think big things with respect to me.
For indeed it is thus even among the race of the gods:
they rejoice being honored by men.
And I will demonstrate the truth of these words right away.
(*Hipp.* 3-9)

To Aphrodite, the question of human morality is simple. The world contains two types of people, those who respect her power and those who do not. Once again she focuses on the importance of mortals, and what they think and say, while the generalizing nature of the verbs further expresses precisely who or what kind of god she is: one who always performs a specific action in a specific set of circumstances.²² Aphrodite outlines her own basic definition of human morality by describing certain mortal attitudes as worthy of honor, and others as worthy of punishment. This is important because Aphrodite implicitly defines good mortals as those who honor her, and bad mortals as those that regard her arrogantly. In this equation, mortal reverence has a privileged position in the definition of piety far above the much more self-involved moral concepts with which the play's human characters constantly regard their own actions. As the play progresses, the divide between humans and gods is increasingly exemplified by the gap between mortal and immortal views of piety, a fact emphasized by varying and repeated definitions of moral terms such as αἰδώς, “shame or

²² For a discussion of the importance of correct thought as a recurring theme in the *Hippolytos* and as a tenet of Athenian religion, see Mikalson 1991: 179-183.

reverence,” and σωφροσύνη, “sound mindedness or moderation.”²³ In six short lines Aphrodite clearly defines the relationship between mortals and immortals through the economy of reciprocal exchange, wherein mortal honor is exchanged for divine favor, and a lack of reverence is answered with violent reprisal.²⁴ It is within this general framework of reciprocal exchange that Aphrodite orients her complaint against Hippolytos.

Extreme Speech: Hippolytos’ Hymn and the Iteration of Offense

When Aphrodite turns to the subject of Hippolytos, she names a few features of Hippolytos’ parentage and position in society, but quickly refocuses on his offensive speech, locating his importance precisely in what he says about her:

ὁ γάρ με Θησέως παῖς, Ἀμαζόνος τόκος,
Ἴππόλυτος, ἀγνοῦ Πιτθέως παιδύματα,
μόνος πολιτῶν τῆσδε γῆς Τροζηνίας
λέγει κακίστην δαιμόνων πεφυκέναι·
ἀναίνεται δὲ λέκτρα κού ψαύει γάμων,
Φοίβου δ’ ἀδελφὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην,
τιμᾶι, μεγίστην δαιμόνων ἡγούμενος,
χλωρὰν δ’ ἄν’ ὕλην παρθένωι ξυνὼν ἀεὶ
κυσὶν ταχείαις θῆρας ἐξαιρεῖ χθονός,
μείζω βροτείας προσπεσῶν ὀμιλίας.

For the son of Theseus, the child of the Amazon,
Hippolytos, the ward of pious Pittheus,
alone of the citizens of this here Troezenian land,
says that I am by nature the basest of divinities.
He rejects the love bed and does not touch marriage,
and Artemis the sister of Phoebus, the daughter of Zeus,
he honors, thinking that she is the greatest of divinities,
being always in the green wood with the maiden

²³ Gregory 1991: 51-85 argues σωφροσύνη and αἰδώς are presented as aristocratic values and contrasted with the Nurse’s moral relativism.

²⁴ On reciprocity in Athenian religion and tragedy, see Mikalson 1991: 175-178; and Yunis 1988: 100-121. For its importance in Greek religion generally, see Mikalson 2005: 23-29; and Burkert 1985: 68-70, 92-95.

he takes the wild beasts from the land with his swift dogs,
having fallen upon a companionship greater than human.
(*Hipp.* 10-19)

Aphrodite directly contrasts Hippolytos' attitudes toward her and Artemis in verses 10-13 and 15-19. The active terms of the contrast are the parallel verbs λέγει (13) and τιμᾶι (16), as well as the superlatives κακίστην (13) and μεγίστην (16), where each goddess is placed at the opposite end of a polar extreme. The type of arrogant speech and lack of reverence set out in Aphrodite's complaint resides in the extreme nature of Hippolytos' attitudes.²⁵ The verb used to describe his speech about Artemis, τιμάω, "to honor or praise," was already used by Aphrodite to describe the type of speech generally pleasing to gods and worthy of reward (9). In this context, then, it is in relation to his excessively negative speech against Aphrodite that his praise for Artemis becomes offensive from Aphrodite's perspective. Therefore, the prevalence of superlatives in Hippolytos' upcoming hymn to Artemis (58-71) is evocative not only of his excessive praise of Artemis, but also implicitly reiterates his denigration of Aphrodite. Aspects of the language of the hymn, as we shall see, further strengthen this implicit reiteration.

Each adjective used in the contrast between Aphrodite and Artemis suggests a different, more closely associated term used at another time in the narrative. Such verbal gestures are significant, since they not only integrate alternate meanings for each term into the distinction between the goddesses, but also draw a connection between Aphrodite's use of speech to describe herself, her attribution of specific types of offensive speech to Hippolytos, and Hippolytos' own use of speech when he first

²⁵ The point here is Aphrodite's perception of Hippolytos' behavior as offensive and hubristic, not issues of authorial intent. Kovacs 1987 argues it was not Euripides' intent to portray Hippolytos' behavior as hubristic, nor would such behavior have been viewed as such by contemporary Athenian audience. An alternative view can be found in Mills 2002: 89-91; and Mikalson 1991: 85.

appears before the audience. Halleran and Barrett are quick to point out the conceptual similarity between the words μέγας and πολύς in their discussions of the opening line of Aphrodite’s speech.²⁶ However, I would add that the assertion that Artemis is μεγίστη (the greatest/most powerful of the gods), declared by Hippolytos, essentially subverts Aphrodite’s assertion of herself as πολλή (great/powerful), especially when placed in the context of Hippolytos’ extreme aspersions of her as the basest of gods (κακίστην). Aphrodite locates Hippolytos’ assessment of Artemis as “μεγίστη” in direct opposition to his opinion of Aphrodite as “κακίστη,” setting the concept of power and stature (μέγας) in conflict with the moral implications of the adjective κακός, “wicked” or “base.” Thus, in the structure of this contrast, Hippolytos supplants Aphrodite’s own assertion of her authority with his declaration of her baseness, which creates a distinct conflation of moral values with the idea of power.

Moreover, the adjective κακός not only has moral implications, but can signify aesthetic qualities as well. This ambivalence is more readily apparent when the term is set in opposition to the adjective καλός, which occurs prominently in the following hymn sung by Hippolytos and his servants (66, 72). The strong lexical association between the adjectives κακός and καλός draws an important conceptual link between Hippolytos’ alleged treatment of Aphrodite as “κακίστη,” and his repeated references to Artemis as “καλλίστα.”²⁷ The use of the term καλλίστα to describe Artemis contravenes the traditional association of Aphrodite with superlative physical beauty,²⁸

²⁶ Halleran 1995: 146; and Barrett 1964: 155 note that while both terms denote power, πολλή is a slightly stronger, more emphatic term.

²⁷ Perhaps the most famous example of the close association between the two words can be found at Hesiod *Theog.* 585, where Pandora is described as a καλόν κακόν, a “beautiful evil.”

²⁸ On the close association between Aphrodite and the concept of beauty, see Cyrino 2010: 53-78; Breitenberger 2007: 21, 47, 51.

just as the use of “κακίστη” alongside “μεγίστη” calls into question Aphrodite’s assertion of power. This is a case of what I call “verbal cueing,” which occurs when a specific verbal element is used in different contexts to draw a conspicuous connection between separate scenes, often involving the inversion, re-definition, or juxtaposition of a previous use or meaning of the same word or element. Here, the interlocking meanings of πολλή and μέγας, καλός and κακός, in addition to the repeated use of superlative adjectives, and the placement of κακίστη and μεγίστη in a parallel construction, all point to different, but nonetheless important, connections and associations.

The goddess further reveals the extreme nature of Hippolytos’ speech by noting that it is exceptional among those living in Troezen. She uses the term άγνός, “pious, chaste,” to contrast Pittheus’ reverence towards her with her perception of Hippolytos’ irreverence (άγνοῦ Πιτθέως, 11). Hippolytos uses the same word later when he refuses to approach or acknowledge the statue of Aphrodite, saying, “I salute her from afar, since I am chaste (άγνός)” (102). This is another case of verbal cueing, which once again links the context of Aphrodite’s complaint to Hippolytos’ use of speech.²⁹ Here, verbal cueing highlights the connection between Aphrodite’s speech and Hippolytos’ behavior, and this time emphasizes the disparity between Aphrodite’s conception of piety, with its emphasis on reverence, and the antithetical morality of Hippolytos, based on an elevated importance of abstinence from sexual activity.

²⁹ άγνός is used three more times in this play: by the chorus in reference to Phaidra’s sickness and refusal to eat to mean “pure from Demeter” (138); by Hippolytos in the *agon* to mean “pure from sex” (1003); and by Theseus when he asks Hippolytos if he will die leaving his killer’s hand impure (άναγνον, 1448).

Intercourse with the Maiden: the Bed and the Hunt

The contrast between Artemis and Aphrodite in Aphrodite's prologue also clearly delineates certain behaviors as explicitly associated with each goddess (14, 17-19). Aphrodite appropriates marriage and the "marriage bed" (λέκτρα, 14), a common euphemism for sexual activity, by complaining that Hippolytos participates in neither. The statement then juxtaposes sex and the internality of the bedroom (λέκτρα, 14) against the hunt and the externality of wild wooded places (χλωρὰν ὕλην, 17), when Aphrodite complains of Hippolytos' excessive devotion to such activities, which are emblematic of his relationship with Artemis.³⁰ The definition of a clear opposition and separation between the bed (sex) and Aphrodite on the one hand, and the hunt and Artemis on the other, establishes an important theme that will recur throughout the play and inform the nature of Phaidra's *eros* in its defiance of such dichotomies and tendency to blur social boundaries. The harsh opposition in Aphrodite's speech between the spaces occupied by the bed and the hunt anticipates the literal movement of the bed itself outdoors when Phaidra emerges from Pittheus' house: this represents the beginning of Aphrodite's infiltration of Hippolytos' world.

This dynamic is underscored by the Nurse's pointed repetition of bed terms, νοσερᾶς, "sick-bed," δέμνια, "bed-stead," and κοίτης, "bed, marriage-bed" (179-180), which not only emphasizes the perverse displacement of the bed itself from the bedroom to the courtyard, but also emphatically connects and confuses the association of the bed with both sickness and sexual activity. This is especially relevant in the case of κοίτη. Etymologically related to the verb κείμαι, it is associated with lying down in

³⁰ For a discussion of the connection between sex via sexual abstinence, and the hunt, and by extension an externality and removal from the polis, adulthood and citizenship, see Zeitlin 1995: 232-236; Goldhill 1986: 119-120; Vidal-Naquet 1986.

either sickness or sexual intercourse, and underlines the erotic nature of Phaidra's disease and the corruption of the marriage bed.³¹ As Ruth Padel points out, Phaidra's lying down combines the erotic and nosological connotations of κοίτη, but also physically anticipates the lying down of Hippolytos' broken body at the end of the play, foreshadowed by Phaidra's ominous claim that he will "share in her disease" (730-731).³² In the parallel placement of the bed and the hunt, Aphrodite insinuates an ironic eroticism into the companionship (παρθένωι ξυνών, ὁμιλία, 17) between Hippolytos and Artemis, as Barrett and Halleran have noted.³³ By means of the opposition between herself and Artemis, Aphrodite establishes a clear connection between her stated identity as a powerful goddess and the challenge to her identity that Hippolytos' speech and attitudes toward her pose. What remains to be seen is how Aphrodite's divine will responds to that specific challenge, and how she establishes her role as the motive force of the play.

Speech Acts: Aphrodite's Will

Aphrodite makes two statements that pronounce her intention of revenge against Hippolytos and establish her direct relationship with Phaidra. Her first claim intimates and even presupposes her agency in the inception of Phaidra's condition:

ἄ δ' εἰς ἔμ' ἡμάρτηκε τιμωρήσομαι
 Ἴππόλυτον ἐν τῆιδ' ἡμέραι· τὰ πολλὰ δὲ
 πάλαι προκόψασ', οὐ πόνου πολλοῦ με δεῖ.

³¹ The bed (κοίτη) has a similar thematic meaning at *Med.* 152, where the chorus speaks of Medea's "desire" (ἔρος) of "the unapproachable bed" (τᾶς ἀπλάτου κοίτας), referring to her morbid and excessive reaction to Jason's new marriage, and thereby conflating her desire for death with her erotic desire for Jason.

³² Padel 1995: 162-163.

³³ Barrett 1964: 157; Halleran 1995: 148.

For the things that he has erred against me, I will avenge myself on
Hippolytos this very day; but having prepared
many things in advance long ago, there is no need of much labor from me.
(*Hipp.* 21-23)

The vivid future verb τιμωρήσομαι denotes the act of payback or revenge, with the middle voice indicating personal interest: “I will avenge myself.” Here, Aphrodite’s use of the future indicative should be viewed as a binding act, very similar to a promise or an oath.³⁴ In this context, then, Aphrodite’s statement “I will avenge myself” provides a point of departure by which to measure the events of the play as they unfold. From the moment of its utterance, Aphrodite’s intent cannot be revoked and should not be evaluated according to its truth or falsehood, but rather by its action as a binding statement, since it speaks to Aphrodite’s ability to realize her intent, and thereby directly reflects the prominent issues of her identity. The verb is coded with reflexive significance, serving not so much to describe what the goddess will do in the future, but to project into the future the intended outcome of things already set in motion, and the force of the will behind them, as indicated by the backward-looking nature of the rest of the statement (ἄ δ’ εἰς ἔμ’ ἡμάρτηκε, τὰ πολλὰ δὲ πάλαι προκόψασ’, 21-23). The following lines, Aphrodite’s only description of Phaidra’s illness, establish the clear connection between Phaidra and Aphrodite, and Phaidra’s central role in the will and plans of the goddess:

ἐλθόντα γάρ νιν Πιθθέως ποτ’ ἐκ δόμων
σεμνῶν ἐς ὄψιν καὶ τέλη μυστηρίων
Πανδίονος γῆν πατρὸς εὐγενῆς δάμαρ
ἰδοῦσα Φαίδρα καρδίαν κατέσχετο
ἔρωτι δεινῶι τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευμάσιν.

³⁴ See Austin 1962: 156 on the “commissive speech act,” which states intention and thereby commits the speaker to a certain course of action. For the future indicative verb as a possible implicit performative utterance, see Austin 1962: 33, 67-75, 91.

Then coming from the house of Pittheus
for the observance and completion of the holy mysteries
to the land of Pandion, his father's noble wife
Phaidra saw him and was possessed in her heart
with a terrible *eros* by my designs.

(*Hipp.* 24-28)

The sentence is complex, in that it accommodates a double set of attendant circumstances: the arrival of Hippolytos in Athens and Phaidra's seeing him there. Both Phaidra and Hippolytos are described by active participles (ἐλθόντα, 24; ἰδοῦσα, 27), after which lies the main verbal thrust of the statement, the conspicuous κατέσχετο, an aorist middle from κατέχω with a passive sense: "she was possessed."³⁵ The use of an effectively passive verb³⁶ in this particular case seems a strangely inert choice, since it describes a crucial relationship in the play: the inception and source of Phaidra's affliction.

The removal of an active subject from the equation transfers any attribution of agency onto the peculiar twofold dative construction in the following line, "*with a terrible eros, by my designs*" (ἔρωτι δεινῶι τοῖς ἔμοις βουλεύμασιν, 28). Given the significance of the action being described, which we are to understand as the inception of the entire chain of events that occurs within the play, the type of agency inscribed here is essential. However, the syntax of the line is also difficult to interpret, leaving several possibilities for interpreting the specific force of the second dative phrase, τοῖς ἔμοις βουλεύμασιν, "by my designs." This translation grants to Aphrodite's plans or

³⁵ Segal 1993: 116 is careful to point to the connection between the meaning of κατέχω here and at 883, where it is used by Theseus of his unwillingness to "hold back" (κατέξω) his curse against Hippolytos, in what I would argue is another case of verbal cueing.

³⁶ For the connection between the aorist middle and passive, see Wackernagel 2009: 179-181. On the aorist middle of κατέχω as passive, see Barrett 1964, *ad loc.*

designs primary agency, by reading βουλεύμασιν with an explicit instrumentality, and this attribution is justified by several factors. First, given the prominence of the divine personification of *Eros* in other parts of the play, if the *eros* mentioned here were to be designated as the agent of the action, one would expect ὑπό plus the genitive, or some other construction with stronger connotations of personal agency.³⁷ Second, the possessive adjective ἐμοῖς puts Aphrodite back into the action, and connects the passive verb closely to her own actions, an involvement anticipated by the force of her previous statement of intention (21-23).

Just as τιμωρήσομαι (21) vividly projects Aphrodite's will into the future, the aorist participle προκόψασα (23), from προκόπτω, meaning "to strike forward, advance or progress," reorients the main action into the past. In this context, the aorist participle anticipates the tense and aspect of the circumstances under which Phaidra's illness began (24-28). The prominence of the aorist participles προκόψασα, ἐλθόντα, and ἰδοῦσα, which occur in close succession, argues strongly in favor of leaving κατέσχετο as an aorist middle verb with a passive sense rather than emending it to an imperfect passive as others have done.³⁸ This arrangement places an extraordinary emphasis on the simple aspect of the aorist and renders an almost cinematic effect: there is a swift progression of connected images as Hippolytos arrives, Phaidra catches sight of him, and her heart is possessed. The two datives in the following line, ἔρωτι δεινῶι "with a terrible *eros*" and τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλεύμασιν "by my designs" serve to qualify the action further, as they are specifically connected to Aphrodite and desire.

³⁷ George 2005: 103, 195-221 argues that due to metrical constraints, πρὸς, παρὰ and ἐκ are used much more commonly to denote agency with passive verbs in tragedy, while ἐκ is by far the most common way to denote divine agency.

³⁸ See Barrett 1964: 159-160.

The two phrases, arranged side by side and occupying a single line of trimeter, are juxtaposed and thereby closely associated. Given the forcefulness of Aphrodite’s claim of intent in the previous lines (τιμωρήσομαι), the passive quality of the verb κατέσχετο redirects subjectivity from Aphrodite herself onto her plans or designs, granting them a prominent instrumentality, while the close auditory and spatial connection of the two dative phrases suggests a strong conceptual association and role in the action. When taken with the simple or instantaneous nature of action in the aorist, and the locative sense of the accusative of respect καρδίαν (“in/as to her heart,” 27), Aphrodite’s will is imbued with a sense of insemination or implantation. The cumulative effect evokes an image that concentrates on Phaidra’s body. In the enactment of Aphrodite’s revenge, Phaidra’s body is closely associated with the goddess, as the point of entry of the goddess’ will into the mortal world.³⁹

Revelation and Externality: The Movement of *eros*

The last part of Aphrodite’s speech predicts the chain of events that will occur in the play, and the manner in which her revenge will be executed by other characters. But first the goddess offers a bit of back-story that brings Phaidra and Theseus from Athens to Troezen, and further develops the intimate connection between Phaidra and Aphrodite:

καὶ πρὶν μὲν ἔλθεῖν τήνδε γῆν Τροζηνίαν,
πέτραν παρ’ αὐτὴν Παλλάδος, κατόψιον
γῆς τῆσδε, ναὸν Κύπριδος ἐγκαθίστατο,
ἔρωσ’ ἔρωτ’ ἔκδημον· Ἴπολύτῳ δ’ ἔπι
τὸ λοιπὸν ὀνομάσουσιν ἰδρῦσθαι θεάν.

³⁹ See Zeitlin 1995: 234-240; Segal 1995: 110-120; Padel 1995: 162-164.

ἐπεὶ δὲ Θησεὺς Κεκροπίαν λείπει χθόνα,
μίασμα φεύγων αἵματος Παλλαντιδῶν,
καὶ τήνδε σὺν δάμαρτι ναυστολεῖ χθόνα,
ἐνιαυσίαν ἔκδημον αἰνέσας φυγὴν,
ἐνταῦθα δὴ στένουσα κάκπεπληγμένη
κέντροις ἔρωτος ἢ τάλαιν' ἀπόλλυται
σιγῇ· ζύνοιδε δ' οὔτις οἰκετῶν νόσον.
ἀλλ' οὔτι ταύτη τόνδ' ἔρωτα χρὴ πεσεῖν·
δείξω δὲ Θησεῖ πρᾶγμα κάκφανήσεται.
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἡμῖν πολέμιον νεανίαν
κτενεῖ πατὴρ ἀραῖσιν ἅς ὁ πόντιος
ἄναξ Ποσειδῶν ὤπασεν Θησεῖ γέρας,
μηδὲν μάταιον ἐς τρεῖς εὐξασθαι θεῶι·

And before [Phaidra] came to this here Troezenian land,
Beside the very rock of Athena, directly facing this land,
she founded a temple of Kypris,
desiring a foreign love; the goddess founded over Hippolytos
posterity will call it.

But when Theseus left the land of Cecrops,
fleeing the stain of the blood of the Pallantidae,
and traveled with his wife to this land,
accepting a year-long exile from home,
then indeed she, groaning and having been driven out of her wits
by the goads of love, the wretched woman dies
in silence; and no one of the household shares in the knowledge of her sickness.
But this is in no way how this desire is meant to fall out.
For I will reveal the affair to Theseus, and it will be made clear,
and the father will kill the young man hostile to us
with the curses which Poseidon, lord of the sea, pledged to Theseus as a gift of

honor,

that he pray not one empty prayer in three, to the god.

(*Hipp.* 29-46)

When Aphrodite describes the circumstances of Theseus and Phaidra's move from Athens to Troezen, the term ἔκδημος, literally "outside the *deme*" or "away from home," emphasizes the shifting spatial and social relationships between Hippolytos, Phaidra, and Theseus, and the transgressive power of Phaidra's *eros*.⁴⁰ Moreover, this is a striking instance of verbal cueing, since ἔκδημος is used first by Aphrodite to refer to

⁴⁰ For the importance of inner and outer spaces as a metaphor for speech and expression in the *Hippolytos*, see Goff 1995: 3-6, 12; and Segal 1993: 94-96, 116-117.

Hippolytos as Phaidra’s “foreign love” (32), and then to the exile of Theseus and Phaidra from Athens just five lines later (37). Shortly afterward the chorus, distraught and puzzled by Phaidra’s bizarre behavior, learns from the Nurse that Theseus is ἔκδημος, away from Troezen, and thus unaware of his wife’s condition and unable to intercede (281). Much scholarly work has already been dedicated to the cultural significations of space in tragedy and ancient Greek culture in general, wherein interior space is typically defined as private and gendered as feminine, while exterior space is distinctly associated with the *polis* and the realm of male action and power.⁴¹ This distinction is notable here for two reasons. While Aphrodite’s description of the exile of Phaidra and Theseus is another story, there is a provocative similarity in the uses of the term ἔκδημος to describe both Hippolytos as a lover removed from Athens (32), and Theseus as the absent husband (281): in each instance, Phaidra manifests as “internal” (ἔνδημος) in contrast to the shifting male “external” position (ἔκδημος). In this context, then, the echoing of the term ἔκδημος emphasizes the prospective reversal and perversion of the social roles between father and son in the face of Phaidra’s shameful *eros*. Moreover, the description of Theseus and Phaidra’s move from Athens to Troezen as an ἔκδημον φυγήν, an “exile out of the *deme*,” is framed as an outward movement (ἐκ-). While the emergence of Phaidra’s sick bed to the exterior of the house in Troezen has been considered significant in the context of her erotic affliction, such movement is embedded within the greater movement from Athens to Troezen. In addition, through verbal cueing, both movements are strongly emphasized, connected to the concept of externalization, and juxtaposed to the content of Aphrodite’s speech and will.

⁴¹ See especially Zeitlin 1996: 353-356, Padel 1992: 2-11; Goff 1990: 2-7; Goldhill 1986: 107-137; and Vernant 1983: *passim*.

Speech Acts: Phaidra's Revenge and the Drama of Expression

The prologue draws to a close as Aphrodite describes how she will use Phaidra's *eros* to bring about her revenge. As things stand, Phaidra wastes away, refuses to take food, and struggles to keep her *eros* secret: this is the state of affairs as the play begins. But Phaidra's silence cannot last, since her *eros* must be revealed according to Aphrodite's plan. As Barrett and others have observed, the specific language used by Aphrodite to describe the revelation of Phaidra's desire to Theseus is misleading, and can be interpreted from a dramatic perspective as intended to leave an element of surprise as events unfold.⁴² Earlier, in Aphrodite's description of the implantation of *eros* within Phaidra, the explicit involvement of the goddess in the insemination of Phaidra's *eros* was understated by the use of an effectively passive verb (κατεσχέτο). Here once again, the goddess conspicuously inverts an attribution of agency in the description of a critical event. But this time the crucial action is the outward expression of that same *eros*, and instead of understating her role in the action, as before, here she overstates her involvement in a misleading way. The core of the statement "I will reveal the affair to Theseus, and it will be made clear" (42) lies in the vivid future verb δείξω, "I will reveal." However, when the time comes, Aphrodite has no explicit participation in the revelation of Phaidra's desire. Rather, Phaidra is the one who first brings the affair out into the open, but in a deceitful way; the full extent of what has happened is only revealed at the end of the play. Artemis uncovers Aphrodite's role in the tragedy, a disclosure that connects the play's events to Aphrodite's power and

⁴² See Mastrorarde 2010: 263; Mills 2002: 49; and Barrett 1964: 16-165.

identity. Phaidra's revelation, on the other hand, enacts Aphrodite's will and revenge, a fact emphasized by the ambiguous language used to describe the agency of both Phaidra and Aphrodite alike.

Just before Phaidra re-enters the house for the last time, she makes her own intentions clear, when the chorus asks her what exactly she intends to do:

Χο. μέλλεις δὲ δὴ τί δρᾶν ἀνήκεστον κακόν;
Φα. θανεῖν· ὅπως δέ, τοῦτ' ἐγὼ βουλευόσομαι.
Χο. εὐφημος ἴσθι. {Φα.} καὶ σύ γ' εὖ με νουθέτει.
ἐγὼ δὲ Κύπριν, ἥπερ ἐξόλλυσί με,
ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαχθεῖσα τῆιδ' ἐν ἡμέραι
τέρψω· πικροῦ δ' ἔρωτος ἠσσηθήσομαι.
ἀτὰρ κακόν γε χᾶτέρωι γενήσομαι
θανοῦσ', ἴν' εἰδῆι μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς
ὑψηλὸς εἶναι· τῆς νόσου δὲ τῆσδέ μοι
κοινῆι μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

Ch. But what ill past cure are you going to do?
Ph. To die. But how, this I will decide.
Ch. Be silent! Ph. And you, advise me well!
But Kypris, the very one who destroys me,
I will delight, having departed from life this day.
I am bested by bitter desire.
But I, dying, will become an evil to another,
so that over my troubles he should know
not to be high and mighty; and sharing this very disease
in common with me, he will learn to be moderate.
(Hipp. 722-731)

There is an overt tension between Phaidra's stated intent (725), and her description of the involvement of Aphrodite (727-729). Phaidra declares that she will die, according to her own wishes and by her own hand (θανεῖν, 723). However, there is some ambiguity in the rest of the statement. The act of wishing or intent (βουλευόσομαι, 723) is separated or set in opposition to θανεῖν by the conjunction δέ, implying that while to

die is not Phaidra’s plan or intent, the manner of it (ὅπως, 723) will be.⁴³ Phaidra then inserts Aphrodite into the equation, and describes the goddess as the one who is actively destroying or killing her (ἐξόλλυσί, 725). This would clarify the ambiguous relationship between βουλεύσομαι and θανεῖν, except that it is in a relative clause, subordinate to a primary action in which Phaidra claims that she will delight (τέρψω, 727) Aphrodite by dying (ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαχθεῖσα, 726).⁴⁴ Furthermore, the type of language used by Phaidra, such as the vivid first person future indicative verbs (βουλεύσομαι, 724; τέρψω, 728; γενήσομαι, 730), is reminiscent of the force and intention of Aphrodite’s own statements in the prologue (τιμωρήσομαι, 21; δείξω, 42). In addition, the temporal limitation of both scenarios is identical, as they are described as about to happen “this very day” (ἐν τῆιδ’ ἡμέραι, 21; τῆιδ’ ἐν ἡμέραι, 728). Thus, this is another case of verbal cueing, wherein each vivid statement of intent and agency is intermingled and confused with a parallel statement of intent and agency by the other character.

Rather than viewing Aphrodite and Phaidra’s disparate claims of agency and will as a paradox or discrepancy, however, they can be more constructively interpreted as a telling unification between the incongruent wills of Phaidra and Aphrodite. Here, the central question is whether or not Phaidra’s actions advance Aphrodite’s will or plans (βουλεύματα), as declared by the goddess in the prologue. Phaidra’s claim that she “will plan” (βουλεύσομαι) the manner of her own death and especially its

⁴³ Barrett 1964: 296-297 argues that here the ambiguous ὅπως refers not only to the manner of Phaidra’s death but also to all its circumstances, ostensibly including the tablet and its contents, as is implied by the end of Phaidra’s statement.

⁴⁴ This use of ἀπάλασσω with the genitive occurs elsewhere in this play, as at *Hipp.* 356, when the Nurse reacts to the news of Phaidra’s love for Hippolytos by claiming that she is destroyed and will die. Other instances of this usage in Euripides include *Hel.* 102 and *Heracl.* 1000.

consequences for Hippolytos, and Aphrodite's claim that she will reveal (δείξω, 42) Phaidra's *eros* to Theseus and thereby accomplish her revenge, is a merging or concordance of wills, rather than a disjunction. Phaidra declares her intention to harm Hippolytos outright, voicing a specific wish that he will "share in her disease" (730), and that by dying she hopes to become an evil to him (κακόν γε, 728). In so doing, however, she performs the precise action, and arguably the only possible action, necessary for Phaidra's sickness to reach Theseus in a way that will bring about Hippolytos' death, and ultimately re-assert Aphrodite's power.

Before she withdraws from the stage, Aphrodite makes one last point that further explains Phaidra's role, and the crucial connection between the woman and the goddess. When she mentions Theseus, and the role of the prayers promised to him by Poseidon in Hippolytos' death, the goddess also describes Phaidra's role as the means of her revenge:

ἡ δ' εὐκλεῆς μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀπόλλυται
Φαίδρα· τὸ γὰρ τῆσδ' οὐ προτιμήσω κακὸν
τὸ μὴ οὐ παρασχεῖν τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐμοὶ
δίκην τοσαύτην ὥστε μοι καλῶς ἔχειν.

And Phaidra is noble, but nonetheless she dies;
For I will not value the misfortune of this woman so much
that those who are hateful to me should escape
the kind of punishment that is fitting to me.

(*Hipp.* 47-50)

Aphrodite's designation of Phaidra as εὐκλεῆς "of good repute/with a good reputation" presages Phaidra's obsession with her honor, especially as it relates to what is and will be said about her, a preoccupation that she and the goddess have in common.

Aphrodite's statement itself, however, can be interpreted in two different ways. One is that Phaidra will die despite being εὐκλεῆς, meaning that the goddess will kill her to

effect revenge against Hippolytos although she is blameless. The other is that Phaidra will die but nonetheless remain εὐκλής, meaning that her *eros* will not stain her reputation. Despite this lack of clarity, the latter part of the statement clearly shows that the death of Phaidra is not an end in and of itself, but a means for the goddess to accomplish her desired revenge against Hippolytos.

Here, the goddess underlines Phaidra's importance as a tool by explicitly placing the value of her own revenge above the implicit unfairness of Phaidra's misfortune. To understand the absolute connection between Phaidra's body and Aphrodite's power, however, it is necessary first to examine the pathology of Phaidra's erotic sickness. In the drama of expression surrounding when and how Phaidra's *eros* will be revealed, Phaidra's suffering is directly connected to the struggle between her will and that of Aphrodite, and its eventual failure. This drama is itself steeped in the play's exploration of shifting moral values, especially the central importance of εὐκλεία, "fame or good repute," and σωφροσύνη, "sound mindedness or moderation." When Aphrodite exits the stage it is Phaidra, through her madness, suffering, and finally her rage, that will ultimately express the goddess' will, and eventually transfer her disease to Hippolytos through the words and judgment of Theseus.

Phaidra: Erotic Affliction and the Drama of Expression

As Phaidra first appears in the play, the drama surrounding how and when her shameful *eros* will be expressed is at center stage. The process begins in the exchange of speech among the women of the chorus and the Nurse regarding Phaidra's condition, and then is manifest especially in the discourse between the Nurse and Phaidra.

Phaidra’s vocalization of her experience unfolds in two stages: an intense exchange with the Nurse building up to the shocking revelation of her *eros*; and a retrospective vocalization of her struggle to suppress and endure it, which frames her madness and suffering in terms of a struggle of wills between herself and Aphrodite. During the process of revelation, the Nurse and Phaidra play shifting roles in the extraction and suppression of speech. As Phaidra raves, she uses descriptive language to project her body into activities and places associated with Hippolytos, and the scandalized Nurse seeks to repress Phaidra’s expression in different ways. The scene begins with Phaidra in a clearly agitated state where she expresses a variety of attitudes evocative of her erotic affliction (198-250). Her ravings revolve around the attitude and location of her body, at first in a concrete and immediate sense, which becomes more abstract as the scene progresses.

Phaidra’s first words express the need for her limbs and head to be held or restrained, and the following lines suggest a loss of control imbued with erotic overtones:⁴⁵

αἴρετέ μου δέμας, ὀρθοῦτε κάρα·
 λέλυμαι μελέων σύνδεσμα φίλων.
 λάβετε' εὐπήχεις χεῖρας, πρόπολοι.
 βαρὺ μοι κεφαλῆς ἐπίκρανον ἔχειν·
 ἄφελ', ἀμπέτασον βόστρυχον ὦμοις.

Take my body, hold up my head;
 I am loosened at the fastenings of my limbs.
 Take my hands and fair forearms, servants.
 It is a burden to hold this headdress on my head.
 Remove it, spread my curls out on my shoulders.
 (*Hipp.* 198-200)

⁴⁵ As Halleran 1995: 169 notes, the language here is evocative of the traditional lyric epithet of Eros, λυσιμελής “limb loosening,” and thereby her description of her condition is imbued with erotic overtones.

The veil or headdress traditionally represents the woman's identity as a wife and mother, and thus its removal is closely associated with the slackening of normal social constraints.⁴⁶ Just as Phaidra's first statement focuses more tangibly on the immediate attitude and state of her body, so does the Nurse's response, referring to Phaidra's condition as a sickness (νοσόν, 205) and urging her not to thrash her limbs so harshly (μὴ χαλεπῶς μετάβαλλε δέμας, 203-204). As Phaidra's ravings become more abstract and puzzling, the Nurse displays a growing sense of shock. The Nurse's use of the language of sickness and the body gives way to a greater focus on Phaidra's use of speech. She refers to Phaidra's ravings as speech mounted on madness (λόγον μανίας ἔποχον) and expresses special concern about their public display (213-214). She wonders at the seemingly random nature of Phaidra's concern for hunting (μελέτη, 224) and desire for water from a mountain spring (ἔρασαι, 225). A few lines later the Nurse emphasizes the importance of words and speech (232-237), first wondering again at the madness of Phaidra's ranting, τί τόδ' αὖ παράφρων ἔρριψας ἔπος; or "Why do you hurl this speech, being out of your mind?" (232). She then puzzles over the seeming randomness of the places and activities named by Phaidra (233-235), and finally posits another type of speech entirely as a type of antithesis to such randomness and confusion:

τάδε μαντείας ἄξια πολλῆς,
 ὅστις σε θεῶν ἀνασειράζει
 καὶ παρακόπτει φρένας, ὦ παῖ.

These things are worthy of much prophecy,

⁴⁶ Halleran 1995: 169, 171, citing Nagler 1974: 44-63 on the symbolism of the Homeric κρήδεμνον, argues that the removal of the headdress here suggests a loss of chastity, or at least anticipates the unchaste nature of the behavior she is about to display, and its replacement signals her shame. Taplin 1978: 94 equates the removal of the headdress with the release of Phaidra's longing evident in her "passionate wishes" for places and activities associated with Hippolytos.

whichever of the gods is driving you
and struck you out of your wits, child.
(*Hipp.* 236-238)

The Nurse's reference to μαντεία, used here to mean the interpretation of portents and therefore a type of ceremonial or religious speech,⁴⁷ makes explicit what Barrett and Halleran view as an implicit connection between Phaidra's condition as madness, and divine causes.⁴⁸ In this context the mention of gods (θεῶν, 237), as opposed to a more general term for higher powers that might be the cause of madness,⁴⁹ is evocative of Aphrodite's designation of herself as θεά in the first lines of her speech. This is a case of verbal cueing that highlights the scene's erotic overtones. In this context, the designation of Phaidra's behavior as madness connects her to Aphrodite's speech and plan. Aphrodite is a constant presence, since the audience knows her to be the cause of Phaidra's affliction, and the nature of the affliction itself is the central question dominating the dialogue.⁵⁰ The verb ἀνασειράζω, according to the scholiast, describes a horse driver pulling back on the reins (σεράι)⁵¹ causing a horse to rear. The image is of a driver/trainer steering a horse, whether by reins or a track rope, and provides a telling metaphor for Aphrodite's influence and control over Phaidra. When taken with the prevalence of horse images in Phaidra's ravings, the metaphor connects the image of a horse and driver to the relationship between Aphrodite and Phaidra, and foreshadows the role of Hippolytos' horses, and his inability to control them, in the description of

⁴⁷ As at *Soph., Elect.* 499-506.

⁴⁸ Barrett 1964: 205 connects the designation of madness to a comparison between the raving Phaidra and her normal self, adding that prophecy is a fitting recourse/cure. Halleran 1995: 170 connects the idea of erotic madness to the concept of ἄτη, the term that Phaidra, returned to cogency, uses to describe her manic state.

⁴⁹ δαίμονες would be the most ubiquitous of these.

⁵⁰ Mastronarde 2010: 176 describes this as a common narrative strategy of Euripidean prologues, wherein the divine narrator gives the audience vital information unknown to the characters of the play.

⁵¹ Barrett 1964: 205. Barrett acknowledges the scholiast's designation of σεράι as "reins" in this instance but notes that the σερά typically denotes the tracer rope use to train horses, not the reins.

his destruction.

While Phaidra's madness gestures dramatically toward Aphrodite and her influence, the language she uses is also highly evocative of Hippolytos, further developing the symbolic infiltration of the erotic into Hippolytos' world. This connection is most productive when Phaidra's voices her desire for "pure water" (καθαρῶν ὑδάτων, 209), with its emphasis on purity and cleanliness, and her invocation of a shaggy meadow (κομήτηι λειμῶνι, 210-211). Such language is highly reminiscent of Hippolytos' description of the meadow where he procured the materials of the garland he offers to Artemis:

Αἰδῶς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις,
ᾧσοις διδακτὸν μηδὲν ἄλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάντ' αἰεί,
τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ' οὐ θέμις.

Reverence tends to the flowing rivers,
for whomever being chaste is untaught, but in their nature,
all things are apportioned always,
for them [the meadow] is lawful to be picked, but not for the wicked.
(*Hipp.* 78-81)

The meadow encapsulates the exclusivity of Hippolytos' connection with Artemis and associates his moral superiority with the landscape. By invoking the uncut and untouched meadow in her madness, Phaidra employs language that further develops the insertion of Aphrodite into Hippolytos' Artemisian world; the meadow image also links Phaidra's raving with the context of Hippolytos' display of reverence toward Artemis, and his refusal to acknowledge Aphrodite. Moreover, Hippolytos identifies the meadow with his claim to untaught, natural moderation or chastity (τὸ σωφρονεῖν, lit. "being chaste," 80). Phaidra's erotic invocation of the meadow foreshadows her final claim that through her sickness Hippolytos will learn moderation/chastity (σωφρονεῖν

μαθήσεται, 731), but it also hints at a contradiction in Euripides' use of the verb σωφρονέω, "to be moderate/chaste." While Hippolytos' use of the word points toward chastity, a type of absolutist sexual moderation, Phaidra's use intimates a more broadly defined moderation in life, and therefore serves to underscore the immoderation of Hippolytos' chastity.⁵² Earlier, when confronted about her disastrous revelation of Phaidra's secret to Hippolytos, the Nurse describes her own actions with the same verb, admitting she "was immoderate" (οὐκ ἔσωφρόνουν ἐγώ, 704). Thus, throughout the scene a series of speaking contexts are connected by verbal cueing in the concept of σωφρονεῖν: Hippolytos' dedication to Artemis, Phaidra's ravings, and the final expression of Phaidra's *eros*. Through Hippolytos' extreme devotion and the transgressive nature of Phaidra's *eros*, the concept of chastity/moderation itself becomes enmeshed in the dichotomy between speech and silence, and to speak is repeatedly conflated with an absence of moderation/chastity. This theme is further developed when Hippolytos is confronted with the choice between betraying his oath to the Nurse and proving his innocence to Theseus. In this instance, to speak would paradoxically be to prove his σωφροσύνη in one sense by disproving Phaidra's accusations, while at the same time betraying σωφροσύνη by failing to honor his oath, a type of speech imbued with important religious and moral implications.⁵³

There is a sudden and shocking shift in Phaidra's demeanor as she comes back to her senses. She expresses a profound shame at what has transpired:

⁵² See Goff 1995: 39-48 for a detailed discussion of the subtleties of the connection between σωφροσύνη, desire, and speech in the *Hippolytos*.

⁵³ For the cultural importance of oaths as an aspect of personal piety, as well as their form and function, see Burkert 1977: 250-54; Mikalson 2005: 185. Goff 1995: 17 notes that oaths in the drama act to suppress the truth surrounding Phaidra's accusations, in particular Hippolytos' oath to the Nurse (611- 612), and the oath of the chorus to remain silent (712).

δύστηνος ἐγώ, τί ποτ' εἰργασάμην;
ποῖ παρεπλάγχθην γνώμης ἀγαθῆς;
ἐμάνην, ἔπεσον δαίμονος ἄτηι.
φεῦ φεῦ τλήμων.
μαῖα, πάλιν μου κρύψον κεφαλὴν,
αἰδούμεθα γὰρ τὰ λελεγμένα μοι.

I am wretched, what have I done?
Where did I wander from good sense?
I was mad, I fell by a blindness (sent) from a god,
Alas, alas, I am wretched.
Nurse, cover my head again,
for we are ashamed at what I have said.

(*Hipp.* 239-244)

The re-veiling of her head signals her return to cogency, and her renewed desire to retain the secret of her shameful *eros*. While Phaidra's raving establishes the physicality and the precariousness of her condition, as well as the virulence of the *eros* within her, her return to sanity launches the Nurse and the chorus into an intense effort to coerce Phaidra into revealing the cause of her malady.

The Nurse urges Phaidra to set aside what has been said between them in the past, assuring her renewed sympathy (288-292). She promises the confidence and aid of the women, should Phaidra's affliction be unmentionable to men, and the help of doctors if it is not (292-296). When these attempts yield only silence from Phaidra, the Nurse becomes more aggressive, berating Phaidra for her stubborn silence and accusing her of betraying her children (293-310). Mention of Hippolytos by name, the first of the scene, finally elicits a response from Phaidra, who utters single word, "οἴμοι," an exclamation of grief or exasperation or both (310). Up to this point, Phaidra has remained in utter silence since the re-veiling of her head. Once this silence has been breached it is never recovered, and the final process of revelation is set in motion. While the Nurse operates on the assumption that the remedy for Phaidra's condition

can be found in the vocalization of the problem, Phaidra's initial response is to suppress speech, and to interdict the slightest mention of Hippolytos. The Nurse does not comprehend the implications of Phaidra's outburst. When Phaidra finally concedes, perhaps too easily given the gravity and implications of her secret, she appeals to the erotic misfortunes of the women of her family:

Φα. τί τοῦθ' ὃ δὴ λέγουσιν ἀνθρώπους ἐρᾶν;
 Τρ. ἥδιστον, ὦ παῖ, ταύτῳ ἀλγεινόν θ' ἅμα.
 Φα. ἡμεῖς ἂν εἴμεν θατέρῳ κεχρημένοι.
 Τρ. τί φήεις; ἐρᾶς, ὦ τέκνον; ἀνθρώπων τίνας;
 Φα. ὅστις ποθ' οὗτός ἐσθ', ὃ τῆς Ἀμαζόνος ...
 Τρ. Ἰππόλυτον αὐδαῖς; {Φα.} σοῦ τάδ', οὐκ ἐμοῦ, κλύεις.

Ph. What is it they mean, when they say that people are in love?
 N. That it is a sweet thing, child, and at the same time a great pain.
 Ph. We would be subject to the latter.
 N. What are you saying? You are in love, Child? With whom among men?
 Ph. Whoever he is, the son of the Amazon . . .
 N. Hippolytos you say?
 Ph. You heard these things from you, not from me.
 (Hipp. 347-352)

With Phaidra's secret now out in the open, the first cycle of the queen's vocalization of her experience, and the drama of its expression, has run its course. Now, the second vocalization of her experience can begin: this is a retrospective account of her struggle to suppress the *eros* within her. She describes an attempt to overcome her desire by the power of her will, and when that fails, she decides to die in order to maintain her honor:

λέξω δὲ καὶ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς γνώμης ὁδόν.
 ἐπεὶ μ' ἔρωσ ἔτρωσεν, ἐσκόπουν ὅπως
 κάλλιστ' ἐνέγκαιμ' αὐτόν. ἠρξάμην μὲν οὖν
 ἐκ τοῦδε, σιγᾶν τήνδε καὶ κρύπτειν νόσον·
 γλώσση γὰρ οὐδὲν πιστόν, ἢ θυραῖα μὲν
 φρονήματ' ἀνδρῶν νοθετεῖν ἐπίσταται,
 αὐτὴ δ' ὑφ' αὐτῆς πλεῖστα κέκτηται κακά.

τὸ δεύτερον δὲ τὴν ἄνοιαν εὖ φέρειν
τῶι σωφρονεῖν νικῶσα προυνοησάμην.
τρίτον δ', ἐπειδὴ τοισίδ' οὐκ ἐξήνυτον
Κύπριν κρατῆσαι, καθανεῖν ἔδοξέ μοι,
Κράτιστον—οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖρ—βουλευμάτων.

I will tell you the path of my thoughts.
When desire wounded me, I was thinking how
I might bear it most nobly. So I began from this,
to be silent and to hide this sickness;
for there is nothing trusty in the tongue, which knows how to admonish the
thoughts of other men, but acquires a great many evils by its own doing.
Then I put my mind to bear the folly well,
overcoming it with being moderate.
And thirdly, since I was not managing to overcome Kypris by these means,
to die seemed best to me, the most noble – no one will deny – of designs.
(*Hipp.* 392-402)

Phaidra's account of her initial reaction informs what has been seen in the previous episode leading up to the revelation of her desire. Her description of the attempt to overcome her *eros* τῶι σωφρονεῖν (399) describes an internal battleground, and a battle of wills, between Phaidra and Aphrodite. Here Phaidra positions σωφροσύνη as a deliberate act of will (προνοέω, 399).⁵⁴ By framing her resistance of *eros* in such terms, the σωφροσύνη described here is an inversion of Hippolytos' emphasis on untaught σωφροσύνη, chastity that exists as an essential part of one's nature and by extension does not necessitate struggle or conscious effort, but simply is. Goff notes in Phaidra's speech a conspicuous progression from silence, to her resolution of σωφροσύνη, to her final decision to die.⁵⁵ In Phaidra's conscious resistance of her *eros*, she frames each successive resolution as part of a linear, chronological progression (ἠρξάμην, 394; τὸ δεύτερον, 399; τρίτον, 400). However, closer examination shows the latter two actions (τῶι σωφρονεῖν νικῶσα, to overcome it by being sound minded, 399; καθανεῖν, to die,

⁵⁴ From νοός, "mind", meaning literally here to set the mind προ, "to/toward" τῶι σωφρονεῖν, "being sound minded."

⁵⁵ Goff 1995: 39 calls it "an ascending tricolon of silence, *sophrosune*, and suicide."

401) to be in service of her first resolution to be silent. In their increasing severity, the following resolutions reveal the successive failure of her attempts to keep her *eros* secret and hidden. The victory of Aphrodite's will, expressed in the prologue and distinctly conflated with *eros*, over Phaidra's σωφροσύνη, is nearly synonymous with silence throughout the scene and conflated with Phaidra's will to keep the *eros* secret and maintain her good reputation.⁵⁶

With Phaidra's *eros* out in the open, its next movement is from the closed society of the women into the world of men. The stage is set for a confrontation between Phaidra, ever determined to suppress the expression of her *eros*, and the Nurse, the advocate of its exposure as the remedy of Phaidra's condition. The Nurse, having tried but failed to convince Phaidra to save her own life by pursuing her desire for Hippolytos, goes back inside the house, feigning access to a love potion that will cure Phaidra's desire, and exhorting Aphrodite to be her accomplice (520-524). Once Phaidra's desire is exposed, the drama of expression begins anew with Hippolytos, and the question of whether or not he will betray his oath to save his own life deepens the thematic connection between speech and σωφροσύνη, indicative of the larger issues of morality at play. However, it is the manner and circumstances of Phaidra's death, and Theseus' reaction to it, that will place Hippolytos in that impossible position. In speaking against Hippolytos, Phaidra's death, and her body itself, will become the most potent expressions of Aphrodite's will and power, and bring about the death of Hippolytos.

⁵⁶ See Goff 1995: 35 for the interchangeability of silence and σωφροσύνη through out the play.

The Speaking Object: Phaidra's Corpse and the Written Word

Theseus, upon his discovery of the tablet that denounces Hippolytos, endows the object with a voice and sense of personhood, which is afterward connected to the written words of Phaidra:

τί δὴ ποθ' ἴδε δέλτος ἐκ φίλης χερὸς
ἠρτημένη; θέλει τι σημήναι νέον;
ἀλλ' ἦ λέχους μοι καὶ τέκνων ἐπιστολὰς
ἔγραψεν ἡ δύστηνος, ἐξαιτουμένη;

But what is this here tablet, from her own hand
having been fastened there? Does it wish to declare something new?
Does the wretched woman write to me
a message about my marriage bed and my children?
(*Hipp.* 856-859)

Theseus sees a twofold process of communication, and two messages contained within the tablet. One consists of Phaidra's initial act of writing, which Theseus expects will communicate her wishes to maintain her children's position. Inserted between Phaidra's act of writing and its reception, Theseus reads a possibility in the message of the tablet, however, and in his anticipation of it he imbues the tablet with the ability not only to speak independently of Phaidra's voice, but also of revealing something unknown (lit. νέον, "something new" in the sense of "terrible news"). This bifurcation places within the words of the tablet itself the possibility of meaning beyond that intended by Phaidra, even as Theseus considers the literal content of the message.

The description of the tablet's shocking revelation once again removes the message from the voice of its originator – Phaidra – and endows it with its own voice, as Theseus expresses his grief in an uneven mixture of iambs and dochmiacs:⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Cyrino 1998: 83, 86-87 notes the connection between this metrical arrangement and heightened emotional states, typically exhibited by female characters, in Euripidean dialogue.

βοᾷ βοᾷ δέλτος ἄλαστα· πᾶι φύγω
βᾶρος κακῶν; ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλόμενος οἴχομαι,
οἶον οἶον εἶδον γραφαῖς μέλος
φθεγγόμενον τλάμων.

It shouts, it shouts, the tablet of grievous hurt; to where should I flee
from this weight of evils? For I go, having been destroyed,
such a thing, such a thing I have seen, a strain of song in the writings,
a wretched utterance.

(*Hipp.* 877-880)

Within the voice of the tablet, said by Theseus to be shouting out a terrible song,
Phaidra's own voice is suppressed. This suppression is indicative of the greater
conceptual movement of Phaidra toward complete objectification. In Theseus' view,
just as Phaidra's body becomes an unchangeable object in death, her words undergo a
similar transformation in the process, becoming fixed objects of meaning. This idea will
resurface in the *agon* between Theseus and Hippolytos, when Theseus utterly dismisses
his son's claims of innocence, based on Phaidra's death as type of permanent speech
act:

τέθνηκεν ἦδε τοῦτό σ' ἐκώσειν δοκεῖς;
ἐν τῶιδ' ἀλίσκηι πλεῖστον, ὦ κάκιστε σύ·

She is dead; do you think this will save you?
In this fact most of all you are convicted, you most evil man.

(*Hipp.* 958-959)

A few lines later, Theseus restates his contention that Phaidra's death, and especially
her lifeless body, act as damning proof of Hippolytos' guilt:

νῦν οὖν – τί ταῦτα σοῖς ἀμιλλῶμαι λόγοις
νεκροῦ παρόντος μάρτυρος σαφεστάτου;

Then now – why would I argue against your words
when the corpse, the surest witness, is at hand?

(*Hipp.* 970-971)

In this latter case, Theseus endows the corpse, like the tablet, with the power of speech,

citing it as an active witness (μάρτυρος, 971) against Hippolytos, in essence taking on a voice of its own. For Theseus, then, Phaidra's death is a type of unchangeable and incontrovertible speech, whose voice consists of the written tablet and Phaidra's lifeless body. That his interpretation posits in their communication the faculties of voice and speech beyond the tablet's literal message is highly significant, given the thematic importance of speech and silence in the presentation and expression of Phaidra's *eros*, and of speech itself in Aphrodite's prologue. Thus, Phaidra's death speaks. First of all, it speaks to the power of Aphrodite's will as Phaidra's death services the goddess' designs against Hippolytos. But also, the tablet's speech, supported by the testimony of the corpse, has a perlocutive effect, as the "speech" of Phaidra's death elicits further speech from Theseus. This speech, as we will see, due to the authority granted to Theseus by both Poseidon's position of power amongst men and his promises, comprises the most direct performance of Hippolytos' destruction in the play. In order to understand this dynamic, it is important to look at the speech act itself, and the role it plays in Hippolytos' destruction.

Speech Acts: Theseus' Prayer and the Bull From the Sea

Completely distraught by the sudden death of his wife, and then confronted with the tablet and its shocking accusations, Theseus at once launches into a curse against Hippolytos. We have just witnessed the protracted drama of expression surrounding Phaidra's *eros* and Aphrodite's will. In the broadest terms, Phaidra represents her resistance to *eros* as a conscious struggle to overcome a highly irrational and potent emotionality within her. While her efforts fail, her opposition is believable,

due in part to the tortuous process of the expression of her *eros*, centered on her efforts to resist, and especially her level of self awareness in the affair, which essentially proves that her character is not prone to excessive emotional or irrational behavior, but on the contrary overcome by the insurmountable power of Aphrodite's will. In contrast, Theseus displays a complete lack of self awareness and deliberation in the utterance of his curse, and the immediate nature of its articulation is especially abrupt, compulsive even, a fact which, as we will see, forms the basis of Artemis' harshest criticism of him (1318-1324). Indeed, his response is both precipitate and extreme:

τόδε μὲν οὐκέτι στόματος ἐν πύλαις
καθέξω δυσεκπέρατον ὄλοον
κακόν· ἰὼ πόλις.
Ἴππόλυτος εὐνής τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν
βίαι, τὸ σεμνὸν Ζηνὸς ὄμμ' ἀτιμάσας.
ἀλλ', ὦ πάτερ Πόσειδον, ἄς ἐμοί ποτε
ἄρας ὑπέσχου τρεῖς, μιᾷ κατέργασαι
τούτων ἐμὸν παῖδ', ἡμέραν δὲ μὴ φύγοι
τήνδ', εἴπερ ἡμῖν ὠπασας σαφεῖς ἄρας.

No longer will I hold this in the gates of my mouth
this thing difficult to pass,
a deadly evil. Hail city!
Hippolytos, he dared lay hold of the partner of my bed
by force, dishonoring the holy eye of Zeus.
But, O Father Poseidon, the three prayers which once
you furnished to me, with one of those
overcome my son, lest he flee this day,
if indeed you granted to me true prayers.

(*Hipp.* 882-890)

In her prologue speech, Aphrodite clearly proclaims the role of Poseidon in her plan to punish Hippolytos, and she explicitly mentions the prayers he has granted Theseus as the essential avenue of his involvement. Thus, the transference of Phaidra's *eros* into Theseus' anger and utterance of the curse is an integral aspect of Aphrodite's plan from the beginning. In light of the various examples we have already seen of the thematic

importance of speech in the play, Theseus' curse is a compelling development, since it comprises the extent of the play's explicit performance of violence against Hippolytos. The violent act is not directly depicted in the *Hippolytos*, or even experienced as an offstage event in real time by onlookers as the similarly violent events of the *Medea* (1270-1292) or the *Herakles* (875-907). On the contrary, the event itself only enters into the play's narrative in form of descriptive language, in the messenger's scene after the fact. As a result, the physical embodiment of the violent act consists first of Theseus' performance of the curse, and later of the display of Hippolytos' broken body. In keeping with the thematic importance of speech in the play, the depiction of the violent act proceeds through speech. Theseus receives a large portion of the blame for Hippolytos' destruction, though he is ultimately pardoned by Artemis, and finally by Hippolytos, in light of the assertion of the inexorable determination of Aphrodite's will in the affair. However, while attributed with a highly active role in the violent act, the entire extent of Theseus' direct involvement consists of judgment and oath/prayer. Given Theseus' authority to compel Poseidon with his prayer, Theseus performs the acts of condemning and destroying Hippolytos with his utterance.⁵⁸ So far the drama has conveyed several cycles of the embodiment of divine speech, most notably Aphrodite's statements of offense and will illustrated and incorporated by Hippolytos and Phaidra, respectively. With Theseus' actions, however, the play's "complex web of interdependence"⁵⁹ has reached its end: the dynamic between Theseus and Poseidon inverts the schema of divine will and mortal embodiment articulated in the

⁵⁸ See Austin 1962: 32-38, where he defines prayers, oaths, and other such ceremonial forms of speech as explicit speech acts, the most clear cut type of performative speech characterized by definite, culturally defined modes of expression.

⁵⁹ Zeitlin 1995: 224.

relationship between Aphrodite and Phaidra. Now the god Poseidon performs the final undoing of Hippolytos. He is constrained to act by Theseus' judgment, will, and finally his prayer. In keeping with the importance of speech elsewhere in the play, the bull from the sea should be viewed as the perlocutionary effect of a series of speech acts, beginning with Poseidon's promise to fulfill three of Theseus' prayers, which essentially grants to Theseus the authority to invoke Poseidon's action. The link between Theseus and Poseidon plays a large role in the scene, and defines the full extent of expression involved in Theseus' violent speech act and the resulting bull from the sea. Barrett and Halleran both note that in the traditional story the prayer used by Theseus against Hippolytos was most likely the last of his three prayers, and here it has instead been changed to the first, inserting a level of doubt as to their efficacy.⁶⁰ This doubt emphasizes Theseus' uncertainty of his true paternity, making the performance of the curse a highly significant statement as to the true status of Theseus' lineage, as is evident in Theseus' response to the news that his prayer had the intended effect:

ὦ θεοί, Πόσειδόν θ'· ὡς ἄρ' ἦσθ' ἐμὸς πατήρ
 ὀρθῶς, ἀκούσας τῶν ἐμῶν κατευγμάτων.
 πῶς καὶ διώλετ'; εἰπέ, τῶι τρόπῳ Δίκης
 ἔπαισεν αὐτὸν ῥόπτρον αἰσχύναντά με;

O Gods, and Poseidon! Thus indeed you are my father
 truly, since you heard my prayers.
 And how was he destroyed? Speak, in what manner did the trap
 of justice strike him, who had shamed me?

(Hipp. 1169-1172)

In terms of its symbolic value regarding the blood ties between them, a bit of back-story about why Poseidon granted the curses to Theseus, and must fulfill them, emerges. The lines above establish that Poseidon's performance of the curse has a

⁶⁰ Halleran 1995: 224-225; Barrett 1964: 334-335.

greater significance beyond its primary importance as the final enactment of Aphrodite's revenge. These include considerable connotations regarding Theseus' identity, as the act proves his divine lineage, and the prayers were given in order to prove the true blood-ties between them. However, the bull from the sea also has important implications regarding Poseidon's identity, in that the act of giving or granting Theseus' prayers, as described by Aphrodite in the prologue (45-46), endows the question of whether or not Poseidon will fulfill the promise an essential question of his character and personal honor as a deity, and operates very much as the binding nature of Hippolytos' hasty and, in hindsight, regrettable oath, which equally contributes to his downfall (611-613). In both scenarios, previous instances of distinctly ceremonial speech inscribe the future actions of Poseidon and Hippolytos, and in the case of the latter the drama of expression presents Hippolytos with the stark choice between maintaining the outward appearance of his σωφροσύνη. In the way that events unfold and complete Hippolytos' destruction, each character is highly motivated and even constrained to act by the complex interplay between speech, action and identity. However, in the end, as Artemis draws the final connection between the events of the play and the will and identity of Aphrodite, such dynamics prove to be subsumed under the greater mantle of Aphrodite's will and power and, in fact, to have been the very means, by which the realization of her will occurs.

Poseidon is notable in that he does not physically appear in the drama, but nonetheless his presence and importance in terms of Hippolytos' death are both powerfully felt. As a god whose presence in the play consists entirely of explicit actions described by others, Poseidon is an active absent god, since he performs tangible and

material actions but does not actually appear onstage, as the Messenger describes Hippolytos' downfall.⁶¹ The report offers a complex image of divine embodiment, wherein the sea in its uproar, and the bull that will emerge, metonymically signify not only Poseidon and his actions, but also the will of Theseus that Poseidon is performing. As a description of the god's indirect appearance contained in the speech of the messenger, the narrative is colored by the experience of the speaker himself, which contributes greatly to the emotional impact of the story and the sense of helplessness it conveys. The Messenger's description emphasizes the massive scale of the event, first through his focus on the terror generated by the thunderous sound that heralds its beginning, as well of the uncanny and abnormal activity of the sea, described as *ιερόν*, "divine or supernatural" (1206). The messenger reiterates this sense of unearthliness, as he describes the wave rearing and rushing toward the shore where Hippolytos is driving his chariot:

αὐτῶι δὲ σὺν κλύδωνι καὶ τρικυμίαι
 κῦμ' ἐξέθηκε ταῦρον, ἄγριον τέρας·
 οὐ̄ πᾶσα μὲν χθών φθέγματος πληρουμένη
 φρικῶδες ἀντεφθέγγετ', εἰσορῶσι δὲ
 κρεῖσσον θέαμα δεργμάτων ἐφαίνετο.
 εὐθύς δὲ πῶλοις δεινὸς ἐμπίπτει φόβος·
 καὶ δεσπότης μὲν ἵππικοῖσιν ἦθεσιν
 πολὺς ξυνοικῶν ἦρπασ' ἠνίας χεροῖν,
 ἔλκει δὲ κώπην ὥστε ναυβάτης ἀνήρ,
 ἱμᾶσιν ἐς τοῦπισθεν ἀρτήσας δέμας·

And with this wave and towering surge
 the swell set out a bull, a savage monster,
 whose bellow filled the whole land,
 the horrible echoes of it, we look upon it
 but the sight seemed too much for our gazes,
 straight away a terrible fear fell upon the horses;

⁶¹ Segal 1993: 112 describes the public nature of the Messenger's announcement as a counterbalance to the language and nature of Theseus' lament for Phaidra (836-50, 856-865), which is focused on the private home rather than the community at large.

and the master accustomed to equestrian things,
living much among them, seized the bridle with both hands
just as a seaman draws an oar,
hanging his limbs on the reins from behind.

(*Hipp.* 1213-1222)

The description is highly sensual, detailing not only the visual elements of the scene, but also its awesome sounds, once again emphasizing the messenger's sense of horror, and that of the horses. The language projects an extreme intensity, as the monster echoes through the whole land, and the aural scale of the scene equals the visual, which is too much for their gaze. Hippolytos' struggle for control emphasizes again the importance of will, as he attempts to regain control over the frightened horses that will eventually destroy him.⁶²

Despite the Messenger's solemn declaration of Hippolytos' innocence and the similar protestations of the chorus, Theseus remains steadfast in his conviction of his son's guilt. Nevertheless, he allows Hippolytos to be brought back into the city:

κομίζετ' αὐτόν, ὡς ἰδὼν ἐν ὄμμασιν
λόγοις τ' ἐλέγξω δαιμόνων τε συμφοραῖς
τὸν τᾶμ' ἀπαρνηθέντα μὴ χρᾶναι λέχη.

Bring him, so that looking in his eyes
I might confront him with words and the misfortunes (sent by) the gods,
The one denying that he defiled my marriage bed.

(*Hipp.* 1265-1267)

Thus the stage is set for a final confrontation between Theseus and Hippolytos. As the broken and dying Hippolytos is about to enter, Theseus defines Hippolytos' destruction as an embodiment of Poseidon's power. In his expectation of a final confrontation

⁶² Barrett 1965: 386 and Halleran 1995: 253 both note disagreement among scholars as to what exactly Hippolytos is doing with the reins, while Ferguson 1984:97 simply concedes the point. It seems most likely that Hippolytos is leaning back and using his body weight to try and rein in the horses. Halleran finds in the oarsman simile a mingling of matters equestrian and of the sea, which parallels the image of Poseidon and the horses, and the bull itself (253).

Theseus expresses his wish to look Hippolytos in the eyes and refute his denial of Phaidra's accusations with what Poseidon has done to him (1266). To Theseus, the bull from the sea is evidence not only of the paternal ties between the Theseus and Poseidon, but also the ultimate proof of Hippolytos' guilt. Theseus' bravado clearly indicates that he would remain firmly convinced of this fact, if not for the intercession of Artemis.

Artemis and the (Re)Performance of Identity

Artemis is the play's secondary god. As such, she is identified by her reactionary role to the force of Aphrodite's will. The central purpose of her appearance is to provide commentary: so, not only does her speech respond to Aphrodite's will and speak to the justness of its consequences, but it also reveals Aphrodite's role to the mortal characters of the play.⁶³ In this capacity as a secondary god, Artemis serves to fulfill Aphrodite's intention and reassert Aphrodite's identity by connecting the play's events to Aphrodite's will and power. Given the apparent animosity of the goddesses, what seems to be Artemis' attempt to condemn Aphrodite ironically serves to bring about the final completion of her plan, and thus the full spectrum of the play's characters have played their own part in the reassertion of Aphrodite's power.

Like Aphrodite in her prologue speech, Artemis also begins her statement by clearly identifying herself. However, the terms of her identity are not set in an overt assertion of her power, but in her prerogative to speak, voiced by her command to be heard by Theseus:

⁶³ Mastronarde 2010: 189-190 notes that the *deus ex machina* usually does not offer such explicit guidance in the dispensation of judgment.

σὲ τὸν εὐπατρίδην Αἰγέως κέλομαι
παῖδ' ἔπακοῦσαι·
Λητοῦς δὲ κόρη σ' Ἄρτεμις αὐδῶ.

You, well born son of Aegeus, I command
that you listen;
I, Artemis, daughter of Leto, am speaking.
(*Hipp.* 1282-1285)

While a clear sense of her authority as a god underscores the statement, Artemis' self-naming is essentially an inversion of Aphrodite's claim to power through mortal speech. That is, Aphrodite's statement of identity centers on the importance of mortal speech as proof of her power. But the divinity of Artemis, simply qualified in reference to her mother, serves to lend authority and power to her own speech and emphasize its importance, and commanding that it be heard.

She then sets out to defend Hippolytos' innocence, as she proclaims the error of Theseus' precipitous judgment against his son:

Θησεῦ, τί τάλας τοῖσδε συνήδηι,
παῖδ' οὐχ ὀσίως σὸν ἀποκτείνας
ψεύδεσι μύθοις ἀλόχου πεισθεὶς
ἀφανῆ; φανεράν δ' ἔσχεθες ἄτην.
πῶς οὐχ ὑπὸ γῆς τάρταρα κρύπτεις
δέμας αἰσχυνθεὶς,
ἢ πτηνὸν ἄνω μεταβάς βίοντον
πήματος ἔξω πόδα τοῦδ' ἀνέχεις;
ὡς ἔν γ' ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσιν οὐ σοι
κτητὸν βίοντον μέρος ἐστίν.

Theseus you wretch, why do you rejoice in these things,
having killed your son in an unholy manner,
having been persuaded by the false words of your wife,
unseen things? You have an obvious blindness.
How do you not hide your body in the darkness under the earth,
having been shamed,
or changing into a winged life form on high
hold yourself above this suffering?
Since among noble men there is no longer
a portion to be acquired for you.
(*Hipp.* 1287-1295)

The goddess' damnation of Theseus is, at the outset, unequivocally harsh. She exhorts him not to glory in his son's misfortunes, and then proclaims that he has murdered his son in an unholy manner (οὐχ ὀσίως, 1287), and reveals that Phaidra's words were false. She then couches her damnation in a complex visual metaphor centering on Theseus' body, but which begins with the dismissal of his credulity regarding Phaidra's death, where, with the neuter plural ἀφάνῃ ("unseen things," 1289), the revelation of Phaidra's dishonesty is interwoven with issues of sight and appearance. This is further developed in the rest of the line, where she further invokes Theseus' moral failure (1289), using the term ἄτη, which has strong moral connotations, often denoting a moral destruction caused by a blindness or shortsightedness often caused by a god as a type of punishment.⁶⁴ This complex connection between sight, morality, and judgment continues to the end of the statement with an increasing emphasis on Theseus' body and its own visibility, with the general argument that his visibility is distinctly improper, given the shame he has incurred. Her contention that Theseus should essentially make himself unseen by hiding under the earth or turning into a bird, though the specific language is much disputed,⁶⁵ is nonetheless a common gnomic colloquialism. In Artemis' language there is a strong correlation between the concepts of vision and morality, with the act of seeing explicitly defined in a highly nuanced field of visual and mental activity. These elements combine to reprise the central concepts of sight and aesthetic appearance, morality and power, which are so prevalent in Aphrodite's prologue: their repetition here emphasizes the hostility between the two goddesses. This theme will be further developed as the scene unfolds, and a sense of

⁶⁴ The concept and use of ἄτη in tragedy is complex, and subject to change and ambiguity. For a thorough discussion see Padel 1995: 197-202; 204-205; 249-59.

⁶⁵ See Barrett 1964: 398-399.

distance and coldness is revealed in the relationship between Artemis and Hippolytos, most obviously through Hippolytos' inability to see Artemis.⁶⁶

Artemis, after denouncing Theseus' actions in the harshest possible terms, again calls attention to the importance of her speech, commanding Theseus to listen. She then announces her own intention in addressing him:

ἀλλ' ἐς τόδ' ἦλθον, παιδὸς ἐκδειῖξαι φρένα
τοῦ σοῦ δικαίαν, ὡς ὑπ' εὐκλείας θάνηι,
καὶ σῆς γυναικὸς οἴστρον ἢ τρόπον τινὰ
γενναιότητα. τῆς γὰρ ἐχθίστης θεῶν
ἡμῖν ὄσαισι παρθένειος ἡδονῆ
δηχθεῖσα κέντροις παιδὸς ἡράσθη σέθεν·
γνώμη δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη
τροφοῦ διώλετ' οὐχ ἔκοῦσα μηχαναῖς,
ἢ σῶι δι' ὄρκων παιδὶ σημαίνει νόσον.
γνώμη δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη
τροφοῦ διώλετ' οὐχ ἔκοῦσα μηχαναῖς,
ἢ σῶι δι' ὄρκων παιδὶ σημαίνει νόσον.

But to this end I came, to demonstrate
the righteous heart of your son, so that he might die with a good name,
and the madness of your wife or, in a certain way, her nobility.
For having been bitten by the goads
of the goddess most hateful
to us for whom virginity is a pleasure,
she had a passionate lust for your son.
Attempting to conquer Kypris with her will
She was destroyed unwillingly by the contrivances of the Nurse
Who revealed the sickness to your son under an oath.
(*Hipp.* 1298-1306)

The verb ἐκδεικνύμι joins the concept of revelation with outward movement (ἐκ), and focuses on the expression of two essential pieces of information: Hippolytos' innocence,

⁶⁶ Segal 1993: 113 notes the important erotic implications of sight and the eyes as the entry point of *eros* into Phaidra. I would argue this serves to inform Hippolytos' inability to see Artemis, and his desire to look at her is a type of misdirected eroticism.

and what has transpired between Aphrodite, Phaidra, and the Nurse.⁶⁷ Artemis is careful to frame Phaidra's *eros* as the inevitable failure of human will against Aphrodite's purpose. Moreover, Artemis' explanation of what has occurred offers an inversion of the itemized list of predictive declarations at the end of Aphrodite's speech, since here Artemis lists the order of events as they have unfolded in retrospect. This rhetorical inversion perfectly enacts the structural and functional difference between the two goddesses: one making a causal and predictive declaration to the audience, the other a reactionary account to the characters of the play after the fact.

Artemis goes on:

ὁ δ', ὡσπερ οὖν δίκαιον, οὐκ ἐφέσπετο
 λόγοισιν, οὐδ' αὖ πρὸς σέθεν κακούμενος
 ὄρκων ἀφείλε πίστιν, εὐσεβῆς γεγώς
 ἢ δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον μὴ πέση φοβουμένη
 ψευδεῖς γραφὰς ἔγραψε καὶ διώλεσεν
 δόλοισι σὸν παῖδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως ἔπεισέ σε.

But he, indeed being righteous, did not pursue
 it with words, nor in turn being harried by you
 did he cast aside the trust of his oaths, being reverent;
 But she, fearing lest she should fall into suspicion,
 wrote false words and destroyed
 your son with tricks, but nonetheless she persuaded you.

(*Hipp.* 1307-1312)

The message of Artemis focuses on the declaration of Hippolytos' innocence, as well as on Phaidra's *eros*, which she refers to as both a stinging madness (οἴστρον, 1301) and a sickness (νόσον, 1306). While Artemis reveals the Phaidra's accusations against Hippolytos were false, the statement is mitigated by Artemis' admission that Phaidra's madness also affirms her nobility, and her desperate attempt to resist Aphrodite.

⁶⁷ As Mastronarde 2010: 185 notes, here again the divine character performs a narrative function only made possible by her superior knowledge, noting Artemis' function in this regard as essential, since otherwise Theseus would remain ignorant.

Artemis frames Phaidra's resistance to Aphrodite again in terms of a struggle of wills (γνώμη δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη, attempting to conquer the goddess with thought/will, 1304), further emphasizing the importance of Aphrodite in Artemis' description. Artemis continues to highlight the honor of Hippolytos in her description his oath to the nurse and refusal to break it, even though by doing so he could have saved himself. Her speech ends with a bitter note of repudiation by once again blaming Theseus' credulity and precipitous judgment.

Artemis' condemnation of Theseus is greatest when she speaks of his irresponsible use of the curses granted him by Poseidon. Here, Artemis speaks for Poseidon, and for the first time the god is described as performing an explicit action:

πατήρ μὲν οὖν σοι πόντιος φρονῶν καλῶς
ἔδωχ' ὅσονπερ χρῆν, ἐπείπερ ἦνεσεν·
σὺ δ' ἔν τ' ἐκείνῳ κᾶν ἐμοὶ φαίνῃ κακός,
ὅς οὔτε πίστιν οὔτε μάντεων ὅπα
ἔμεινας, οὐκ ἤλεγξας, οὐ χρόνῳ μακρῶι
σκέψιν παρέσχες, ἀλλὰ θᾶσσον ἢ σ' ἐχρῆν
ἀράς ἐφῆκας παιδὶ καὶ κατέκτανες.

But truly your father, the sea god, although thinking kindly toward you,
granted just what was necessary, since indeed he promised it;
but you seem wicked to him and to me,
who neither awaited an oath nor the voices of seers,
you did not question, nor provide fitting time
for examination, but swifter than you needed
you hurled curses against your son and killed him.

(*Hipp.* 1318-1324)

Artemis' statement revisits the issue of will in the relationship between Poseidon and Theseus, highlighting the importance of specific speech acts in the execution of Hippolytos' destruction. Poseidon's promise to fulfill Theseus' prayers, and Theseus' hasty abuse of that promise, dominate the description. However, these are balanced in importance by the mention of suppressed speech acts, which are of consequence in the

terrible chain of events since they were not heard or solicited. The goddess names two specific types of speech in particular: the proclamations of mantics, which could have granted greater insight into the forces at play and revealed the truth; and cross-examination (πίστιν, 1321). Artemis describes Poseidon as doing what was necessary to fulfill his promise, and here his explicit involvement in the chain of events is summed up by the two fold act of vowing or promising, an explicit speech act,⁶⁸ and in turn granting or giving (διδώμι) what has been promised. In speaking for Poseidon, however, Artemis attributes to the god a distaste for and harsh judgment of Theseus in his fulfillment of the prayer, which further emphasizes the constraining force of the prayer and the god's lack of will in the action itself. According to Artemis, Theseus has killed his son for a crime he didn't commit, and also lost face in the sight of his divine father and ally.

Despite the harsh tone of criticism in the first part of Artemis' address, the goddess ultimately concludes that Theseus is not to blame. After Theseus responds to her previous indictment of him, exclaiming his wish to die as proof of his extreme grief, Artemis says:

δείν' ἔπραξας, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 ἔτ' ἔστι καί σοι τῶνδε συγγνώμης τυχεῖν·
 Κύπρις γὰρ ἤθελ' ὥστε γίνεσθαι τάδε,
 πληροῦσα θυμόν. θεοῖσι δ' ὦδ' ἔχει νόμος·
 οὐδείς ἀπαντᾶν βούλεται προθυμίαι
 τῆι τοῦ θέλοντος, ἀλλ' ἀφιστάμεσθ' αἰεί.
 ἐπεὶ, σάφ' ἴσθι, Ζῆνα μὴ φοβουμένη
 οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἦλθον ἐς τόδ' αἰσχύνης ἐγὼ
 ὥστ' ἄνδρα πάντων φίλτατον βροτῶν ἐμοὶ
 θανεῖν ἔᾶσαι.

You did terrible things, but nonetheless

⁶⁸ Austin 1962: 32-39.

it is still possible that you happen upon pardon
for these things; for Kypris wished that these things come about,
filling up her *thumos*. But the law is thus among the gods:
no one wishes to oppose the desire
of the one wanting it, but always we stand back.
Know clearly that, were I not afraid of Zeus,
I would never have come to this level of shame
that the dearest man of all mortals to me
be allowed to die.

(*Hipp.* 1331-1334)

Artemis' speech reaffirms the importance of the will of Aphrodite, not only in defining Phaidra's actions, but also Artemis' inability to act. She suggests that Theseus might be pardoned, but she also defines Aphrodite's involvement exclusively in terms of will, an explicit act of volition described by the imperfect of ἐθέλω ("to wish or be willing"). According to Artemis, the wishes of Aphrodite precluded interference; she goes on to say in the following lines that she would have intervened for Hippolytos' sake if she did not fear reprisal from Zeus. This is a significant point, not only because it underlines the importance of will, but it also draws a distinct contrast between the two goddesses: Aphrodite is empowered by the force of her will, and Artemis, who is defined conversely by her lack of will, is unable to act against it. Aphrodite's will characterizes the extent of divine causality in the play, delineating not only the thrust of Aphrodite's action but also Artemis' inaction, and therefore positioning the divine dichotomy of the play as an opposition between will and the absence of will.

Hippolytos' body, previously the site of a clearly embodied threat to Aphrodite's identity, in its deterioration exemplifies the re-assertion of her power. In the dialogue between the three characters on stage the importance of Aphrodite's will once again comes to the fore. First, Artemis reveals Aphrodite's involvement to Hippolytos. Their interaction is characterized by Hippolytos' attempts at intimacy, and Artemis'

deflections, expressing her physical and emotional distance. Hippolytos' inability to see her is indicative of her aloofness:

Ιπ. ὦ θεῖον ὀσμῆς πνεῦμα· καὶ γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ὦν ἠισθόμην σου κἀνεκουφίσθην δέμας.
ἔστ' ἐν τόποισι τοισίδ' Ἄρτεμις θεά.
Αρ. ὦ τλήμον, ἔστι, σοί γε φιλτάτη θεῶν.
Ιπ. ὀρᾶίς με, δέσποιν', ὡς ἔχω, τὸν ἄθλιον;
Αρ. ὀρῶ· κατ' ὄσσων δ' οὐ θέμις βαλεῖν δάκρυ.
Ιπ. οὐκ ἔστι σοι κυναγὸς οὐδ' ὑπηρέτης
Αρ. οὐ δῆτ'· ἀτάρ μοι προσφιλῆς γ' ἀπόλλυσαι.
Ιπ. οὐδ' ἵππωνώμας οὐδ' ἀγαλμάτων φύλαξ.
Αρ. Κύπρις γὰρ ἢ πανοῦργος ὦδ' ἐμήσατο.
Ιπ. οἴμοι, φρονῶ δὴ δαίμον' ἢ μ' ἀπώλεσεν.
Αρ. τιμῆς ἐμέμφθη, σωφρονοῦντι δ' ἤχθετο.
Ιπ. τρεῖς ὄντας ἡμᾶς ὤλεσ', ἠισθημαί, μία.
Αρ. πατέρα γε καὶ σὲ καὶ τρίτην ξυνάορον.

H. Divine breath of scent! For even though being in the midst of many evils
I sensed you and am uplifted in my limbs.
The goddess Artemis is here in this very place!
Ar. O wretched man! It is I, the dearest of gods to you.
H. Do you see me, mistress, how I am faring, the suffering?
Ar. I see you, but it is not right that I let fall a tear from my eyes.
H. Your hound-leader and servant is no more.
Ar. No indeed, but you die most dear to me.
H. Nor is your horseman, nor the guard of your statue!
Ar. No, for wicked Kypris intended it so!
H. Woe! Now I understand what goddess killed me!
Ar. She faulted your honor and hated you being chaste.
H. As one goddess, she destroyed us, being three.
Ar. Your father, and you, and his wife is the third.
(Hipp. 1392-1404)

The meaning of Hippolytos' destruction and the role of divine power is the central focus of the exchange. The state of his body is immediately brought out as he expresses his awareness of the goddess as an ineffable manifestation coupled with his immediate sensation of physical relief. Mastronarde notes in the command for Theseus to embrace his son a distinctly humane gesture on the part of Artemis. However, the physical and emotional closeness between father and son emphasizes the distance between Artemis

and Hippolytos, and the problematic nature of their “greater than human” companionship.⁶⁹

The goddess’ final pronouncement is a response to her earlier contention that Theseus might still be pardoned for his errors:

σὸ δ', ὦ γεραιοῦ τέκνον Αἰγέως, λαβὲ
σὸν παῖδ' ἐν ἀγκάλαισι καὶ προσέλκυσαι·
ἄκων γὰρ ὤλεσάς νιν, ἀνθρώποισι δὲ
θεῶν διδόντων εἰκὸς ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
καὶ σοὶ παραινῶ πατέρα μὴ στυγεῖν σέθεν,
Ἴππόλυτ'· ἔχεις γὰρ μοῖραν ἧ διεφθάρης.

But you, son of old Aegeus, take
your son in your arms and draw him close;
For unwillingly you destroyed him, and it is permitted that men,
when the gods grant it, err greatly.
And as for you, I advise you not to hate your father,
Hippolytos; for you have a fate by which you were destroyed.
(*Hipp.* 1431-1436)

The pardon of Theseus is based entirely on the idea that mortals cannot and should not be held responsible when divine will is at play: that is, when gods grant (θεῶν διδόντων, 1434) that a particular event should occur, the ultimate responsibility for human action is completely removed. In favor of in an extreme model of the determination of divine will, Artemis dismisses the complex issues of morality explored in the play through each mortal character’s individual action and reaction to Phaidra’s shameful *eros*. But, how to interpret Artemis’ contention of extreme divine determination, and the negation of human morality beyond the observance of reverence and obeisance to the gods, is an open question as the chorus utters its final lament.

⁶⁹ Mastronarde 2010: 187.

Conclusion

Aphrodite's appearance in the prologue of the *Hippolytos* provides a specific voice and context for the concept of her personal identity and will. While her will is accomplished by the play's other characters over a comparatively long period of time, much of the play's action and subsequent speaking contexts gesture back toward Aphrodite's prologue speech, reinforcing the importance of her identity and will. We have examined how these gestures and juxtapositions are embedded in the language of the play itself, and how connections are made quite often through the inversion, appropriation, and redefinition of specific language and themes throughout the play. Finally, we have seen how the relationship between gods and men, especially regarding human offense and divine revenge, are firmly anchored in speech in a variety of ways, as is the process and realization of Aphrodite's will and the re-assertion of her identity as a fundamentally powerful goddess deserving of reverence.

In their respective roles, Aphrodite and Artemis stand in stark contrast to one another. Due to the play's structure, which places the two goddesses at the beginning and end of the action, and also owing to the clearly marked differences between them in terms of will, their different character types are clear. Aphrodite is without doubt the play's primary god, acting as the motive force of the play's events. Artemis, on the other hand, is clearly a reactionary character whose involvement is characterized by her absence of will. She is limited to commenting on the play's events and dispensing judgment, but she never really initiates the action. While in the *Hippolytos* the separation between primary and secondary gods, marked structurally by the Aphrodite and Artemis' appearances in the prologue and epilogue positions, and further

characterized by their will and or absence of will, is distinct, in the *Herakles* this separation begins to break down. As we shall see in the next chapter, because of a structural collapse of the prologue and epilogue into one scene near the middle of the play, and the conspicuous absence of the play's real primary god, the arrangement of divine appearance in the *Herakles* deconstructs the primary god /secondary god dichotomy, which serves to highlight important thematic differences between the two plays.

Chapter 2. *Herakles*: Theme and Structure

As many scholars have noted, the structure of the *Herakles* is highly idiosyncratic.⁷⁰ The vast majority of scholarship on the play centers on the issue of its unity, and how to reconcile the shocking and disjunctive turn of events that occurs after line 814, with the mood of the play up to that point.⁷¹ While scholars have seen a variety of thematic and narrative divisions within the play,⁷² I divide it into two distinct movements or halves. The first is a distinctly melodramatic movement from impending tragedy to an apparently happy outcome, beginning with the desperate and untenable supplication of Herakles' family (1-338), which resolves into their seemingly inevitable execution at the hands of Lykos (339-522), but is then altered toward a happy resolution with the return of Herakles (523-814). The second movement begins with Herakles' madness, and the sudden peripeteia caused by Iris and Lyssa (815-874), and proceeds to the nearly unparalleled violence and brutality of the murder of Herakles' children, which is represented three times after the exit of Iris and Lyssa (874). The first depiction of the murder occurs in real time as the events unfold, as the chorus outside the house reacts to the sounds of the murders within (874-909). Next, a messenger vividly describes the scene in exceptionally graphic terms (910-1015). Finally, the

⁷⁰ Mastrorarde 2010: 69; Mills 1997: 129; Halleran 1988: vii; Silk 1985: 2; Barlow 1981: 124. Gilbert Murray 1946: 112 referred to the play and its sudden reversal at line 815 as "broken backed."

⁷¹ Papadopoulou 2005: 1-4, 25 provides an excellent overview of the matter; Bond 1981: xi-xxvi responds to prevalent criticisms of the play's unity by dismissing notions of Aristotelian unity, arguing for what he instead calls a "unity of contrast" in the play.

⁷² For instance, Barlow 1981: 124 divides the play into two parts 1-814 and 815-end, thus her main division occurs along the lines of the goddesses' appearance. Mills 1997: 129, divides the play into three parts corresponding to what she sees as the three major innovations of Euripides: the inclusion of Lykos, the appearance of Iris and Lyssa, and the arrival of Theseus.

events are narrated a last time to Herakles, who emerges from the house on the *ekkuklema*, surrounded by his dead children, with no recollection of what has happened (1089-1177). Herakles, destroyed by the sheer brutality of what he has done, resolves to commit suicide, but is saved by Theseus and the redemptive power of their friendship, and resolves to move to Athens where Theseus has promised he will receive cult honors (1178-1428). Due to limitations of space, my analysis will focus specifically on the Iris/Lyssa scene (815-874). I argue that, in both the play's employment of divine character types and its structural arrangement, the separation between primary and secondary characters begins to break down, and the aspects of the prologue and the epilogue collapse into a single unique scene. Furthermore, this arrangement underlines the thematic importance of the body and bodily presence and action in the play, especially through the manner in which Hera's absence effects the play's depiction of divine identity and power.

In to understand the larger context of the divine epiphany of Iris and Lyssa, my analysis will begin with a brief examination of the themes and events of the first half of the play as it leads into the appearance of the goddesses and the sudden shift they bring about.

Absence & Presence: Fatherhood and the Movement From Tragedy to Melodrama

At the beginning of the play, Amphitryon, Megara, and Herakles' sons are supplicants at the altar of Zeus *Soter* in front of the house of Herakles in Thebes. Lykos, a tyrant who has killed Megara's father Kreon and taken power in Thebes, aims to kill them in order to remove any threat they might pose to him in the future. In a two-part

prologue, Amphitryon (1-59) and Megara (60-106) describe their misfortunes. Their narration indicates that Herakles has not yet been driven mad by Hera, which sets up the play's inversion of the traditional order of Herakles' madness and labors.⁷³ It also explains the motivation for his labors as the restoration of Amphitryon, who was exiled for killing Alkmene's father Elektryon, to Argos (17). In providing the setting and circumstances of the play, the narrative function of the prologue in the *Herakles* is very similar to that of Aphrodite's opening speech in the *Hippolytos*; except that here the prologue is spoken by mortals and thus does not reveal any secret unknown to the majority of the play's characters. When Amphitryon is done speaking, the audience knows that Herakles is in Hades, either dead or completing his final labor, and that Megara and his children are still alive. The prologue also introduces two important issues of the initial movement of the play. The first centers on Herakles' *nostos*, or homecoming: Amphitryon argues there is still hope of Herakles' return (95-106), while Megara thinks it is extremely unlikely, and so she resolves to surrender to Lykos (60-87). The second prominent issue of the first half of the play is Herakles' relationship with Zeus, and especially the implications it raises regarding the differences between gods and men. Given Zeus' role in the paternity of Herakles, the misfortunes of the hero's family lead Amphitryon and the chorus to criticize Zeus for failing to protect his son, as well as question the existence of divine justice.

Theodicy is of central importance throughout the play, but in the play's first half it is highly involved with the theme of presence vs. absence. Until Herakles reappears (523), the fact of his absence is the central focus of the play, as it allows for

⁷³ See Papadopoulou 2005: 74-76; Bond 1981: xxviii.

the unjust persecution of his family, while his return is their only hope of salvation. The trope of Herakles' dual paternity (Zeus/Amphitryon) defines the play's presentation of the divine and human dichotomy in the first half of the play.⁷⁴ This dichotomy once again focuses on the dialectic between power and the lack of power, immortality and aging mortality, absence and presence, as Amphitryon – though old and infirm, constantly points to his conspicuous presence, and bemoans his powerlessness in the face of Lykos' abuses (228-235, 503-513). The weakness of old age and the longing for youth is a prevalent theme in the songs of the chorus of Theban elders, as they repeatedly claim that they would defend the family of Herakles if they still had the strength (107-123, 268-274, 312-315, 436-441). Amphitryon, present and helpless, stands in direct contrast to the absence and inaction of all-powerful and undying Zeus. This comparison reaches its greatest height when Amphitryon criticizes Zeus for his apparent lack of concern:

ὦ Ζεῦ, μάτην ἄρ' ὀμόγαμόν σ' ἐκτησάμην,
 μάτην δὲ παιδὸς κοινεῶν' ἐκλήϊζομεν·
 σὺ δ' ἦσθ' ἄρ' ἦσσον ἢ 'δόκεις εἶναι φίλος,
 ἀρετῇ σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὦν θεὸν μέγαν·
 παῖδας γὰρ οὐ προὔδωκα τοὺς Ἡρακλέους,
 σὺ δ' ἐς μὲν εὐνάς κρύφιος ἠπίστω μολεῖν,
 τάλλοτρία λέκτρα δόντος οὐδενὸς λαβῶν,
 σώϊζειν δὲ τοὺς σοὺς οὐκ ἐπίστασαι φίλους.
 ἀμαθὴς τις εἶ θεὸς ἢ δίκαιος οὐκ ἔφυς.

O Zeus, a vain shared marriage I got with you,
 in vain we called you a sharer of my son;
 but indeed you were a lesser friend than you seemed to be.
 I, although I am a mortal, surpass you, a great god, in virtue;
 for I do not betray the sons of Herakles.
 You sure knew how to come to beds in secret,
 seizing another's marriage bed with none having given it,

⁷⁴ The hero's dual paternity is a prevalent theme from the first line of the play, when Amphitryon introduces himself, Τίς τὸν Διὸς σύλλεκτρον οὐκ οἶδεν βροτῶν, Ἀργεῖον Ἀμφιτρυῶν; "Who among mortals does not know the bedmate of Zeus, Argive Amphitryon?" (*H.F.* 1-2).

but you don't know how to save your loved ones.
You are an ignorant god or you are not by nature just.
(*H.F.* 339-348)

Here, Amphitryon, finally giving up hope that Zeus/Herakles will save them, uses the trope of fatherhood, and his own presence and suffering in contrast with Zeus' absence, to criticize Zeus. He equates Zeus' absence to ignorance, beginning with the ignorance of how to act virtuously and ending with an accusation of a greater, more general ignorance.⁷⁵ As we will see, this translates into a generalized attack on Zeus' power and divinity in general; note that in both plays we have examined, I have argued that a god's superior knowledge is a key identifier of divinity and power. In light of the kinship connection between Zeus and Herakles, and Herakles' alleged piety, the misfortune of Herakles' family becomes the occasion for constant criticism of Zeus, and of the gods. In this regard, Herakles' absence is directly conflated with the absence and disinterest of Zeus. In the context of the abject and unjust suffering of Herakles' family, whether or not Zeus, and by extension the gods in general, can be said to be just is directly connected to the theme of fatherhood, and the question of whether or not Zeus has fulfilled the duties of a good father explored through the constant comparison between Amphitryon and Zeus. Thus, the return of Herakles and the apparent recovery of his family's fortunes are directly received by the chorus as a vindication of Zeus and of the existence of theodicy. The close tie between Herakles' return and presence, as it is conflated with the presence of Zeus, is most clear in Megara's reaction to the sight of Herakles, as she tells her children to go greet their father:

δεῦρ', ὦ τέκν', ἐκκρίμασθε πατρώϊων πέπλων,

⁷⁵ For a brief discussion of Amphitryon's assumption that divine justice should be based on reciprocation and concern see Papadopoulou 2005: 96-97.

ἴτ' ἐγκονεῖτε, μὴ μεθῆτ', ἐπεὶ Διὸς
σωτῆρος ὑμῖν οὐδέν ἐσθ' ὄδ' ὕστερος.

Go there, children, and cling to your father's robe,
go, make haste, don't let him go, since
this man is no less your savior than Zeus!

(H.F. 520-522)

Thus, the first half of the play progresses from the seemingly inevitable and tragic disaster of Herakles' family to a melodramatic reversal of their fortunes. The play's first half ends as the chorus sings a "new song" of joy (755-814), extolling the triumph of Zeus and the victorious return of Herakles and the reinstatement of justice.

The beginning of the second half of the play is marked by the sudden appearance of Iris and Lyssa. Immediately it becomes clear that the happy ending portended by Herakles' return is not to be, and the chorus' now false claims of the vindication of Zeus and of divine justice are clearly ironic. As such, the scene acts as a bridge between what is considered by many to be two radically different plays masquerading as one. Some readers find seeds of madness in the behavior of Herakles before the sudden and violent change brought about by the goddesses. Moreover, Lyssa's account of the initial stages of her effect on Herakles has itself been interpreted as a clinical description of a wide range of mental illnesses. While the occurrence of a divine appearance in the middle of the play is precisely what makes its structure so unusual, analyses devoted to the thematic or narrative aspects of the play as they argue in favor of dramatic unity naturally dismiss the epiphany of Iris and Lyssa as an effective or acceptable narrative device bridging the two halves of the play. Such a dismissal clearly privileges a traditionalist view of the *deus ex machina*.⁷⁶ However, when

⁷⁶ Mastronarde 2010: 182 softens the Aristotelian view of the *deus ex machina*, as he eventually concludes that even the seeming dissonance of the epilogue god is itself a type of integration (104).

compared to the structure of divine appearance elsewhere in Euripides, such as in the *Hippolytos*, I argue that here the prologue and epilogue are collapsed into a single scene: this is evident both in how the scene accomplishes the end of one movement (1-814) and the beginning of another (815-end), and in the role and narrative functions performed by the appearing goddesses. As such, the arrangement of divine appearance in the play, and the narrative functions performed by the goddesses, represent an innovative extension of divine appearances and narrators in Euripides' plays. In order to understand this more fully, we will look in depth at the circumstances and events of the Iris and Lyssa scene.

Iris and Hera: The *Latris* of the Gods and the Performance of Identity

The madness of Herakles is clearly attributed to Hera, and Hera's enmity toward Herakles is both well attested throughout the play, and an integral aspect of the traditional story.⁷⁷ Although she doesn't appear in person, Hera is the play's primary god, and therefore her absence is not only conspicuous, but it also makes the nature of divine appearance and the operation of divine will and identity in the *Herakles* fundamentally different from that of the *Hippolytos*. The treatment of Zeus in the first half of the play, and especially the chorus' reaction to the unexpected appearance of Herakles, demonstrate how a god's absence can lead mortals to generalize their interpretation of a god's actions, even to the point of broad and sweeping implications about divine identity in general. This trend is most conspicuous when Herakles reacts

⁷⁷ Bond 1981: vxv, xxvii, 67.

to the murder of his children by broadly condemning and dismissing the very nature of the traditional Olympian gods as the inventions of poets (1340-1346). Just as Herakles interprets Hera's actions as having sweeping implications regarding the nature of gods as a whole, the offense and revenge narrative presented in Iris' speech is also broadly generalized, as she claims that Herakles' greatness has dire implications regarding the power of the gods in general (833-842). This statement of Herakles' offenses (841-842) recalls the detailed and distinctly epinician account of Herakles' labors in the first *stasimon* (348-450).⁷⁸ When taken with Herakles' final labor and the conflation of Herakles' physical location in Hades with literal death in the first half of the play,⁷⁹ Iris' statement that Herakles has become too great and poses a threat to all gods is plausible, although vague (842). However, her claim to such necessity as it relates to Herakles' return from death is entirely undercut by the insinuation that she and Hera had planned and desired the destruction of Herakles before his final labor (829). Furthermore, whereas Aphrodite in the *Hippolytos* pronounces a specific threat to her identity and honor as an individual goddess, Iris' statement of offense relates rather to a generalized divine identity, and claims that the threat posed by Herakles has dire implications for the overall nature and stature of the Olympian gods, and implies that if mortals are allowed to become too great, then the gods will no longer maintain their current honors.

Hera's importance as a primary god renders her absence peculiar, as she cannot

⁷⁸ For a discussion the variety of epinician language and choral performance in the *Herakles* see Swift 2010: 121-133.

⁷⁹ Herakles' death and location in Hades is first proclaimed as a fact by Lykus (145-146), then repeated by Megara (295-297), and then lamented by the chorus at the end of their account of Herakles' labors (430-435); all of these statements serve to emphasize his return as a defiance of death. Herakles similarly defies death in Eur. *Alkestis*, when he wrestles Thanatos into submission, forcing him to release Alkestis and return her to the living (*Alk.* 837-860; 1129-1163).

speak for herself and therefore must be spoken for, very much as Artemis speaks for the absent Poseidon in *Hippolytos*. Because of Hera’s material absence, her force and presence in the play is bifurcated and distributed between the two goddesses who appear in her stead. In this context, Iris and Lyssa both assume certain aspects and functions of primary and secondary gods, each in her own way. To understand this arrangement, it is necessary to look closely at the goddess’ respective roles, beginning with Hera’s primary will as Iris voices it. However, the appearance of the two minor goddesses acts as a type of commentary, or epilogue, to the events that have gone before it, and thus the framework of the Iris and Lyssa scene must be interpreted in relation to the themes and assertions of the preceding chorus, which they so violently interrupt.

After Amphitryon leads Lykos into the house of Herakles, the chorus lauds the reversal of their fortunes and exults as Lykos exclaims Herakles is murdering him inside the house (735-760).⁸⁰ They begin by praising divine justice (δικα θεῶν) and the apparent reversal of fortune (παλίρρους πότμος, “the flowing back of fortune,” 738). They proceed to name Lykos’ crimes, and then turn to extol the greatness of the city of Thebes and the restoration of the kingship (740-797). Finally, they come to the issue of fatherhood, and respond to the many criticisms they had earlier leveled against Zeus. The final lines of the chorus pronounce the vindication of Zeus, Herakles’ strength, his victorious return from Hades, and the ultimate proof of divine justice:

ὦ λέκτρων δύο συγγενεῖς
 εὐναί, θνατογενοῦς τε καὶ
 Διός, ὃς ἦλθεν ἐς εὐνὰν

⁸⁰ Rehm 2002: 100-105 discusses the complicated spatial metaphors involved in Herakles’ first *nostos*, noting in the plot to murder Lykos a distinctly Odyssean type of subterfuge centering on the *oikos* itself as a space of disguise.

νύμφας τᾶς Περσηίδος· ὡς
πιστόν μοι τὸ παλαιὸν ἦ-
δη λέχος, ὦ Ζεῦ, σὸν ἐπ' οὐκ ἐλπίδι φάνθη.
λαμπρὰν δ' ἔδειξ' ὁ χρόνος
τὰν Ἡρακλέος ἀλκάν·
ὃς γὰς ἐξέβας θαλάμων
Πλούτωνος δῶμα λιπῶν νέρτερον.
κρείσσων μοι τύραννος ἔφυς
ἢ δυσγένει' ἀνάκτων,
ἃ νῦν ἐσορῶντι φαίνει
ξιφηφόρων ἐς ἀγώνων
ἄμιλλαν εἰ τὸ δίκαιον
θεοῖς ἔτ' ἀρέσκει.

O dual bed of marriage,
the co-fathered man, both mortal born
and of you, Zeus, who came to the bed
of the young wife, the granddaughter of Perseus;
indeed, that your old marriage bed is real,
O Zeus, it seems so to me, but not according to my expectations.
But time revealed the bright strength of Herakles,
who came out of the earth, from the inner chambers of Hades,
leaving behind his nether palace.
To me you are a better ruler by nature than
than that ill-born scion of lords,
who now appears to the onlooker,
in a contest of sword-bearing struggle,
if justice is still pleasing to the gods.

(H.F. 798-814)

The statement begins with Zeus and his role in the shared conception of Herakles, and then progresses to Herakles' return from Hades and his victory over Lykos, which are stated as conditions that prove the existence of divine justice. In the chorus' interpretation, the return and superiority of Herakles proves that Zeus has concern and compassion for Herakles, but it also essentially proves his paternity of Herakles, which the chorus describes as contrary to their expectations (803).⁸¹ Furthermore, the

⁸¹ Papadopoulou 2005: 112-113 points out that here the chorus is not voicing a serious doubt, especially given the prominent criticism of Zeus that assumes he is the father of Herakles. Papadopoulou instead argues that the trope is meant to emphasize the fact that Zeus' intervention proves his paternity of Herakles, much like Poseidon's intervention in the *Hippolytos* proves his relationship to Theseus. She also

confluence of these three factors – Zeus’ paternity, Herakles’ return, the vindication of Zeus and divine justice– is generalized to signify something about the nature of all gods, just as Herakles’ victory in the “sword-bearing struggle” with Lykos, the ill-born scion of lords (809), is taken as proof of theodicy. This last contention once again points to a correlation between the presence of Herakles and that of Zeus. Whereas earlier in the play *Amphitryon* and the chorus interpret the absence of Herakles as equal to the absence of Zeus, the appearance of Herakles suggests that Zeus has somehow provided for the well being of his son and his family.

Immediately upon the chorus’ invocation of divine justice, Iris and Lyssa appear above the stage (814). The chorus reacts with terror:

— ἔα ἔα·
 ἄρ' ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν πίτυλον ἤκομεν φόβου,
 γέροντες, οἷον φάσμ' ὑπὲρ δόμων ὄρω;
 — φυγῆι φυγῆι
 νωθὲς πέδαιρε κῶλον, ἐκποδῶν ἔλα.
 — ὦναξ Παϊάν,
 ἀπότροπος γένοιό μοι πημάτων.

— Whoa! Whoa!
 Have we arrived at this same mad fit of fear,
 old men, what sort of apparition do I see above the house?
 — In flight! In flight!
 Lift your sluggish limbs, drive them far away.
 — Lord Paian,
 be a protector, for me, from calamities.

(*H.F.* 815-821)

The sudden appearance of Iris and Lyssa, accentuated by the extreme reaction of the chorus, remarks upon the chorus’ earlier assertions about the existence of theodicy.

While the chorus heralds the return of Herakles as a final vindication of Zeus and of

points out that the chorus’ statement recalls Lykos’ claim that Zeus’ absence proves that he is not the father of Herakles (148-149), and *Amphitryon*’s criticism of Zeus mentioned earlier (339-347).

divine justice, the goddesses will cause Herakles to perform the murder of his wife and children, a fate even worse than if Lykos had murdered them in his absence. Here the conditional nature of the chorus' final statement before the goddesses' appearance ("if justice is still pleasing to the gods," 814) is a *double entendre*. Their certainty regarding the meaning of Herakles' return, their belief that he will defeat Lykos in "sword bearing struggle" (813), and the declaration that Herakles' return will prove both his superiority (809) and of the existence of divine justice (814), turns ironically back into a lingering question to be taken up again in the play's second half. The shift in the chorus' song is sudden and shocking as the entire outlook of the play, and what type of story it appears to be, changes violently. Such a shift not only has drastic implications for the fortunes of Herakles, but also for the issues of divine nature and justice that happen to be the subject of the chorus' song as the *peripeteia* occurs.⁸² As the consequences of the goddesses' appearance and interference play out, they provide conclusive commentary on the prominent questions and conclusions of the play's mortal characters regarding prior events. Thus the narrative function of the appearance of Iris and Lyssa, before any words are spoken, takes on aspects of the epilogue, in speaking to such dominant thematic issues. In addition, very much in keeping with the larger themes of the *Herakles*, they make their commentary on the preceding declarations of the chorus through the very fact of their physical presence and what it entails, rather than any explicit speech on the particular issue of divine justice as the chorus has propounded it. Iris further carries out an epilogue function,

⁸² Papadopoulou 2005: 71, 119 remarks on the sudden and shocking shift caused by the goddesses' appearance, and the reversal of the chorus' optimism; see also Foley 1985: 152. Both Papadopoulou and Foley note in the sudden change a type of perverted sacrifice, given the messenger's description of events.

one of commentary, when she voices her own opinions concerning Hera's will. Her pronouncements of Hera's identity and will, on the other hand, as well as her articulation of the threat that Herakles poses to divine identity in general, fall under the purview of primary functions.⁸³ While she performs these primary functions first, they are followed by her own position on such issues, and thus she provides commentary on the justice and nature of Hera's will, thereby also performing the function of a secondary god.

When the goddesses appear, Iris speaks first, and begins by introducing herself and Lyssa to the chorus, seeking to allay their fears:

θαρσεῖτε Νυκτὸς τήνδ' ὀρῶντες ἔκγονον
 Λύσσαν, γέροντες, κάμῃ τὴν θεῶν λάτριν
 Ἴριν· πόλει γὰρ οὐδὲν ἤκομεν βλάβος,
 ἐνὸς δ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὸς δῶματα στρατεύομεν,
 ὃν φασιν εἶναι Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τ' ἄπο.
 πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ἄθλους ἐκτελευτῆσαι πικρούς,
 τὸ χρὴ νιν ἐξέσωιζεν οὐδ' εἶα πατὴρ
 Ζεὺς νιν κακῶς δρᾶν οὔτ' ἔμ' οὔθ' Ἥραν ποτέ·

Take courage, old men, looking upon this daughter of night,
 Lyssa, and me the servant of the gods,
 Iris; for not at all have we come to do harm to the city,
 but we war against the house of one man,
 whom they say is born of Zeus and Alkmene.
 For before he completed his bitter labors,
 Necessity saved him, and Father
 Zeus at that time was not allowing either me or Hera to treat him badly.

(H.F. 822-829)

She begins by commanding the chorus not to be afraid, naming first her monstrous companion, and then herself. Her introduction identifies them as gods, further developing the visual and spatial hierarchy described by their appearance above the

⁸³ Barlow 1996: 159-160 and Bond 1981: 281 both view the Iris/Lyssa scene as a second prologue effectively ushering in the second half of the play. Bond compares the scene to other *rheses* occurring mid-play in Euripides that typically take on attributes of the prologue, noting especially Menelaus' speech at *Hel.* 386.

skene on the crane or *theologeion*.⁸⁴ As we will see, when Lyssa speaks she will further elucidate the nature of her origin, and the chorus will later recount in detail her monstrous attributes. Iris' introduction, though brief and concise, begins to inform the audience of the essential aspects of Lyssa's character. Most essential is Iris' designation of her companion as Lyssa, a substantive purely evocative of madness and rage, and hence a potent signifier of what is to come. Padel provides a catalogue of the many impersonal connotations of λύσσα, a well-known term for madness, used to describe blind battle or "wolf rage," and even to denote rabies in Xenophon.⁸⁵ In Iris' allusion to Lyssa's descent from Nux, or Night, as Padel notes, Euripides connects Lyssa and her particular personification of madness to the concept of darkness, and thus describes the total obliteration of consciousness as part of her effect;⁸⁶ this becomes evident when Herakles re-appears before the chorus, at first unconscious, and then completely unaware of what he has done (1042, 1088).

The language Iris uses to describe her own role is also highly significant. Her use of the term λάτρις (servant, 824) establishes from the very beginning of the scene the combined primary/secondary role that Iris will carefully construct throughout her speech. It is the same term Hermes uses of himself when he appears to speak on behalf of the absent Apollo in the prologue of the *Ion*, a play that is deeply ensconced in issues of divine identity and justice in its exploration of the greater implications of Apollo's rape of Kreousa. While scholars disagree as to the specific meaning of the term regarding Iris' attitude toward her role as the mouthpiece of Hera, the term marks Iris

⁸⁴ Scholars tend to agree on their location above the *skene* (see especially Rehm 2002: 105; Mastronarde 1990: 260-61, 268-270; and Bond 1981: 280), and their position is made clear enough in the dialogue.

⁸⁵ Padel 1995: 18.

⁸⁶ Padel 1992: 79.

as subordinate, and recalls her mythological role as the dutiful messenger of the gods.⁸⁷ This clearly frames Iris' speech and appearance as being in service of and hence subordinate to Hera's will, a hierarchy borne out in the remainder of her address.

When Iris describes Herakles and the purpose of their appearance, she establishes a hostile association between the two. While Iris formally states that Herakles' labors have taken him beyond a level of greatness appropriate for mortals (841-842), her first mention of him recalls the traditional source of Hera's enmity toward Herakles, that is, Zeus' adulterous affair with Alkmene. Iris couches the divine birth of Herakles in terms of rumor, or what is generally said to be true, recalling Aphrodite's emphasis on speech in the *Hippolytos* prologue. However, while Aphrodite's specific allegations against Hippolytos center on the speech of an individual as an act of *hubris* and a violation of the reverence due to her as god, Iris' introduction of Herakles focuses her and Hera's enmity against Herakles based on what the unnamed collective says about him. Thus Iris' emphasis on speech implicitly undermines that speech as unreliable. By using Zeus and their alleged blood relation to identify Herakles, Iris invokes the traditional source of Hera's anger against him. Interestingly, this particular offense can only be located in his body and its nature, but not anything he has done or said.

In the final lines of Iris' introduction, the function of her speech as explicit commentary, that which responds to the chorus' claims of theodicy and thus serves as epilogue, is most apparent. To the extent that *Amphitryon* and the chorus' criticisms of Zeus centered on his seeming lack of concern for Herakles as he completes his labors,

⁸⁷ Iris commonly carries various messages for Zeus in the *Iliad*, and for Hera, though less often, as at *Il. XVIII. 166*, where Hera sends Iris to alert Achilles that Patroklos has been killed and the Ajaxes are fighting to save his corpse from Hektor.

Iris reveals that precisely the opposite is true. The chorus' epinician description in the second *stasimon* emphasizes the civilizing nature of Herakles' labors, and later Lyssa will cite Herakles' piety in performing the labors and their role in upholding the honors of the gods contrary to Iris' accusations. However, the chorus and Amphitryon's assertions that Zeus has unfairly abandoned his son during his pious labors is contrary to the state of affairs as Iris outlines them. According to Iris, it is only after the completion of the labors that Zeus no longer protects him, and Hera is able to exact her revenge.⁸⁸

After stating who she and Lyssa are and the implications of their sudden appearance, Iris then clearly pinpoints Hera's involvement:

ἐπεὶ δὲ μόχθους διεπέρασ' Εὐρυσθέως,
Ἥρα προσάψαι καινὸν αἶμ' αὐτῷ θέλει
παῖδας κατακτείναντι, συνθέλω δ' ἐγώ.

But since he accomplished the labors of Eurystheus,
Hera wishes to attach a fresh bloodguilt to him,
cutting down his children, and I wish it also.

(*H.F.* 830-832)

This is a critical statement, since Iris reveals that Hera intends Herakles to murder his children. It eradicates any confusion or doubt caused by the play's order of events – the arrangement of Herakles' labors prior to his madness – and now the audience can be sure that the play is turning from the melodramatic to the tragic. This narrative function outlining the play's particular version of a traditional myth, as we have seen in Aphrodite's speech in the *Hippolytos* and Amphitryon's opening lines, typically belongs to the prologue. Moreover, the statement performs another critical function of the

⁸⁸ In connection to the limit set on Zeus' protection of Herakles, Bond 1981: 282 notes also the time limits placed on formal agreements such as peace treaties, and the time limit of Apollo's ability to protect Admetos at Eur. *Ion* 105- *real end numbers*.

divine prologue: the explication of the primary god’s will, which motivates the events to follow. However, the declaration involves two essential statements of will which further construct the primary/secondary relationship between Hera and Iris, utilizing two distinct verbs of wishing or wanting (θέλω, “to wish or to want,” 831; and συνθέλω, “to wish or to want together with or alongside another,” 832). Hera’s act of will (θέλω), in wishing or willing the bloodguilt of Herakles, is the primary initiatory act, and it comes first in Iris’ statement. While both verbs are in the present active indicative, Hera’s will explains the presence of Lyssa and Iris in Thebes, and her absence and physical separation from the scene affirms her primary status. This is essential because while her act of wishing the madness of Herakles is clearly constructed as a motivating force in the present, her absence clearly establishes that act of will as prior to the present circumstances, and renders it an inceptionary role further developed as the narrative progresses. In this context Hera’s absence serves as a potent indicator of her power, as her act of will continues to define and drive the present circumstance, even in her absence. Throughout the scene, the wishes of the other goddesses are defined by their relationship to Hera’s will. Iris’ act of will (συνθέλω) is clearly subordinate and completely dependent upon Hera’s completed action, as is evident by the subordinating force of the compound verb with σύν (“with, together with”). The secondary will of Iris affirms Hera’s prior, initiatory act of will.

Iris concludes her speech, and demonstrates precisely what her presence means, when she orders Lyssa to generate Herakles’ madness:

ἀλλ’ εἴ, ἄτεγκτον συλλαβοῦσα καρδίαν,
 Νυκτὸς κελαινῆς ἀνυμέναιε παρθένε,
 μανίας τ’ ἐπ’ ἀνδρὶ τῷδε καὶ παιδοκτόνους
 φρενῶν ταραγμοὺς καὶ ποδῶν σκιρτήματα

ἔλαυνε, κίνει, φόνιον ἔξειει κάλων,
ὡς ἂν πορεύσας δι' Ἀχερούσιον πόρον
τὸν καλλίπαιδα στέφανον αὐθέντη φόνῳ
γνῶ μὲν τὸν Ἥρας οἶός ἐστ' αὐτῷ χόλος,
μάθη δὲ τὸν ἑμὸν ἢ θεοὶ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
τὰ θνητὰ δ' ἔσται μεγάλα, μὴ δόντος δίκην.

But come then, gathering your relentless heart,
unwedded daughter of dark night,
drive madneses upon this man and stir a child-slaughtering
confusion in his wits and the leaping of his feet,
let loose the murderous sail,
sending through the passage of Acheron
the crown of his fair children by his own murderous hand,
so that he might understand Hera's wrath, the sort there is against him,
and that he might know mine as well. Or, with this man not paying any penalty,
the gods will be nothing, but the affairs of mortals will be great.

(H.F. 833-842)

Iris utters a string of forceful, harsh commands: ἔλαυνε (drive), κίνει (stir), ἔξειει (let loose). Occurring in rapid succession within a single line (837), the verbs invoke a flurry of frenzied motion, and inscribe in Lyssa's effect on Herakles, although purely psychological, an intense physicality.⁸⁹ Iris' tone of command, as indicated by the imperative mood, highlights her authority and begins to establish the dynamic of her ascendancy over Lyssa. This is the first concrete example of Iris' role as a surrogate god standing in for Hera, and essentially performing the rhetorical aspects of Hera's primary functions. Iris' description of what she expects Lyssa to do to Herakles is not only graphic and detailed, but also ruthless, and betrays an expectation that Lyssa can and will completely control Herakles' actions. When Iris declares that the purpose of such actions is to demonstrate first Hera's wrath, and then her own, once again she

⁸⁹ Barlow 1996: 161 notes a connection between the urgency of asyndetic imperatives here, and at 491-xx where Amphitryon desperately urges Herakles to come and save his family. In addition, she notes 1996: 162 the violence of Lyssa's description of her effect on Herakles (861-70) and its similarity to the brutal physical description of the murder of Herakles' children that corroborates Lyssa's description, but she fails to make the connection to the tone set by Iris' speech.

voices her own opinion as secondary or subordinate to that of Hera's, although they describe the same sentiment. In this arrangement, Iris mingles her primary function, the exposition of the primary god's will, with her secondary function, to provide commentary in reaction to the primary act of will.

At the end of her statement, Iris essentially declares that if Herakles is not punished, mortals will become greater than the gods: this recalls what Silk views as Herakles' problematic defiance of the classification within the divine/human dichotomy that will be resolved as the events of the second half of the play unfold.⁹⁰ While the statement is vague, it is Iris' most concerted effort toward a declaration of offenses committed by Herakles, beyond the traditional reason for Herakles' madness and Hera's anger against him: his illegitimate birth by Zeus. Despite its brevity, Iris' statement has wide-ranging implications regarding the god/human dialectic and the significance of Herakles within that dynamic. She argues that if Herakles is not punished, then the honors of the gods, and that of men, will essentially be reversed. In its broadness, the statement inverts central claim of the epinician account of Herakles' labors in the second *stasimon* (348-450), as well as the prominent insinuations of his greatness and piety by Amphitryon, Megara, and the chorus elsewhere. While in the first half of the play all Herakles' heroism and role as a civilizing force are constantly cited as reasons why he is deserving of justice and of divine protection, here Iris alleges that for the same reasons he has offended and threatened the gods, and therefore must be punished.⁹¹ The connection between Iris' accusation and the first *stasimon* detailing the labors, is most clear when Lyssa responds to Iris in defense of Herakles:

⁹⁰ Silk 1985: 5-6, 10, 12, 14, 19.

⁹¹ Foley 1985: 155-188 examines the problematization of Herakles as an epinician hero through the trope of perverted sacrifice and Herakles' uncontrollable violence.

ἀνὴρ ὄδ' οὐκ ἄσημος οὔτ' ἐπὶ χθονὶ
οὔτ' ἐν θεοῖσιν, οὐδ' οὐ μ' ἐσπέμπεις δόμους·
ἄβατον δὲ χώραν καὶ θάλασσαν ἀγρίαν
ἐξημερώσας, θεῶν ἀνέστησεν μόνος
τιμὰς πιτνούσας ἀνοσίων ἀνδρῶν ὑπο·

This man is not unknown—neither on earth
nor amongst the gods, whose house you are sending me against,
since he conquered impassable lands and the savage sea,
and he alone restored the honors of the gods
otherwise slipping under unholy men.

(*H.F.* 849-852)

We will explore the implications of Lyssa's resistance and unwillingness to play her designated role in Herakles' madness later. Here it is important to note that not only does Lyssa directly contradict the claim that it is necessary to punish Herakles for the gods to maintain their supremacy, but also she refutes Iris' claim against him and clearly points to his role as a civilizing force as it is constructed in the chorus' earlier account of his labors (line #s).

Thus, when compared to Lyssa's role in the outcome of the tragedy, the role of Iris is actually quite limited. Her primary function is to pronounce Hera's will and the offenses of Herakles, but by inserting herself and her own reactions and opinions to Hera's will into the equation, she also performs the secondary role of commentary. When Lyssa resists, as we will see, Iris effectively enforces Hera's will by representing Hera's power, and by further asserting Hera's identity and importance as a primary god. Her brief explanation of the justness and necessity of what Lyssa must do is largely a rhetorical function. Her most significant role is defined not by her power, but by Hera's importance as an Olympian deity. Since Hera does not appear in the play, Iris

stands as a proxy, a symbol of Hera's will, and an embodiment of her power.⁹² In this capacity, supplying neither the motive nor the cause of the tragic action, Iris represents the motive force and the power of the absent Hera and thus functions to compel Lyssa, who is the active cause of the tragedy. Unlike in the *Hippolytos*, where divine will and identity is clearly stated by a fully embodied primary, Hera's absence realigns the dichotomy between will and action, and that of power and lack of power, along the lines of absence and presence. Thus, the arrangement of divine embodiment in the *Herakles* offers a greater material presence and level of participation in the completion of Hera's revenge against Herakles, indicating lower levels of self-determination and control. Hera provides the will for the madness of Herakles and the murder of his family, voiced and approved in commentary by Iris. But it is Lyssa and Herakles who must carry it out, though they are obviously opposed to such actions.

Theogonic Language and the Imagination of Ambivalent Madness

The mythological role of Iris as a messenger of the gods, and her divine lineage, is well attested in the epic tradition.⁹³ However, Lyssa as a fully personified deity does not have the established mythological background that Iris does, which has led her to be viewed as a distinctly tragic invention.⁹⁴ As a result, while Iris' passing reference to

⁹² Bond 1981: xxiv goes so far as to identify Iris solely as "Hera's mouthpiece."

⁹³ Hesiod *Theog.* 265-267 mentions Iris is the daughter of Thaumas and Elektra; he also at *Theog.* 780-787 describes Iris as the daughter of *Thaumas*, and details her role in fetching the water of Styx when the gods swear oaths.

⁹⁴ Padel 1995: 18 argues that Lyssa came into her own as a character in tragedy, but can only point to one other instance of her personification: when Lyssa appears and speaks in Aeschylus' *Xantriae* (Radt 1985: Frag. 169, 1-8), as a manifestation of the Bacchic frenzy inflicted by Dionysos against either the Minyadae or the Theban Maenads who have dismembered Pentheus. While Padel also refers to Orestes' mention of Lyssa in his invocation of the Furies at *Aisch. Cho.* 287, it is impossible to say whether or not this is a personified conception or not.

herself as a λατρίς or messenger of the gods is suggestive of her robust credentials, and thus sufficient to recall her traditional role in myth, her brief introduction of Lyssa (822) rests on no such established tradition. The scene features repeated allusions to Lyssa’s ancestry that are meant to establish the circumstances of her birth and divinity. As described above, Iris first introduces her as the “child of night” (822), and then addresses her again later as the “unwedded daughter of dark night” (834). In her first lines, Lyssa elaborates her own origins with greater dignity:

ἔξ εὐγενοῦς μὲν πατρός ἔκ τε μητέρος
πέφυκα, Νυκτὸς Οὐρανοῦ τ' ἀφ' αἵματος
ἴτιμάς τ' ἔχω τάσδ' οὐκ ἀγασθῆναι φίλοις†
οὐδ' ἥδομαι φοιτῶσ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων φίλους.

From a noble father and mother
I was born, of Nux and the blood of Ouranos.
And I have these functions that are not admired by my *philoï*,
but I do not take pleasure in visiting men dear to me.

(H.F. 843-846)

Here, Euripides builds a theogonic background for Lyssa, and her testimony of her origins is reminiscent of the language of Hesiod. In the *Theogony*, Nux and Ouranos are both prominent figures that breed prolifically, each spawning a variety of monstrous children, though never with one another.⁹⁵ In addition, Lyssa’s birth story directly invokes the specific episode of the castration of Ouranos and thus recalls a definitive event of the *Theogony*, the same event which spawned Aphrodite and the Furies, and which places Lyssa’s birth a generation before the advent of the Olympian gods.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Hesiod *Theog.* 123, 126 states that Gaia produced Ouranos and Nux asexually. For the many children produced by Ouranos and Gaia, including the monstrous Hundred-Handers, see also 131-153. The many monstrous children born of Nux are detailed *Theog.* 124-125; 211-232.

⁹⁶ For the castration of Ouranos, see *Theog.* 154-210, and the offspring generated from his severed member. The children born from the drops of Ouranos’ blood falling into Gaia include the Giants (185), the Furies (185), the ash tree Nymphs (187); while Aphrodite’s birth results from the foam of Ouranos’ member mixing with the sea (188-206).

Lyssa's speech also recalls the *Theogony* in her allusion to τίμαι ("honors"), which in the *Theogony* refer to the functions or duties allotted to the gods by Zeus or the deity sitting atop the divine hierarchy.⁹⁷ In this context, τίμαι comprise a large portion of a god's identity and position in the divine universe. Thus, in the three lines quoted above, not only does Lyssa connect herself to a rich mythological background by naming her origins in epic terms, but she also begins to describe the fundamental contradictions of her character. Born of Nux and the blood of Ouranos, the source and circumstances of her birth are nearly identical to that of the Furies: this highlights the distinct connection between them, since they are similarly reviled by the gods, imbued with aspects of monstrosity, and have τίμαι connected to madness and revenge. Lyssa's monstrosity is most apparent when the chorus describes her appearance to Amphitryon, connecting her to the Gorgons, who are said by Hesiod to be daughters of Phorkys and Keto⁹⁸ and are commonly depicted in ancient vase paintings as monstrous, serpent-haired demons:

βέβακεν ἐν δίφροισιν ἅ πολύστονος,
 ἄρμασι δ' ἐνδίδωσι
 κέντρον ὡς ἐπὶ λώβαι
 Νυκτὸς Γοργῶν ἑκατογκεφάλοις
 ὄφρων ἰαχήμασι, Λύσσα μαρμαρωπός.

She came on a chariot,
 the cause of much sorrow,
 and gave the goad to the team, as an additional outrage,
 the Gorgon of night with a hundred hissing serpent heads,
 burning eyed Lyssa.

(H.F. 879-883)

However monstrous her appearance, Lyssa's apparent empathy belies the outward

⁹⁷ For example, at *Theog.* 74, 452.

⁹⁸ *Theog.* 274-277.

monstrosity that seemingly pervades her form, origin, and function. Thus, there is a contradiction in her claim that she does not take pleasure in approaching men dear to her (οὐδ' ἥδομαι φοιτῶσ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων φίλους, 846), because the statement itself equates the simple act of approach (φοιτῶσα) itself with violence, as emphasized especially by the force of the preposition ἐπί (against w/dat., 846), and insinuates that while Lyssa is capable of and at least partly characterized by friendly and loving feelings toward men, she is only able harm to them. This combination of poignant empathy and potent, monstrous brutality, as I will argue, make up the core of Lyssa's character, and accentuate her connection to Herakles, a notoriously ambivalent character.⁹⁹

After Iris levels her accusations against Herakles and commands Lyssa to cause his madness and blood-guilt, Lyssa's response is unexpectedly empathetic and rational. When Iris argues that Herakles' heroism and labors pose a threat to the greatness of all gods (841-842), Lyssa directly contradicts her (851-852), stating rather that Herakles' actions have upheld the gods, thereby further strengthening the connection between Iris' accusations (841-842) and the chorus' account of Herakles' labors (348-450). Lyssa prefaces her defense of Herakles by clearly stating her intent in the matter:

παραινέσαι δέ, πρὶν σφαλεῖσαν εἰσιδεῖν,
Ἥρα θεέλω σοί τ', ἣν πίθησθ' ἔμοῖς λόγοις.

I wish to advise, before I see you err,
Hera and you, if you would be persuaded by my words.
(H.F. 847-848)

⁹⁹ Papadopoulou 2005: 3-5, 9 gives a broad overview of the ambivalences of Herakles' character, such as his vacillation between piety and transgression, while arguing the central importance of his ambivalence lies in the dichotomy between virtue and excess, with Herakles' heroism often located in between. Silk 1985: 5-6, on the other hand, contends that Herakles' ambivalence lies in his defiance of classification as either god or human.

Lyssa's description of her own will (θέλω) uses the same verb as Iris' declaration of Hera's primary will and her own subordinate will (θέλω/συνθέλω, 831-832), an obvious case of verbal cueing, which connects and contrasts the separate acts of will attributed to each of the three goddess. The use of the same verb to describe both Hera and Lyssa ironically emphasizes the contradictory nature of their wills (θέλω vs. θέλω), and provides a sharp contrast to the subordinate complicity of Iris described by the συν- prefix. While Lyssa's will is contradictory, it is still essentially reactionary, offering a judgment and commentary on the justness of Hera's will in an attempt to advise to dissuade them from their current course of action, as Lyssa can only wish to advise against what has already been decided. The repetition of θέλω, underscoring a clash of opposing wills between Lyssa and Hera, places Lyssa in a very similar position to that of Phaidra in the *Hippolytos*, as a large part of Phaidra's story was defined by her struggle against Aphrodite, a struggle that is also explicitly framed in terms of the failure of her will in her role as a tool in Aphrodite's elaborate scheme of revenge. However, an analysis of the similarities between Lyssa and Phaidra also reveals important differences, especially in that Lyssa is herself a goddess and has full knowledge of the present circumstances, including knowledge of the role she is to play. Thus there is an interesting contrast between Phaidra as an unwilling mortal and Lyssa as an unwilling goddess: yet while their level of knowledge differs, their level of helplessness does not. It is precisely this divine status and knowledge that allows Lyssa to express her judgment of Iris' complaint against Herakles, and to resist her designated role in his punishment.¹⁰⁰ Both efforts, to complain and to resist, to the extent that they are

¹⁰⁰ Lefkowitz 1989: 81 cites the superior knowledge of the gods as a key factor defining divine power and the separation between gods and men.

framed in response to Hera's initial act of will, act as commentary and should be viewed as secondary functions.

Lyssa's initial resistance ushers in a brief *agon* between Iris and Lyssa, which further develops the specific force of Hera's will and names a key element of her identity, while elucidating the respective positions of Iris and Lyssa in relation to that will:

Ιρ. μὴ σὺ νουθέτει τὰ θ' Ἥρας κάμᾶ μηχανήματα.
Λυ. ἔς τὸ λῶιον ἐμβιβάζω σ' ἵχνος ἀντὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
Ιρ. οὐχὶ σωφρονεῖν γ' ἔπεμψε δεῦρό σ' ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ.

Iris: Do not rebuke Hera's and my schemes.

Lyssa: I would lead you to the more desirable route, instead of the wicked one.

Iris: The wife of Zeus did not send you here to be sound-minded.

(H.F. 855-857)

Iris' rebuttal of Lyssa begins with yet another command (μὴ νουθέτει, "do not advise/rebuke," 855). The tone of the statement is demeaning, as elsewhere the verb νουθετέω takes on distinctly negative connotations, meaning not to only advise,¹⁰¹ but to rebuke or chastise.¹⁰² The word Iris uses to denote their designs (μηχανήμα, 855) has sinister implications as well, as its root μηχανή, when used in respect to mental activity, typically denotes artifice, cunning, or contrivance of some kind. Lyssa answers Iris by claiming that Hera's plans are wicked (κακός, 856), and essentially reiterates the concern that Hera is in the wrong. Iris answers by cryptically restating the importance of Hera and her will. However, the allusion to Hera as the wife of Zeus (ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ, 857) is highly ironic, as I will argue, especially in the reaction of Lyssa. Given the earlier

¹⁰¹ As at Euripides *Supp.* 337, and *Med.* 29.

¹⁰² As at Herodotos 2.173.2. Mastronarde 2010: 162, 170, 178 uses the term νουθετέω to describe a common mode of addressing the gods in Euripides, referring to *nouthetic prayers* as those that betray mortal characters' desperation through harsh criticism of the gods in the form of prayer or direct address.

prevalence of epithets or identifying phrases in the foundation of Iris and Lyssa's roles in the divine schema of the play (822-824, 834, 843-844), the fact that Iris' identification of Hera as Zeus' wife is the first and only such title used to describe Hera highlights its importance as a central, identifying trait. The allusion itself seems not only to lay claim to Hera's relationship with Zeus as a central factor of her identity, a large portion of her *τίμαι*; it also forms in large part the basis of her power, and the necessity of the completion of her will. The irony is found in conjunction with Iris' description of Herakles as the "rumored" son of Zeus and Alkmene (826), and her passing reference to Zeus "the father" in describing his protection of Herakles during the labors (828); thus the reference to Hera as the "wife of Zeus" not only names the traditional cause for her animosity against Herakles and the reason for her persecution of him, but also suggests the opposing will of Zeus to Hera's intentions as voiced by Iris.¹⁰³ In the next lines, Lyssa drops all pretense of resistance directly following Iris' invocation of Hera as the wife of Zeus. In this way, Hera's relationship to Zeus is established as an essential aspect of her identity, if not the ostensible source of her power and a major reason for Lyssa's acquiescence.

Iris builds on the ironic tone of the title she gives Hera with the terms of her direct response to Lyssa's objections. Here, instead of attacking the logic of Lyssa's argument, appealing rhetorically to likelihood, or undermining the reasoning or moral authority behind Lyssa's defense of Herakles, as might be expected in a typical tragic *agon*, Iris admits that Lyssa is being sane and sound minded by ironically noting that Hera did not send her for that purpose (*σωφρονεῖν*, 857). Perhaps most telling is Iris'

¹⁰³ Homer refers to Hera's animosity against Herakles, when Zeus recalls his punishment of his wife for her bad treatment of Herakles: Zeus hung her from the sky, an anvil hanging from each of her feet fastened by golden chains (*Iliad* XV.14-29).

concession that of the three goddesses involved in the scene, Lyssa is the sane one, an incongruous trait in a divine personification of madness sent for the sole purpose of causing mayhem and confusion. The verb Iris uses to describe Hera (ἔπεμψε, “she sent,” 857) further develops Hera’s role as the cause and motivating force of Iris and Lyssa’s appearance; yet this time her action is not an ongoing act of will in the present tense as before (θέλω, 831), but a simple action in the past, as indicated by the aorist tense. As the act of having sent Lyssa to possess Herakles, the past tense verb comprises an essential act of will.

When Iris appeals to Hera’s power, and the purpose of Lyssa’s presence in Thebes, Lyssa abandons her resistance to Hera’s will. But first she swears an oath, the terms of which further accentuate the contradictions of her character, as does the fierceness and alacrity with which she turns toward the task she has been assigned:

Ἥλιον μαρτυρόμεσθα δρῶσ' ἃ δρᾶν οὐ βούλομαι.
 εἰ δὲ δὴ μ' Ἥραι θ' ὑπουργεῖν σοί τ' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει,
 εἴμι γ' οὔτε πόντος οὔτω κύμασι στένων λάβρος
 οὔτε γῆς σεισμὸς κεραυνοῦ τ' οἴστρος ὠδῖνας πνέων
 οἷ' ἐγὼ στάδια δραμοῦμαι στέρνων εἰς Ἡρακλέους·

I call Helios to bear witness that I do not wish to do the things I am doing.
 But if indeed it is necessary to Hera and to you that I undertake these things,
 then I will go. And neither the sea, fierce moaning with its waves,
 nor the quake of the earth and the goad of the thunderbolt breathe pains
 such as the race I will run in the breast of Herakles.

(H.F. 858-862)

Lyssa reiterates her unwillingness one last time in highly formal language, referring to herself in the plural and using the definitive vocabulary for oaths sworn to the gods in Euripides (μαρτυρόμεσθα, “we swear,” 858).¹⁰⁴ The contradictions of Lyssa’s character

¹⁰⁴ As at Eur. *Hipp.* 145 (Ἄρτεμιν), *Phoen.* 626 (γαῖαν καὶ θεούς), *Med.* 619 (δαίμονας), etc.

have already been established by the dissonance of her monstrous form and her distinctly empathetic defense of Herakles, and further emphasized by the rebuttal of Lyssa's wish to advise of Hera's designs, described specifically by Iris as paradoxically sane. Once again such contradictions are apparent in the language of her oath, and her choice to swear by the sun specifically, given her explicit connection to night and, by extension, darkness.¹⁰⁵ This duality is perhaps most noticeable, however, in the suddenness with which Lyssa exchanges her distinctly empathetic and rational tone for the shockingly brutal savagery of what comes next.

Speech and Acts: Violence & The Movement From Constraint to Action

As Lyssa swears her oath, she restates and emphasizes the role of Hera and Iris in constraining her to act, although, as was the case with Phaidra's capitulation to the Nurse's oath, she seems to abandon her resistance all too easily. As she ends her resistance, every hint of her prior empathy completely vanishes, a fact that once again reveals her ambivalence, as she swiftly transitions with utter abandon to a description of the fearsome violence she is about to perform on Herakles. The shift inscribed in the tone of her narrative is sudden and coincides with a greater shift in her position and role in the tragedy. As the focus of the scene moves away from Hera and Iris' will and their coercion of Lyssa, and toward the possession of Herakles, Lyssa's will and control over Herakles and his actions becomes the central defining action of the narrative. In

¹⁰⁵ Barlow 1981: 162 argues that Lyssa's invocation of the sun shows her dedication and orientation to the light and good, as opposed to the dark and badness or evil. This assessment is, while perhaps simplistic, not incorrect given the connection of Lyssa's descent from Nux with other monstrous aspects of her nature.

relation to Hera and Iris, Lyssa is a secondary god, acting in response to Hera's motive force and power. When viewed in relation to Herakles, on the other hand, it is her control and will over Herakles that defines what occurs next, and she steps into a primary role. This becomes more apparent as she continues:

καὶ καταρρήξω μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐπεμβάλῳ,
τέκν' ἀποκτείνασα πρῶτον· ὁ δὲ κανὼν οὐκ εἴσεται
παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτ' ἐναίρων, πρὶν ἂν ἐμὰς λύσσας ἀφῆ.
ἦν ἰδού· καὶ δὴ τινάσσει κρᾶτα βαλβίδων ἄπο
καὶ διαστρόφους ἐλίσσει σῖγα γοργωποὺς κόρας.
ἀμπνοὰς δ' οὐ σωφρονίζει, ταῦρος ὡς ἐς ἐμβολήν
† δεινός· μυκάται † δέ Κῆρας ἀνακαλῶν τὰς Ταρτάρου.
τάχα σ' ἐγὼ μᾶλλον χορεύσω καὶ καταυλήσω φόβῳ.

And I will dash his roof to pieces and hurl upon the house,
having first killed his children; the killer will not know
it is the children he begot that he is killing, until he is freed from my madness.
Now look! Indeed at the starting line he shakes his head,
and rolls in silence fierce eyes all twisted up.
His breath is uncontrolled, like a bull in full charge;
he bellows, calling up the goddesses of doom from Tartaros.
Straightway I will dance you around even more, with fear, I will play you as a
flute.

(H.F. 864-872)

Lyssa begins by unfolding, in the future active tense, what will happen once Herakles is under her influence. At first she describes her actions, saying that she will dash his roof to pieces and hurl upon the house (864). The syntax of the following verse, however, begins to blur the line between Lyssa and Herakles, as she first describes herself as killing the children (ἀποκτείνασα, 864) with an aorist participle that cannot refer to Herakles due to its gender. But directly afterward she names Herakles as the killer with a masculine participle in the present tense (ὁ κανὼν, "the man killing/the killer") in the same line as the participle describing her as the one doing the killing. The effect conflates their respective roles in the murder of the children, but defines the ultimate

difference between them as one of knowledge, as Herakles is distinctly identified as the one who will not know (οὐκ εἴσεται, 864) who he is killing.

Having described what Herakles will do under her influence, Lyssa then goes back to the earliest stages of her effect, and recounts in detail Herakles' bodily sensations as she possesses him in real time, as evinced by her use of verbs in the present indicative. Note that in the *Hippolytos*, the play's definitive tragic event, the destruction of Hippolytos, reaches its conclusion through a series of increasingly explicit speech acts. While this process begins with Phaidra's spoken revelation of her *eros*, the final and most explicit speech acts involved in the death of Hippolytos are two: first, Poseidon's promise that he will perform Theseus' prayers, and second, the prayer of Theseus, which is performed on stage and has a definite perlocutionary force in requiring Poseidon to send the bull from the sea. In this play, however, the relationship between the words of Lyssa and her demonstrable physical effect remains ambiguous. The central question regarding whether Lyssa's speech describes the effect of her possession of Herakles, and is thus a conative speech act, or whether the utterance itself comprises Lyssa's performance of the act, and is thus a performative speech act, is essentially unanswerable.¹⁰⁶

I would argue that this arrangement emphasizes the direct physicality of the relationship between Lyssa and Herakles, which is supported by the pronounced bodily element in Lyssa's description of her possession of him. Given the narrative circumstances of the scene, the vocalization of the event is an inextricable aspect of the presentation of Lyssa's possession of Herakles, and the expression of the ambiguously

¹⁰⁶ See Austin 1962: 1-25. In Austin's theory, conative speech describes an action, while performative speech either explicitly or implicitly comprises the performance of an action.

mental or physical activity of possession coincides with its performance. Thus, Lyssa's description should be seen as an inseparable aspect of her act of possession, and Herakles' actions under her thrall as a type of perlocutive effect. Lyssa's description of the inception of Herakles' madness is markedly physical, and resides singularly in his body and bodily sensations, and has as a result been often interpreted as a largely clinical description intimating the pathology of a variety of specific disorders.¹⁰⁷ As Lyssa's description proceeds the terms become increasingly bestial, as if Herakles were reduced to his lower animal functions, while the higher functions of thought and will are taken over by Lyssa. He shakes his head and rolls his eyes (867-868), definite signs of madness elsewhere in Euripides.¹⁰⁸ Papadopoulou also notes the inclusion of silence, foaming at the mouth, and the rolling of the eyes in the other Euripidean scenes depicting madness, as well as a medical treatise by Hippocrates.¹⁰⁹ Vasquez notes the commonality of irregular breathing in depictions of madness in tragedy.¹¹⁰ The bull simile (869) completes the image of Herakles' reduction to base, animal functions, but also describes a fitting combination of physical exertion: he breathes like a bull at full charge. The cumulative effect is one of intense physicality centering on Herakles' body, and especially its functions, abilities, and sensations. This physicality is emphasized through the continued progressive reiteration of the murder of Herakles' children, which is experienced and then re-lived three times after the Iris/Lyssa scene: first, as the chorus experiences the events from outside the house and express their extreme duress and despair at the horror of it (875-921); then, as a Messenger comes out of the

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the typology of Herakles' madness as a tragic trope, see Papadopoulou 2005: 58-70.

¹⁰⁸ For a full list see Papadopoulou 2005: 63.

¹⁰⁹ Papadopoulou 2005: 64.

¹¹⁰ Vasquez 1972: 218.

house and describes what has happened to the chorus (922-1015), in a speech nearly unrivalled in terms of its abject brutality and graphic description of the children's murder. Finally, after a brief lament by the chorus, first Amphitryon, and shortly thereafter an unconscious Herakles tied to a pillar and surrounded by his dead children, enter the scene. Herakles returns to consciousness in utter confusion and has no idea of what has occurred, and the events are then recounted again, for the last time, to Herakles.

Music, Dance and the Performance of Control

Once Lyssa has described her effect on Herakles in vivid physical terms, she then turns to metaphorical language to describe her control over him. She says that she will play him like a flute, again vividly employing a verb in the future active indicative. The metaphor is multivalent, and Bond rightly notes Lyssa's appropriation of a verb whose associations with pleasant experiences (*καταυλέω*, "to accompany/play on the *aulos*," 872), are placed in apposition with the sensation of panic or fear (*φόβω*, 872).¹¹¹ The verb is used transitively, implicitly relegating Herakles to the position of an instrument (the *aulos*) or that of a song itself, an image conflated with the violence to come. That Lyssa's metaphor of fluting describes possession and control transitively, and that Herakles should be objectively interpreted as the song or the instrument, is further established by Lyssa's use of another verb evocative of music and performance, more specifically of dancing. However, the attribution of the second person personal

¹¹¹ Bond 1981: 271.

pronoun σε (you, acc.sing., 872) is ambiguous, and could refer to Iris,¹¹² or Herakles, whom she has been describing in the third person up to this point.¹¹³ If it is in reference to Herakles, she says that she will make him dance (σ' ἐγὼ χορεύσω, lit. I will dance you 872), and the rare use of personal pronouns (ἐγὼ, σε) stresses her subjectivity and his role as the transitive object. If she is addressing Iris, whom she will address directly in the next line, then the metaphor would denote a musical accompaniment of Iris' "dance" up to Olympos, inserting a disturbing image of levity and pleasure to the heaviness and violence of the scene. Given the interpretive options provided by the ambiguity of σε, the multivalence of Lyssa's metaphor of song and dance nonetheless imparts a potent image of control, and a discontinuity between the positive connotations of music and musical accompaniment, and violence.

The use of vivid and sensuous references to music, piping, and dancing to describe Lyssa's control over Herakles is taken up by the chorus, in their lament of what they now know is about to happen, directly after the Iris and Lyssa depart:

ὄτοτοτοῖ, στέναξον· ἀποκείρεται
 σὸν ἄνθος πόλεος, ὁ Διὸς ἔκγονος,
 μέλεος Ἑλλάς, ἃ τὸν εὐεργέταν
 ἀποβαλεῖς ὀλεῖς μανιάσιν λύσσαῖς
 χορευθέντ' ἐναύλοις.

Alas! Lament! He is cut down,
 the flower of your city, the son of Zeus,
 it is you, unhappy Greece, who cast aside, will lose
 your benefactor, having been driven to dancing
 by the raving madnesses piped on the flute.

(H.F. 875-879)

¹¹² As might be indicated when Lyssa uses terminology evocative of dance when she exhorts Iris to leave to Olympos, “στεῖχ' ἐς Οὐλύμπων πεδαίρουσ', Ἴρι, γενναῖον πόδα· Go to Olympos, Iris, lifting a noble foot”, (873).

¹¹³ Bond 1981: 177, 287 interprets the σε to mean Herakles, citing a similar occurrence of apostrophe in reference to Herakles by the chorus at 434, and at *Hipp.* 1131, *Alk.* 983, et al.

The chorus' first lines emphasize Herakles' helplessness and passivity by describing him with the same verb used by Lyssa (χορεύω), this time in the aorist passive (χορευθέντ' "having been danced, driven to dancing," 878). Their concern is for Herakles, and as they praise him as the flower of Greece, they frame the event specifically as his destruction, rather than that of his family. The chorus' use of the word λύσσα in the plural ("madnesses," 878) once again draws a specific connection between madness and the transitive, causal concept of the verb χορεύω specifically associated with the flute earlier (872). Here the plural is either poetic or denotes iterative waves of madness or a qualitative intensity of the madness felt by Herakles, but the term itself should not be completely separated from Lyssa and her own reference to dancing and the flute only seven short lines earlier. When taken together, as they be should given their close proximity and the placement of a form of the word *lyssa* in subjective and objective positions, the language of both statements evokes the something akin to a Greek internal accusative. The feel is that of Lyssa, as madness personified, is piping madnesses or a song of madness, the song that sets Herakles to dancing against his will.

A few lines later the chorus, upon hearing Amphitryon's shouts of terror from within the house, first proclaim the beginning of the dance (κατάρχεται χορεύματ', "the dances begin," 889), and then liken the scene to a Bacchic revel (890).¹¹⁴ Shortly afterward they respond to Amphitryon's shouts again, calling the sound a deadly or terrible song, and directly invoking Lyssa:

δαίον τόδε
δαίον μέλος ἔπαυλεῖται.

¹¹⁴ Foley 1985: 147 labels Herakles' perverted sacrifice, "a terrifying unmusical song or Dionysiac ritual."

κυναγετεῖ τέκνων διωγμόν· οὔ ποτ' ἄκραντα δόμοισι
Λύσσα βακχεύσει.

Deadly this is,
a deadly song piped on the flute.
He pursues a quarry of children; and not in vain
will Lyssa revel in the house.

(H.F. 894-897)

As Amphytrion literally sings or shouts out, the chorus responds by calling it a μέλος (“song”), as they earlier referred to Lykos’ shouts heard from within the house (μέλος φίλιον, “a kind or friendly song,” 751-752).¹¹⁵ However, in the chorus’ direct reiteration of Lyssa’s flute imagery, the significance of the term μέλος deepens, and conjures the dynamic of control inscribed in Lyssa’s earlier language. The next verb (κυναγετεῖ, “he/she hunts,” 896) has no explicitly stated subject, and has been translated above as referring to Herakles; yet given the prevalent slippage already seen between the actions of Lyssa and Herakles, the ambiguity further confuses the attribution of violent action. The chorus’ response ends by explicitly describing Lyssa as performing an action that recalls dance in a Dionysian ritual context (βακχεύω, “revel in a Bacchic fashion,” 897).¹¹⁶ Thus, the language of the play resorts to images of song, music and dance to envision the relationship of control between Lyssa and Herakles. The prevalence of references to music and the *aulos* in particular, a double reeded flute which was the primary mode of musical accompaniment in tragedy, gives a rare glimpse into the scene’s extra textual performative context, leaving little doubt that

¹¹⁵ As Barlow 1996: 164, and Bond 1981: 296-299 note, based on metrical evidence, in both cases the characters probably did sing out; moreover, the murder of Herakles’ children was most likely accompanied by *aulos* music, a fact which gives the metaphorical language, and its description of the connection between Lyssa and Herakles, yet another dimension.

¹¹⁶ Foley 1985: 154-155 uses this passage as an example of ritual language to support her designation of a ritual crisis in direct connection to the play’s depiction of violence.

aulos music would have been an integral part of the scene.¹¹⁷ Given the complex significance of the musical metaphors we have just discussed, the scene's musical dimension would have no doubt greatly accentuated its violent pathos, especially as it relates to the connection between Lyssa and Herakles.¹¹⁸

Departures

After Lyssa finishes the description of her effect on Herakles and the actions he will perform under her influence, she and Iris depart. However, the spatial relationship between the two goddesses, as inscribed in their parting and articulated by Lyssa, subtly reiterates the scene's earlier emphasis on the birth and position of each respective goddess:

στεῖχ' ἔς Οὐλύμπον πεδαίρουσ', Ἴρι, γενναῖον πόδα·
ἔς δόμουσ δ' ἡμεῖσ ἄφαντοῖ δυσόμεσθ' Ἡρακλέουσ.

Go, Iris, to Olympus, lift your noble foot.
I will sink unseen into the halls of Herakles.

(H.F. 873-874)

Lyssa first exhorts Iris to return to Olympus, describing a movement, presumably upward, connected to her nobility (γενναῖον πόδα, lift a noble foot, 873). Lyssa then says that she herself will move down from her elevated position on the crane or *theologeion* (δύω, “to sink, set down,” 874), into the house of Herakles as he performs the actions she has already described. Lyssa's movement downward into the house, a

¹¹⁷ For the literary and pictographic sources see Csapo and Slater 1994: 332, 335-336, and Plates 1A, 1B, 5, 8; see also Taplin 1993: 7-78 for a discussion of the depictions of flute players on vases paintings, and Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 156-157, 257-262, for a concise survey of music and musical accompaniment in Tragedy.

¹¹⁸ Bond 1981: 299 postulates at the very least that the *aulos* would have accompanied lines 875-879, in addition to noting the shift in meter upon the exit of Iris and Lyssa at 875.

structure strongly identified with Herakles himself in the play,¹¹⁹ and her implied presence there during the killings themselves, further strengthens her close connection to Herakles and his actions. Lyssa then says that while in the house she will be ἄφαντοι (“unseen,” 874), and, sure enough, neither the Messenger nor Amphitryon relates a hint or suspicion of her presence in their eyewitness accounts of the scene. But what does her invisibility mean? Herakles, who is inside the house performing a purification ritual when the scene begins, is not visible to Lyssa during her description of her effect on him, a fact which strongly suggests the connection between them as Lyssa possesses him, even to the point where she feels what he feels and is able to describe it.

I would argue that Lyssa’s movement into Herakles’ house, and her effectively intangible presence suggests their merging or shared experience, which was first evident in Lyssa’s knowledge and description of him. Further, this connection strongly emphasizes the similarities between their respective characters and positions. Like Herakles, Lyssa possesses extraordinary power that is exploited to cause great harm and suffering. She describes her effect on Herakles through his experiences and sensations, and both characters are unwilling perpetrators of terrible acts of violence. These shared experiences help to establish Lyssa’s singularly empathetic relationship with Herakles.¹²⁰ This empathy accentuates a compelling feature of each character,

¹¹⁹ Papadopoulou 2005: 78-80; and Foley 1985: 188-190 both identify a domestic or family oriented Herakles as one of the central aspects of his ambivalent character, in such a schema the destruction of the house of Herakles itself represents the destruction of that aspect of his character. Rehm 2002: 108 details the use of architectural metaphor to figuratively represent Herakles’ destruction, and the single broken pillar, to which he is tied as he emerges from inside the house, as a symbol of the his destruction.

¹²⁰ The importance of this empathy is perhaps best expressed by Lefkowitz 1989: 78, where she cites the inability of the gods in Euripides’ plays to comprehend and feel compassion toward human suffering as a source of ancient and modern suspicions of Euripides’ atheism and impiety. For Lefkowitz, then, it is a lack of empathy that typifies the dichotomy between gods and men in Euripidean drama.

which is exemplified by their status as the unwilling purveyors of extreme brutality against those weaker than they are, and, as we have seen, by the unique contradictions and ambivalences of their characters.

Conclusion

The murder of Herakles' children is an intensely active and physical event, in which certain aspects of Herakles' heroic personage, especially his immense strength and capacity for violence, play an essential role in the realization of his tragedy. Here, the hero performs a distinctly transitive, physical act of violence, and renders himself tragic through the emotional pain of what he has done. Just as the tragedy is marked by a pronounced bodily element, as is fitting for the robust physical character of Herakles, so too is the nature of Herakles' alleged offenses against the gods Iris pronounces them (841-842), since they are rooted in his extreme accomplishments and feats of strength. Beyond the alleged criminality of Herakles' excessive greatness, said by Iris to pose a threat to the power and stature of all gods, the other cause of Herakles' offensiveness to Hera, Zeus' illicit love affair with Alkmene and paternal link to Herakles, also resides conspicuously in Herakles' physical body. As such, it fits nicely into the salient dialectic between presence and absence, which informs the constant comparison of divine and mortal bodies, sex, and fatherhood throughout the first half of the play.

It is into this physical tableau that the schema of divine appearance of the play occurs. Here, the theme of presence and absence constructs and informs the complex relationships between the goddesses involved in Herakles' tragedy, and with Herakles himself. In the Iris/Lyssa scene, there is a distinct hierarchy in which an agent's level of

power is inversely proportionate to the character's level of presence or interaction with the physical world. Hera clearly possesses the ultimate power of determination and will, though she has no physical presence in the play whatsoever and performs no immediately tangible action. Iris appears as the voice and physical embodiment of Hera's will, but her level of materiality is limited to speech. Of the three divinities, Lyssa's interaction with and influence over the physical world – through her possession of Herakles – is unmistakably the most direct, though she has clearly been constrained to act against her will. Lyssa's combination of empathy, unwillingness and powerlessness, when taken with her unique power and ability to perform violence, clearly draws a remarkable connection between Lyssa and Herakles, and they inhabit a remarkably similar position. Both are endowed with a great power to act that is used against their own will, with devastating consequences.

Conclusions and Avenues for Future Work

We have seen how the appearance of divine characters and their function as the motive force of human suffering, whether direct or indirect, make it possible to trace intra-textual, causal relationships between different characters through the examination of divine will and identity, especially through the performance of language. One crucial aspect of this analysis is the concept of perlocution, or the effect of an utterance and its ability to elicit or cause other actions, and thus have real world consequences. In fact, J.L. Austin's speech act theory has provided the means throughout this project to explore words or utterances that comprise a complete action in and of themselves. Plus, the theory by extension asserts more generally the way that words and language can have real world effects and consequences. While Aphrodite's speech in the *Hippolytos* is highly focused on the importance of speech and its perlocutive effects in causing and motivating actions by both mortals and immortals alike, we examined how her declarations of will and identity themselves have a perlocutive effect in inciting further and increasingly explicit speech acts as the play's other characters perform her will and ultimately reassert her identity.

By using J.L. Austin's speech act theory, we can begin to mark the division between speech acts and conative speech that describes everyday physical actions. While this is a division between different types of language, the theory also implicitly delineates the division between different types of action: the speech act and the physical act, and the larger division between the mind and the body. Armed with these

terms, it becomes possible to examine the ever-changing and permeable boundaries in tragedy's mimetic narrative between speech and the body, and language and action, divisions that are never complete, and often ambiguous. Aphrodite's will and the manner of its realization in the *Hippolytos* are highly concentrated on the importance of speech, and highlight the operation of speech as a type of action. However, the thematic importance of physical action and the body in the *Herakles* points to the expressivity of the body and bodily action. Herakles' performance of the labors, the physical movements of his body, and his body's semi-divine nature as an embodiment of Zeus' infidelity, all "speak" and have a type of perlocutive effect similar to Hippolytos' speech in the motivation of divine revenge, and the manner that Phaidra's body speaks and bears witness to Hippolytos' guilt. Thus, in the current project and its various conclusions lie the foundational elements for examining not only the ability of speech in tragedy to comprise a complete action, but also the body and its expressivity, and the different ways that the body itself can speak and motivate actions, such as acts of description or revenge. An examination of bodies as such in tragedy, whether they appear directly or in descriptive speech (direct or indirect bodies, to borrow from the language of our grammar books, in a similar delineation between direct and indirect discourse), would be a natural extension of this project.

In keeping with the current project's interest in the interplay between speech and the body in the formation and performance of identity, an examination of direct or indirect bodies in tragedy would also point to an investigation of the description of certain actions as a type of speech act which itself constructs and informs the identity of the speaker. This would be especially fruitful in the analysis of the messenger

speech, which describes crucial actions central to the development of a play's plot, not only rendering indirect bodies and essential actions in speech, but also drawing narrative authority from the identity of the speaker as an objective observer through his identification with the act of description itself, or to the extent that the messenger should be said to be unreliable through an apparent lack of such objectivity by having a recognizable identity beyond the act of description.

The connection between speech and the body in the presentation of identity also raises a number of questions regarding the chorus and its role in tragic narrative. While the current project is highly invested in tracing causal relationships between individuals, as well as the performance and construction of individual identity, precisely how the chorus performs a more generalized, collective identity through speech, and especially through commentary and the presentation of mythological exempla, has yet to be answered. However, the analytical tools and conclusions of the current project may very well prove useful in the examination of the chorus, especially with regard to questions as to the dramaturgical expediencies and implications in the representation of a certain group or subsection of society in the person of the chorus, how the sometimes seemingly disjunctive allusions of the chorus might be integrated into and inform the plot of a play, and how the chorus represents the relationship of the individual to the community. Beyond such issues of identity, the current work also points to the chorus' role in referencing and raising awareness of the play's performance context through the performance of song and dance, a role which is at times integrated to other aspects of a play's narrative, as is evident is the use references to the performance of music and dance that describe both the violent act

and Lyssa's possession of Herakles in Euripides' *Herakles*. Choral self-referentiality and a play's awareness of its ritual context, as well as the how the specific vocabulary used by the chorus and others to connect different actions and contexts as distinctly performative and performance related, will be especially fruitful as a springboard to future examination and inquiry.

My analysis is based on the connection between the *Hippolytos* and the *Herakles* as a specific subset of tragedy I have defined as the madness play. My exploration of issues of motivation and intention, as they are externalized and made problematic through the trope of madness, lends itself to future study in several ways, especially as it begs comparison to other plays and types of plays. The first, and most obvious extension the current project would be to further explore issues of madness, and divine appearance and character types, such as in Euripides' *Bacchae* as a play containing explicit divine appearance and a high level of control exhibited by a god over mortals. In addition, a comparison to other plays such as Euripides' *Medea*, which implicitly contains similar attributes of madness and divine control but without any explicit divine appearance, might do much to inform the operation of a god's explicit appearance, and the resultant ability to draw connections, causal or otherwise, between explicit bodies on the stage. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore whether my categorization of divine character types would apply to other types of plays involving divine appearances. Of course, in plays lacking the elements of divine determination and control over mortals which define the madness play, the distinction between primary and secondary gods would be based more on issues of divine identity than of will, and a primary god would most likely be the one for whom the play's action

is steeped in questions of identity, motivation, issues of presence/absence, and criticism on the part of mortal characters.

In conclusion, the current project establishes a certain vocabulary, a way of defining, however imperfectly, the interplay between speech and the body in the performance of identity. Furthermore, it provides a method for establishing and tracing the intra-textual, causal relationships between the bodies that appear throughout a play, by examining the structure and language of a particular drama, in way that points a greater exploration of issues of motivation and intention in Attic tragedy more generally. While this analysis has shown how divine appearance, and the presentation of divine will, identity, and offense, serve to motivate and inscribe mortal actions and suffering, such examinations also have larger implications in the future study of ancient drama, and should be pursued in the ways outlined above, and however else this conclusion may have failed to recognize.

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