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HIPPOLYTUS' NEGLECT OF *EROS*: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EURIPIDES' DRAMA AND SARAH KANE'S *PHAEDRA'S LOVE*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1996, the Gate Theatre in London staged *Phaedra's Love* by Sarah Kane who – after the production of her controversial *Blasted* – had been attracting the attention of the British media.[1] *Phaedra's Love* draws on the general motif of Potiphar's wife (see *Genesis* 39: 6–20, where an older woman fails to seduce a younger man and then accuses him of attempted rape),[2] and more specifically on the theme as it is expressed in the Greek myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus,[3] presenting the former's illicit erotic passion for her stepson and his subsequent dismissal of it. Nonetheless, the playwright herself has stated that it was never her intention to follow any classical model closely:

> It was the Gate which suggested something Greek or Roman, but I've always *hated* those plays. Everything happens off stage, and what's the point? […] I read (Seneca's) *Phaedra*. I read Euripides *after* I've written *Phaedra's Love*. […] Also, I read Seneca once. I didn't want to get too much into it [my emphasis].
>
> (Kane's interview with Nils Tabert, Saunders 2009: 67)

Consequently, Kane's words have determined the course of subsequent scholarship to a considerable degree. Her insistence that *Hippolytus* exerted no influence on *Phaedra's Love* has led most scholars to discuss the relationship between the Senecan drama and its modern adaptation.[4]

Be that as it may, there are some striking thematic and structural similarities between *Hippolytus* and *Phaedra's Love*,[5] which – despite what Kane said in the above interview – simply cannot be ignored.[6] First, in Kane's version, after being rejected by her stepson[7] Phaedra hangs herself offstage (5:85), exactly as in Euripides (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 776–779).[8] In Seneca, she stabs herself on stage (Seneca, *Phaedra* 1199–1200). Second, in the English drama Phaedra dies in the first half of the play (5:84), before Hippolytus' frightful death (8:97).[9] Euripides presents us with exactly the same sequence of events,[10] while in Seneca the heroine dies *after* Hippolytus at the very end of the play (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1199–200). Furthermore, we cannot fail but notice that in Kane's text Phaedra accuses Hippolytus of raping her through a letter (5:85), just as her Greek counterpart had done (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 856–65). However, Seneca's Phaedra denounces Hippolytus on stage and in person (Seneca, *Phaedra* 881–903). Finally, in both Euripides and Kane it is the queen herself who charges Hippolytus with rape (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 682–723; Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 5:81). Conversely, in Seneca the nurse pulls the strings.[11] She is the one who begins to publicly vilify him (Seneca, *Phaedra* 719–35), after Phaedra's passionate revelation and Hippolytus' enraged tirade and hasty departure from the stage (Seneca, *Phaedra* 713–8).

All of the above elements indicate that at some point Kane must have come into contact with Euripides' text[12] – *either* during her readings as an undergraduate student in drama at Bristol University and a postgraduate student in playwriting at the University of Birmingham,[13] *or* as a theatregoer. Therefore, a comparative analysis of Kane and Euripides may not be as unwarranted as it may initially seem.[14]

In this paper, I shall argue that the interplay between these two dramas is much more significant than scholars have conventionally acknowledged. I will focus in particular on Hippolytus' idiosyncratic attitude towards erotic love in both Euripides and Kane. I will explore how Kane approaches this central issue in her drama, while simultaneously analysing whether she does in fact achieve displacement from the Greek myth – and if so, how great?

In the following two sections I will discuss the representation of *eros* in Euripides and Kane respectively. The final section will be devoted to the conclusions of this examination. Of course, I have no intention of suggesting that Kane has slavishly based her play on Euripides' drama, nor must we disregard the substantial 'contemporary sensibility' (Saunders 2004: 69) that *Phaedra's Love* certainly displays. Rather, I will emphasise that Sarah Kane's play is, in a unique way, not only faithful to the Greek myth, but also to her own modern era.[15]

EURIPIDES' *HIPPOLYTUS*: THE DENIAL OF *EROS* AND MARRIAGE

Hippolytus' denial of *eros* in Euripides – as well as the vexing question of his own culpability in his death – has evoked much scholarly debate. In particular, Barrett (1964), Segal (1965), Bremer (1975), Halleran (1991), Cairns (1997), and most recently Kokkini (2013), among others have claimed that Hippolytus, as a 'problematic character' (Cairns 1997: 53), has at some level provoked his own death.[16] His clear-cut rejection of erotic love and marriage,[17] his dissociation from the societal norms, which is reflected in his unilateral passion for hunting [18] and his disinterest in the political life,[19] along with his claims of singular piety,[20] go against the values of the Greek *polis* and may well have contributed to his nemesis.[21] On the contrary, Kovacs (1980), Segal (1982), Heath (1987) and Davies (2000) have stated that the devout Hippolytus is an innocent victim, who has done nothing to deserve his punishment. [22] The latter argue that Hippolytus' relationship with Artemis and her divine presence at the end of the drama (Euripides' *Hippolytus* 1284–1439) demonstrate that he has been unjustly destroyed by the rage of the rival goddess, Aphrodite. Moreover, Segal maintains that Hippolytus furiously rejects Phaedra's love, because she is, after all, his stepmother (Segal 1982: 5).

As we can see, the issue is rather complex and unilateral statements are in danger of being simplistic. That being said, there are indeed elements in this tragedy, which enable us to claim that Hippolytus' general demeanour, his attitude towards Aphrodite and his *permanent* abstinence from erotic love have possibly been presented by Euripides as odd.[23] Due to limitations of space, I shall focus mainly on the first 120 verses of the tragedy, which opens with a prologue uttered by Aphrodite. Here the goddess of love underlines her determination to punish all mortals who disrespect her:

> But I trip up those who are proud towards me.
>
> (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 6)[24]

Hippolytus is included in this list because:

> He spurns the bed and doesn't touch marriage.
>
> (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 14)

Aphrodite also claims that Hippolytus separates himself from the rest of humanity because of his *unearthly* relationship with Artemis (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 19).

Undoubtedly, Aphrodite is Hippolytus' divine rival in Euripides' drama. So, perhaps, we should not take her spiteful words at face value. Nevertheless, Hippolytus' first appearance on stage verifies the truth of Aphrodite's accusations. After returning from hunting, the young prince dedicates a wreath to Artemis' altar (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 73–83), underlines his privileged and exclusive relationship with her (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 84–6) and wishes to remain celibate forever

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 87). Although this may at first seem to be a self-evident act of reverence, a careful reading of the text reveals that Hippolytus' demeanour may well have been viewed by the audience as questionable or even abnormal.

First, as many studies have shown, Hippolytus' repeated references to the purity of the meadow (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 73-8), from which he has gathered flowers, alludes to a well-known *topos* in Greek literature: the association of meadows with female virginal beauty, which is about to be stolen.[25] However, the case of Hippolytus constitutes a reversal of this normative representation: he is a young celibate man of marriageable age who (despite being sexually attractive and desirable)[26] wishes to abstain from sexual relationships completely (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 86–7). This stance most likely goes against the societal norms of the classical Greek *polis*, since every Athenian citizen was expected (yet, not legally obliged) to get married and become the head of his own individual *oikos*.[27]

Moreover, it is also worth noting that in Greek mythology itself the fear and/or rejection of sex and marriage is, more often than not, associated with the female gender[28] and connected with a profound negativity that marriage was potentially expected to rectify. Examples of this pattern can be seen in the stories of Schoeneus' daughter Atalanta,[29] who was trying to avoid marriage but was tricked by Hippomenes, and of the much-desired (but still unmarried) daughters of king Proetos.[30] According to the version preserved in Bacchylides' eleventh epinician Ode (Bacchylides, 11.40ff. and 82ff),[31] the virginal Proetides boasted that their father's wealth was greater than Hera's (perhaps inside the Argive Heraion while the marriage of Zeus and Hera was being celebrated?)[32] and they were thus afflicted with madness (Bacchylides, 11.43-54). After Proetos' desperate plea (Bacchylides, 11.95-105), Artemis intervened for their sake (Bacchylides, 11.106-7) and, subsequently, their reintegration into the community was achieved *both* by the institution of sacrifices and female choruses in honour of Artemis (Bacchylides, 11.110-11) *and* by their marriage (as Bacchylides most probably suggests with the phrase χοροὺς γυναικῶν, Bacchylides, 11.112).[33]

These myths very likely attest to the fact that: 1) the prolongation of virginal status could prove to be hazardous to women and, therefore, any disturbance of the norm should be resolved through the restoration of the norm itself,[34] and 2) the passage from virginity to adulthood might be presented as painful for maidens, but vital at the same time. Consequently, it could be said that the association of this *male* Euripidean character with permanent virginity and his avoidance of erotic love and marriage may well have been perceived by the Greek audience as an anomaly.[35] Second, it is noteworthy that during his prayer to Artemis the Euripidean Hippolytus considers his piety unique and exclusive of other people:

> …receive a band…from a reverent hand. For I alone of mortals have this privilege: you are my companion and I converse with you.
>
> (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 83–5)[36]

This noticeably exclusive attitude may well have rung a bell for the democratic Athenian audience, whose many religious celebrations and rituals were being gradually both established and regulated by the democratic city-state (Lacey 1968: 65).[37]

As a matter of fact, the dialogue which unfolds between Hippolytus and his attendant shows that the latter believes that Hippolytus' piety is partial (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 88–120).[38] Through his actions, Hippolytus not only rejects the importance of love and of reproduction (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 106, 618–24, 1002) – thus excluding himself from the community and the notions that Aphrodite, as a goddess of love, symbolises and protects[39] – but he also refuses to show the necessary respect to her, a fact underscored by the servant (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 99). When the

servant tries to direct his attention towards this risky behaviour (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 107), the prince answers recklessly:[40]

> And to that Cypris of yours I say good riddance.
>
> (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 113)

Last but not least, we must take into consideration that, as the female Chorus makes thereafter evident (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 161–9), the celibate goddess Artemis is connected to procreation,[41] through the protection that she offers in the act of childbearing.[42] Therefore, the goddess' auspicious participation in the birthing process attests to a certain inclusiveness in her jurisdiction, which Hippolytus' exclusive stance fails to appreciate.[43] Consequently, all of the above elements very likely indicate that Euripides presents Hippolytus' rejection of erotic love and his unilateral dedication to the virgin goddess Artemis as a marginal anomaly.

That being said, it should also be noted that Euripides does not develop Hippolytus as an entirely unsympathetic character. First, his neglect of erotic love is motivated by his positive appreciation of the virginal life of the Greek adolescent (who will, nevertheless, *abandon* this way of life even before reaching adulthood) which is perfectly personified by Artemis (Seaford: 2008, 73-4). Thus, his denial of human *eros* is tightly interwoven with his decision to respect Artemis wholeheartedly, a fact acknowledged by her at the end of the tragedy (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1419).[44] Moreover, the prince's piety is shown to be sincere by the fact that, when he is wrongly blamed by Phaedra's letter (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 885–90), he honours his vow (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 611–2) and does not reveal her falsehood (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1021).[45]

All things considered, it can be argued that Hippolytus' repudiation of erotic love and of the institution of marriage would have provoked a certain uneasiness in the Athenian audience, which, nonetheless, might have also felt sympathy for his appalling (and partially unjust) death.[46]

KANE'S HIPPOLYTUS AND THE ABUSE OF SEX IN *PHAEDRA'S LOVE*

Although Kane's plays are repeatedly being staged in Germany, Greece and other European countries, they have not yet made in into regular theatrical repertoire in Britain (Saunders 2009, xxi). For this reason, I will first outline the plot of *Phaedra's Love* in detail. *Prima facie*, it seems that Kane's universe has nothing to do with the Greek account of the myth. Her play starts with an obese and depressed Hippolytus watching TV in his room at the royal palace and eating a hamburger (Scene One). Much to the spectators' surprise, after a few moments Kane's prince masturbates into his sock, but – as the dramatist informs us – he remains rather disinterested, experiencing no pleasure. The audience's strong premonition that this Hippolytus is *nothing* like the chaste classical prototype is indeed presently confirmed in the next scene, when Phaedra – while discussing with the royal Doctor her stepson's psychological health – notifies him that Hippolytus frequently has sex with random people who visit him at the royal palace (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 2:62). However, during their exchange the Doctor seems to concentrate more on Phaedra's obvious passion for her stepson, which he believes is correlated with Theseus' uninterrupted absence after their wedding day (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 2:63).

In Scene Three Phaedra approaches her daughter Strophe and reveals her overwhelming erotic passion for Hippolytus,[47] which is expressed metaphorically as a strong physical pain:

> A spear in my side, burning.
>
> (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 3:65)

It is thus clear that Kane's Hippolytus, although he has not yet uttered a single word on stage, is the centre of attention. As a matter of fact, one significant trait that seems to be common between

Kane's character and his Euripidean counterpart is their desirability (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 3:66).[48] Without question, Strophe herself (by attaining an advisory role similar to that of the Nurse) admits Hippolytus' huge success in the 'erotic domain', but she tries to dissuade Phaedra from succumbing to this illicit passion.[49]

However, in Kane's postmodern universe adultery is not, in and of itself, something ignominious that *should* be avoided at any cost; this is made clear by Strophe's characteristic advice to her mother to find a lover in order to forget her stepson:

> Why don't you have an affair, get your mind off him.
>
> (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 3:66)

According to Strophe, the most significant concern is that Hippolytus frequently engages in heterosexual and homosexual sex, without developing any emotional devotion, emotional reciprocity or even an indicative respect towards his partners. For Strophe, Hippolytus' emotional detachment from his lovers is unequivocal:

> He's not nice to people when he's slept with them.
>
> (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 3:67)[50]

Up to this point, it seems reasonable to assume that Hippolytus' attitude in the English play is diametrically opposed to that in the Greek (and Latin) text: Euripides' Hippolytus abstains from sex at all costs, while this one endorses it on every occasion (Ward 2013: 235). Nevertheless, it is of great importance to bear in mind that Kane's Hippolytus (just as Euripides' Hippolytus before him) rejects the importance of *eros*;[51] he resorts to cynicism as regards his or other people's emotions (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 3:67, 4:70-3, 4:76.),[52] deprecating both his partners *and* the very act of sex.[53] In other words, it could be argued that Kane's character replicates the problematic attitude of the Euripidean prince by doing exactly the opposite: he completely rejects romantic love and sex through both the excessive *and* reckless use of sex itself.

In fact, Kane's modern audience comes face to face with Hippolytus' denial of romantic love during Scene Four. There, Phaedra, after expressing her strong erotic desire and deep affection for her stepson,[54] performs oral sex on him.[55] During this short sexual act we are informed that 'He watches the screen throughout and eats his sweets' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:76). However, as the physical act of fellatio is completed, Hippolytus repels Phaedra by denigrating their sexual encounter, criticising her performance and informing her that he has already had sex with her daughter Strophe,[56] who has also slept with her husband Theseus:

> Hip. There. Mystery over.
>
> Ph. Will you get jealous?
>
> Hip. Of what?
>
> Ph. When your father comes back.
>
> Hip. What's it got to do with me?
>
> Ph. I've never been unfaithful before.
>
> Hip. That much was obvious.
>
> Ph. I'm sorry.
>
> Hip. I've had worse. (…)
>
> Hip. (Sex) it's boring.

> Ph. You are just like your father.
>
> Hip. That's what your daughter said.
>
> (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:76-9)

Here Kane's statement is poignant:

> …what Hippolytus does to Phaedra is not rape – but the English language doesn't contain the words to describe the emotional decimation he inflicts.
>
> (Saunders 2009: 73)[57]

Indeed, in Scene Five Strophe enters her stepbrother's room and notifies him that Phaedra has committed suicide and has accused him of rape (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 5:81). Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that for Kane both Hippolytus' denial of mutual affection and his cynical view of sex somehow reflect the Euripidean Hippolytus' exclusive stance. In other words, in this case Kane's Phaedra interprets Hippolytus' complete and total indifference (once again) as an unambiguous rejection that provokes both her suicide and her false accusation of rape, which will lead to Hippolytus' death as well. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that this very accusation proves calamitous not only to Hippolytus, but also to all the members of the royal family, since it triggers the violent and public killings of all: in Scene Eight outside the court Theseus (after having returned) unknowingly both rapes and kills Strophe who tries to defend her stepbrother. He also cuts Hippolytus' chest, contributing to his dreadful dismemberment by the angry mob (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 8:95–6).[58] Subsequently, after Theseus realises that he has actually murdered his own stepdaughter, he kills himself. All in all, the brutish neglect of reciprocated emotions has proved catastrophic for Kane's Hippolytus and the other dramatic characters.[59]

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, again, Kane is in agreement with Euripides in presenting her depressed prince with great sympathy. Undoubtedly, Hippolytus' indifferent demeanour and brutal frankness cause a great deal of pain to the people around him. However, the realisation that his obsessive emotional self-protection has arisen from a painful breakup (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:78);[60] his final appreciation of Phaedra's love, which leads him to willingly accept the accusation of rape (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 5:86);[61] and his lack of pretention, which comes in stark contrast to other characters' hypocrisy[62] all make him ultimately sympathetic, or even heroic, in a play where clear-cut judgments cannot be easily articulated.[63]

Indicative of Hippolytus' undeviating dedication to truth is the dialogue which unfolds between him and a Catholic priest in his prison cell (Scene Six). Hippolytus' refusal to confess and thus to be forgiven for Phaedra's death – which derives from his will to live and die in a consistent and honest atheism – is, to say the least, admirable:

> Hip. (Forgiveness) It may be enough for you, but I have no intention of covering my arse. I killed a woman and I will be punished for it by hypocrites, who I shall take down with me.
> Pr. There is a kind of purity in you. (…)
>
> (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 6:91)

After this interchange, the priest spontaneously performs oral sex on Hippolytus (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 6:91), thus voluntarily assigning himself to the list of hypocrites.[64] On the contrary, Hippolytus embraces his culpability for Phaedra's suicide and chooses to die being loyal to his own truth.[65]

To conclude, Kane's depressed protagonist harshly rejects the importance of mutual erotic love, a stance that must have provoked, to some degree, his horrendous death on stage. Be that as it may, Kane, following the logic of the Greek drama, never allows her audience to form simple and

certain judgments; in the English drama Hippolytus' honest and unpretentious behaviour can easily be viewed by modern spectators with sympathy, in a play where the other characters' superficiality, disturbing pretense and political decadence are manifest in various ways.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, in this paper I have discussed the interplay between Kane's *Phaedra's Love* and Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Of course, by no means do I imply that Euripides' tragedy is Kane's one and only influence. Indeed, she has arguably engaged in dialogue with Seneca, Shakespeare, Racine, Brecht and Camus and, consequently, many different contextual readings of her drama are feasible (Saunders 2009: 39).[66] Rather, I hope that I have shown that Kane's dialectical play attests to the transhistorical importance of the Greek myth,[67] whose relevant value is evident in our postmodern world. Just as in Euripides' tragedy Hippolytus' neglect of human love is, at one level, the cause of his destruction, we see that exactly the same occurs in Kane. In the English drama, though, we are witnesses to the negative outcome that an emotionally unreciprocated consummation may bring, as opposed to the choice of permanent celibacy displayed in Euripides (Saunders 2002: 76), a fact that may reflect the different preoccupations of each author's particular society. In other words, in Euripides' era the neglect of *eros* is connected with marriage and thus is closely intertwined with the societal responsibilities of the Athenian citizen. In Kane's postmodern drama the emphasis lays more on the personal experience of the emotion of love and its neglect, which, although presented by Hippolytus as a veiled indifference, can also be seen as a desperate act of self-preservation against the possibility of being hurt once more.

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[1] *Blasted* was produced in 1995, and it presented many extremely violent scenes on stage, such as female rape, male rape, mutilation and cannibalism. Because of its obvious cruelty (and the inability of its first shocked viewers to fully comprehend its metaphorical essence), the play was almost unanimously rejected by critics. For instance, Jack Tinker, a journalist from the *Daily Mail*, entitled his review: 'This Disgusting Feast of Filth' (1995). For a detailed analysis of the initially negative reception of Kane's *Blasted*, see Sierz 2001, 94-100. All the same, in the following years, and after Kane's suicide, many critics changed their minds. The case of Michael Billington is characteristic. He stated: 'I made an idiot out of myself over Sarah Kane's *Blasted*' (quoted by Blankenship 2008).

[2] For the story of Potiphar's wife and its various adaptations in ancient civilizations, see Yohannan (1968: *passim*). Furthermore, for a recent discussion on the Greek myth of Hippolytus and its noticeable similarities with the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, see Karahashi and López-Ruiz (2006). Cf. Seaford (2008: 72). Moreover, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* could possibly be considered dramas based on the motif of Potiphar's wife.

[3] Of course, the *Hippolytus* that survives today is not the only Greek tragedy which dealt with this subject. Cf. Barrett (1964: 10-44); Halleran (1995: 25-37).

[4] Cf. Mayer (2002: 84-7); Harrison (2009: 168-9); Bexley (2011: *passim*); Campbell (2011: 178); Giannopoulou (2011: *passim*); Müller-Wood (2011: 97-103); Urban (2011: 309); Ward (2013: 234-5); Remshardt (2016: 296-8). It is interesting that Remshardt (2016: 297) characterises Kane as a 'Senecan playwright,' even though he admits that 'no scene in *Phaedra's Love* corresponds directly to Seneca's *Phaedra*.' As for journalists, Billington (1996) wrote that Kane was 'nodding in the direction of Euripides *and* Seneca' (my emphasis), without discussing this suggestion thoroughly, while Benedict (1996) claimed that Kane rejected Euripides as a dramatic model.

[5] Some of these similarities have been elaborately discussed by Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 66-7) and Marshall (2011: 167-8).

[6] This argument has also been made by Brusberg-Kiermeier, in connection with this interview (2001: 168): 'This must be a gap in her memory as she clearly knew Euripides' text when she wrote the play. In fact, she changes some aspects of Seneca's plot construction back to how they are in Euripides' play.' However, she did not elaborate this point further. Cf. Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 48). Moreover, Foley (2003: 181) has passingly stated that Kane's play is based *both* on Euripides and Seneca.

[7] The queen experiences Hippolytus' rejection differently in different versions of the drama. In Euripides, Hippolytus learns of Phaedra's erotic passion from the Nurse (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 601-15). He then expresses a tirade against women and furiously leaves the stage (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 616-68). On the contrary, in Kane, Phaedra articulates her emotions to Hippolytus herself and indeed a sexual contact takes place on stage (Scene Four). Nonetheless, as the rest of Kane's drama makes clear, the cruel apathy with which Hippolytus treats Phaedra is interpreted by Phaedra as a clear-cut rejection.

[8] Cf. Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 170); Mayer (2002: 86); Bexley (2011: 373, n. 36).

[9] All three plays present Hippolytus as dismembered in punishment.

[10] Cf. Phaedra's suicide in *Hippolytus* 776-89 and Hippolytus' demise in *Hippolytus* 1236-48.

[11] Cf. Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 167); Frangoulidis (2009: *passim*).

[12] We should bear in mind that, even if Kane did not refer to a theatrical play as one of her influences, it does not necessarily mean that she was not actually influenced by it. See her illuminating remarks concerning *Blasted*: 'I think my influences are quite obvious. Yes, Beckett, of course, but not particularly consciously, because I'm practically unconscious when I write, and I think once you're consciously influenced your voice becomes inauthentic' (Saunders 2009: 46). For *Blasted*, see Saunders (2004: 72): 'In the early stages of writing the play, Kane was unaware of utilizing or reinterpreting material from *King Lear*.'

[13] For more information on Kane's university studies, cf. Sierz (2001: 91-3); Saunders (2009: 8-9). For Kane's knowledge of the conventions of Greek tragedy, cf. Benedict (1996: 6); Stephenson and Langridge (1997: 130).

[14] Of course, one could perhaps argue that a writer can draw ideas from another writer's work without necessarily having read it. For instance, see Halperin's comments (1990: 63) on Dante's *Divine Comedy*: 'Dante, after all, managed to seize upon a set of meanings essential to the *Odyssey* without ever having read it.'

[15] This way of approaching reception in general was suggested by Dr Justine McConnell during the AMPRAW 2016 conference.

[16] Cf. Barrett (1964: 171-3, 403); Segal (1965: 138-9, 147-8, 155-61); Bushala (1969: 28-9); Köhnken (1972: 185-8); Montanari (1973: 45); Bremer (1975: 275-80); Goff (1990: 86-7, 90, 114-5); Halleran (1991: 118-9); Danek (1992: 26-7); Mitchell (1991: 98-9, 105); Halleran (1995: 39); Cairns (1997: *passim*); Zeitlin (1997: *passim*); Seaford (2008: 75-6); Kokkini (2013: *passim*).

[17] See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 14, 106, 616-37, 1004-5, 1140-1. Cf. Bushala (1969: 28-9); Just (1989: 237-8); Halleran (1991: 118-9); Cairns (1997: 65-9); Craik (1998, 34-5); Kokkini (2013: *passim*).

[18] See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 17-8, 109-10. Cf. Segal (1965: 160); Swift (2006: 138); Seaford (2008: 71-4).

[19] See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 986-987, 1014-7. Cf. Barrett (1964: 348); Goff (1990: 116); Seaford (2008: 74-5).

[20] See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 84-6, 995, 1099. Cf. Barrett (1964, 171-3); Köhnken (1972: 184-5); Bremer (1975: 276-7); Goff (1990: 59); Mitchell (1991: 105); Halleran (1995: 39); Cairns (1997: 73); Kokkini (2013: 70-4).

[21] Cf. Goff (1990: 90); Kokkini (2013: 79-81).

[22] Cf. Kovacs (1980: 135-7); Segal (1982: 6); Heath (1987: 84-7); Davies (2000: 66-7). Segal (1982: 5-6) has argued that Hippolytus is morally blameless because he has another 'heroic preoccupation,' that is, athletics.

[23] For the importance of Hippolytus' absolute and immutable virginity that is averse to Athenian customs, cf. Cairns (1997: 57-8); Seaford (2008: 69-70); Kokkini (2013: 68-71). On the contrary, short-term abstinence from sex was often admired:

Do we not know by report about Iccus of Tarentum, because of his contests at Olympia and elsewhere, how, spurred on by ambition and skill, and possessing courage combined with temperance in his soul, during all the period of his training (as the story goes) he never touched a woman, nor yet a boy?

(Plato, *Laws* VIII 839e-40a, transl. Bury).

[24] All translations of this Greek text are Halleran's.

[25] For example, see Euripides, *Ion* 887-90. Cf. Motte (1973: *passim*); Skinner (2005: 49-50). For the abnormal case of Hippolytus, cf. Bremer (1975: 268-74); Halleran (1995: 154); Zeitlin (1996: 235); Cairns (1997: *passim*); Craik (1998: 32-6); Swift (2006: 127-9).

[26] See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1139-1140. Cf. Cairns (1997: 63).

[27] For the moral responsibility of Athenian men to get married, see Lacey (1968: 15, 73). Cf. MacDowell (1986: 86): 'In some ancient states financial or other penalties were imposed on a man who did not marry and have children, but it is not certain that this was ever so in Athens. A few texts say or imply that a man who did not marry could be prosecuted with *graphe*, and the orator Deinarkhos declares that a man without legitimate children was forbidden by the law to be an orator or a strategos.' However, marriage was not perceived by the Athenians exclusively as a civic duty. For the emotional aspect of the Athenian wedding as depicted on vase-paintings, cf. Sutton (1981: 220-1); Redfield (1982: 182); Oakley and Sinos (1993: 43-7); Sutton (1997/1998: 28-9, 41-44); Sutton (2004: *passim*); Stafford (2013: 201-8).

[28] See, for example, Aeschylus, *Suppliants*, Sophocles, *Tereus* fr. 583.3-8 (Radt.) Cf. Jenkins (1983: 142); Seaford (1987: 106); Seaford (1988: 119).

[29] Cf. Seaford (1988: 124-5); Gantz (1993: 335-6); Zeitlin (1996: 278); Seaford (2008: 72). In other sources her husband is called Melanion. See discussion by Clark (2012: 118). For Callisto's similar fate, cf. Seaford (1988: 124); Seaford (2008: 72).

[30] Cf. Hesiod, fr. 129-33 M.-W.; Cantarella (1987: 18); Seaford (1988: *passim*); Dowden (1989: 71-95, especially 75-6, 87-8); Gantz (1993: 313-4); Seaford (1994: 302); Calame (1997: 116-199); Zeitlin (1997: 278); Cairns (2010: 45-6, 113-28, 289-96). For Hippolytus' analogous aversion to marriage, see Seaford (1988: 118-9).

[31] For Bacchylides' brief allusions to myths as 'vignettes', see Cairns (2010: 45-6).

[32] See Calame (1997: 119).

[33] See Cairns (2010: 45-6). Cf. n. 36.

[34] Cf. Cairns (2010: 122-8, 280).

[35] See n. 20. Cf. Cairns (2010: 45-6).

[36] See n. 23. Seaford (2008: 71) builds upon this argument, noting that Theseus calls Hippolytus a vegetarian (953-954) as if 'he belongs to an Orphic sect, which is marginal and esoteric, outside the religion of the city-state.'

[37] Even the secluded rituals of Athenian women were mostly considered an integral part of the official religious celebrations of the *polis*. See Winkler (1990: 194): 'In a sense, the Demetrian feasts were official business of the polis, but carried out with a good deal of practical autonomy by women.' For a detailed analysis of Hippolytus' aristocratic, elitist and almost contemptuous attitude towards the *polloi*, cf. Barrett (1964: 173); Mitchell (1991: 105-6); Cairns (1997: 70-1); Skinner (2005: 136).

[38] See Köhnken (1972: 185, 190) and Montanari (1973: 45).

[39] For Aphrodite's and Eros' omnipotence, see Euripides, *Hippolytus* 525-64, 764-75, 1268-81.

[40] Undoubtedly, all three main characters react recklessly and without compassion towards each other. See Phaedra's precipitous decision to accuse Hippolytus of rape (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 728-31), along with Theseus' impetuous choice to curse his son (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 887-90) and his terse rejection of any augury given by the oracular birds (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1058-1059). Mitchell has well pointed out that 'no character in the play owns a monopoly on anger (1991: 102). See also Köhnken (1972: 187).

[41] Cf. Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusai* 517; Euripides, *Suppliants* 958; Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* 1097; Plato, *Theaetetus* 149b9-10.

[42] We should bear in mind that childbirth was extremely demanding and dangerous for Greek women and, thus, Artemis' favorable contribution was of the utmost significance. For the frequent deaths of young women, as excavations of ancient cemeteries suggest, see Pomeroy (1975: 84). For childbirth as an almost 'mortal peril' and its depiction in Greek iconography, see Demand (2003: *passim*). Medea's exclamation in Euripides' play is characteristic:

I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.

(Euripides, *Medea* 250-1, transl. by Kovacs).

[43] Cf. Segal (1965: 159-61); Zeitlin (1996: 238); Craik (1998: 33); Skinner (2005: 135).

[44] Without doubt, at the end of the tragedy Hippolytus realises the impossibility and the impracticable nature of his choice; Artemis is not a human being, but an immortal goddess who cannot feel the same emotions as he does and cannot even be present at his death. Cf. Taplin (1978: 52). See Hippolytus' resentment after this painful realisation: μακρὰν δὲ λείπεις ῥαιδίως ὁμιλίαν ('Easily you leave a long companionship,' 1441). Cf. Köhnken (1972: 188-9). Besides, the close (erotic) relationship between a mortal man and an immortal goddess rarely ends up well for the part of the male in Greek mythology. Cf. *Homeric Hymn* 5. 189-90. For the unfortunate fates of Tithonos and Endymion, loved by Eos and Selene respectively, see Winkler (1990: 202-5).

[45] See Davies (2000: 65).

[46] My conclusion is similar to Bushala (1969: 28); Mitchell (1991: 99); Cairns (1997: 74-5); Seaford (2008: 76).

[47] Kane has invented Strophe's role in her play.

[48] Hippolytus seems to be fully aware of the fact that he is sexually successful with both men and women. See Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:70: Hip. 'Everyone wants a royal cock, I should know.' Cf. n. 31.

[49] It is made clear throughout that the notion of incest is not applicable, since Hippolytus is not Phaedra's son. Nonetheless, at the end of the play one woman who is part of the crowd that tears Hippolytus apart says: 'Raped his own mother' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 8:93).

[50] Later, Strophe characterises Hippolytus as 'a sexual disaster area' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:69). In fact, in Scene Five, when Strophe informs Hippolytus about Phaedra's suicidal letter, she refers to her own dreadful emotional experience as his lover very negatively: 'There aren't words for what you did to me.'

[51] Cf. Greig (2001: xi); Urban (2001: 69); Saunders (2002: 73-6); Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 56); Biçer (2011: 83); Giannopoulou (2011: 60-1); Müller-Wood (2011: 106); Remshardt (2016: 297).

[52] Cf. Saunders (2002: 73-4); Saunders (2009: 71).

[53] Cf. Greig (2001: xi); Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 56); Bexley (2011: 372); Giannopoulou (2011: 60-1).

[54] This face-to-face disclosure took place in Euripides' *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos* and in Seneca, *Phaedra* 666-71.

[55] This scene seems to beg the following question: does it make a difference that they do not have complete sexual intercourse and that she only performs oral sex on him? To my mind, this element is crucial, because it underscores Phaedra's non-reciprocated love for Hippolytus; his only participation in this sexual act is summarised by his abrupt grasp of Phaedra's head while he ejaculates (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:76). Cf. Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 58); Marshall (2011: 173). For the psychological connotations of oral sex, see Lowinger's comments (1998) concerning the affair between Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky: 'Oral sex avoids pregnancy, so the love, responsibility, bonding and biological imperative of sexual intercourse are denied.'

[56] Hippolytus cynically says to Phaedra concerning Strophe: 'She's less passionate but more practiced. I go for technique every time' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 4:79).

[57] Cf. Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 171); Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 52); Ward (2013: 235-6).

[58] Of course, by choosing to represent extreme violence on stage, Kane generally follows the conventions of Senecan and Shakespearean drama rather than those of Greek tragedy. Cf. Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 57-62); Saunders (2004: *passim*).

[59] The final and emotional reunion of Hippolytus with Theseus, which occurs in both Euripides and Seneca, is totally absent here. See Foley (2003: 188).

[60] See Mayer (2002: 86).

[61] See Sierz (2001: 111): 'Phaedra's suicide and her accusation of rape galvanize him into life – he's suddenly in touch with his emotions.' Cf. Giannopoulou (2011: 65); Müller-Wood (2011: 108).

[62] First and foremost, Theseus can be characterised as a hypocrite because he rapes Strophe in the scene where he attacks Hippolytus for (allegedly) raping Phaedra (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 8:95-96). Cf. Campbell (2011: 182). Equally hypocritical is the behaviour of the (presumably virginal) Catholic priest, who tries to advise Hippolytus to confess his sins, but later performs fellatio on him (6:91). Furthermore, in Scene Eight Kane pinpoints the affectation of the ordinary people, who have brought their kids to witness Hippolytus' horrendous dismemberment and to participate in this atrocity with the excuse that: 'Don't deserve to live. I've got kids' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 8:94). Last but not least, Kane comments upon the corrupted hypocrisy of the executive authorities, when she presents two policemen not intervening as the mob gets out of control by arguing that: 'I've got two daughters' (Kane, *Phaedra's Love* 8:96). Cf. Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 168); Urban (2011: 309-10).

[63] Cf. Urban (2001: 69); Saunders (2002: 25, 69-70); Müller-Wood (2011: 100-1); Remshardt (2016: 297-8).

[64] For Kane's complicated relationship with the Christian faith, see Saunders (2009: 59-60).

[65] Cf. Saunders (2002: 73-4); Saunders (2009: 25); Urban (2011: 309). For the truth as the ultimate purpose of Kane herself, see Stephenson and Langridge (1997: 134): 'My only responsibility as a writer is to the truth, however unpleasant that may be.'

[66] See also Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 165): 'Kane's *Phaedra's Love* can be described as (1) a post-modern re-write (2) in an Elizabethan light (3) of a Roman re-write (4) of a Greek play.'

[67] Cf. Brusberg-Kiermeier (2001: 167); Diamantakou-Agathou (2006: 49); Müller-Wood (2011: 98, 110). For the adjective 'transhistorical' as a term that connotes 'human communalities across history', see Martindale (2013: 173).