

HPAH4005 Cauldron of Democracy and Tragedy: Classical Greek History and Literature

Euripides' 'Hippolytus': Prologue of Aphrodite (Lines 1-57)

Hippolytus, a non-believer in Love, the bastard son of Theseus and Queen of the Amazons Hippolyta, adored by Artemis daughter of Zeus and sister to Apollo¹. The play is set in Trozen, where Hippolytus and Artemis hunt together, and this bond with Artemis, and his blatant disregard in the worship of the goddess Aphrodite becomes the root of Hippolytus' troubles, in Euripides' play, and will ultimately lead to his death².

Aphrodite's monologue begins with how her power stretches from one side of the Greek World to the other. Aphrodite favours those who are devout, and actively seeks to ruin those who are not. The cause of Aphrodite's present frustration, is one man, Hippolytus, who pays Aphrodite no attention or devotion³. Hippolytus actively shuns the goddess Aphrodite, adding to her fury, and so, Aphrodite sets out a plan of revenge⁴. The plan involves Hippolytus' father's wife, Phaedra, on whom Aphrodite inflicts the disease of Love, love for Hippolytus⁵.

It would be easy to use Euripides' Hippolytus, and also his Medea, as his damning view of women scorned, a view of a misogynistic man (Euripides). The devious, conniving nature of women coming to the fore of his plays, Hippolytus and Medea. Evidence for this particular outlook of Euripides' is, perhaps, the destruction of the relationships of those connected with Hippolytus. Aphrodite sees this harming of the innocent as collateral damage and perfectly acceptable as long as she gets her revenge on Hippolytus⁶. There are parallels to be made here with the lengths that Medea is willing to go to punish Jason, by murdering her own children⁷.

However, Man's duty, or oath (to pray and offer sacrifice to the gods), with regards to Aphrodite has been broken by Hippolytus. In religious terms the upholding of oaths is vital, and religion to the Greeks is first and foremost when it comes to everyday life⁸. Rarely, when the gods are slighted, does it end well and neither will it just effect the guilty⁹. With this said, perhaps, Euripides is outlining the dangers of breaking oaths, and religious disobedience rather than his play 'Hippolytus' (and Medea) being a view of women in general.

Word count 402

¹ Kovacs, 1995, p.117; Graves, 2017, p.83-86

² Kovacs, 1995, p.117; Graves, 2017, p.83-86; Halleran, 2004, p. 145

³ Eur. Hip. 1-57

⁴ Eur. Hip. 1-57

⁵ Eur. Hip. 1-57

⁶ Eur. Hip. 1-57

⁷ Eur. Med.

⁸ Burkert, 1987, p.250-254

⁹ Hom. Il. 1.1-25

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Very good.

To improve:

- ① ~~Also~~ read more carefully.
- ② Work more with the text.
- ③ You are doing well to provide your own view, but you must provide evidence to support your views.

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Timeline Additions for 431-421 B.C

3.8-15 Conference at Olympia (Mytilenean speech)¹

Certain Athenian allies are beginning to revolt, for multiple reasons, but mainly due to lack of protection and Athenian tributes required to be paid by Athenian allies and the pressures of providing it². Tributes would be paid in the fashion of ships, men, or in talents of silver, all needed to fund the Athenian war effort. With Athens spending more and more on the war the pressures placed on its allies became ever greater³. One of the Peloponnesian tactics was to strike up new alliances with these defectors and use them in their own war effort with the promise of protection⁴. Others, such as the Mytileneans, needed no persuasion, and beg for a new alliance between themselves and the Lacedaemonians after revolting against the Athenians in 428/7⁵. Ask. ✓

The Mytileneans open their plea, that the changing of sides in such an event is a common occurrence, and with it, the common convention or belief, to those on the outside, that it is a show of weakness and fear on behalf of those defecting. The Mytileneans hold this feeling to be true and just, but plead that in their case it is different and proceed to defend their virtue and their belief in 'justice and honour'⁶. Ref.

Perhaps, showing his Athenian bias and unable to remain objective to a point, Thucydides apportions some of blame in this present proceeding on the Lacedaemonians. Explaining that the sham alliance only came about because of actions taken by the Lacedaemonian withdrawal from the Median War⁷. Thucydides manages to turn the question of virtue and honour, using the mouthpiece of the Mytileneans on to the Lacedaemonians, rather than the Athenian behaviour that follows, although this too is acknowledged. Ref. why not see this as Thuc. identifying how to influence the Lac.?

You are misinterpreting the mouthpiece The relaxation of the Athenian offensive against the Medes, who are trying to 'enslave' the Mytileneans and their allies and with it, in the eyes of the Mytileneans, the whole of Hellas becomes the root of their discontent and distrust in the Athenians⁸. The Mytileneans conclude their speech with the benefits of an alliance. The Mytileneans suggest that it is the 'minor' poleis that enable a great polis to become even greater (an ideological view of Thucydides' perhaps)⁹. They urge for the alliance to be struck and at once to attack Athens, who are on the backfoot because of plague and financial mismanagement¹⁰. I.E. what arguments an orator uses to convince Spartans

¹ Thu. 3.8-15 (S. Lattimore translation 1998)

² Rhodes, 2010, p.97-100

³ Rhodes, 2010, p.102-103

⁴ Rhodes, 2010, p.104

⁵ Thu. 3.8-15 (S. Lattimore translation 1998); Rhodes, 2010, p.114

⁶ Thu. 3.9-10 (S. Lattimore translation 1998)

⁷ Thu. 3.10 (S. Lattimore translation 1998)

⁸ Thu. 3.11-12 (S. Lattimore translation 1998)

⁹ Thu. 3.13 (S. Lattimore translation 1998)

¹⁰ Thu. 3.13 (S. Lattimore translation 1998); Rhodes, 2010, p.97-100

↓
No need for translation
details unless quoting

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Word count 443

Very good.
To improve:

- ① Provide evidence to support your points, not just supposition.
- ② Read more ancient sources.
- ③ Provide references
- ④ Proofread more carefully

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Demosthenes (General) and his portrayal by Thucydides in his 'History of the Peloponnesian War'.

Demosthenes, son of Alcithenes¹, appointed stratēgos in 427/6 BC. Stratēgos is the term for military commander, of both land and sea, was an elected position which with it held political connotations also². However, it is thought that Demosthenes had no designs on a political career³.

It is considered by some scholars that Thucydides is highly critical of Demosthenes in the main⁴. Evidence suggests that his plans were often too elaborate⁵. Misreporting, misrepresentation and heavily fictional accounts/speeches by Thucydides becomes a factor when using Thucydides' work to try and gain a true picture of a certain person involved in the war⁶. This issue with the work of Thucydides obviously leaves it open to interpretation⁷; for example, it is also suggested that he was a masterful tactician⁷. What must be remembered that whatever the outcome of anything from a skirmish to a campaign victory, or defeat, lies, ultimately, at the feet of the general in command. Ask.

The two would have undoubtedly known each other⁸. Thucydides was well aware of the strains that come with command, he himself was a general in this particular war and tasted bitter defeat⁸.

Do not address the reader
If you consider the evidence of one of Demosthenes' speeches, a fictional account, by Thucydides himself, Demosthenes comes across as being in total control, inspirational to his men and standing at the front line with his men, showing great courage⁹. Also, Thucydides uses this particular speech to show the little nuances of Demosthenes' command by adding into the speech details of how Demosthenes and his men will defeat the soon to be landing army of the Lacedaemonians¹⁰. Thucydides also goes on to explain that the Lacedaemonians did just as Demosthenes expected, which I believe is evidence of Thucydides portraying Demosthenes in a favourable light¹¹.

¹ Thu. 3.91

² Rhodes, Ameling and Tinnefeld, 'Strategos', 2006, Brill's New Pauly; MacDowell, 'Stratēgoi', 2005, Oxford Reference.

³ Westlake, 1968, p.98

⁴ Westlake, 1968, p.97-98

⁵ Westlake and Hornblower, 2005, Oxford Classical Dictionary online

⁶ Lattimore, 1998, p.192

⁷ Westlake and Hornblower, 2005, Oxford Classical Dictionary online

⁸ Lattimore, 1998, p. 188

⁹ Thu. 4.10

¹⁰ Thu. 4.11

¹¹ Thu. 4.11

Word count 351

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Very Good. To improve:

- ① Try to read more carefully. Write in a less "clunky" fashion. Mention scholars directly.
- ② It is interesting that you seem to avoid using Hornblower's commentary.

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Timeline Additions for 431-421 B.C

On the use of Homer in Book 3 of Thucydides' The Peloponnesian War

Thucydides' use of Homer in his own work, The History of The Peloponnesian War, occurs on more than one occasion. Homer's Iliad is used at the very start of the work to accentuate the severity of the Peloponnesian War, drawing direct comparison to the Trojan War that takes place in the Iliad, with Thucydides believing that, that War (Trojan) will pale into insignificance compared to this War (Peloponnesian). *→ All titles in italics*

The mention of Homer's Iliad early in Thucydides' own work shows that the works of Homer were not far from Thucydides' mind whilst he is composing his chronicle of a Great War. In book 3, the relevance of Delos and its purification enables Thucydides to tie into to his effort the Homeric Hymn to Apollo and to glorify the actions of the Athenians². Thucydides believes the Hymn to Apollo to be the work of Homer³. The initial cleansing of Delos by Peisistratos is mentioned by Herodotus⁴. The binding of the three works must hold some significance to Thucydides, maybe the episodes use reiterates the worth of his own endeavour. The purification of Delos and Apollo could also be looked as another reference to Homer's Iliad, and its opening book, the plague brought by Apollo onto the Achaeans (Danaans/Argives) caused by Agamemnon's unwillingness to give up his war prize, Chryseis, the daughter of a priest of Apollo's (Chryses)⁵. *→ you are ignoring the epic cycle.*

The hymn itself, also, mentions competition, an aspect key to Athenians and all other Greeks⁶. The use of the hymn is perhaps used less as a tool of comparison and used more to accentuate the importance/role of competition, its role within society and how, possibly, it inevitably leads to war. Or whether it is used as a suggestion that Thucydides is openly competing against the greatest poet, Homer, and is relishing the challenge like a true Athenian. *Does it? How? | why key? | How? End?*

It is possible that Thucydides considered his work on the history of the Peloponnesian War to be more than just an endeavour of recording the historical events of the War, and that he also considered it to be an artistic tribute to the War and those who fought and died in it. Thucydides' heavy reliance on fictionalised speeches display his own rhetorical prowess and powers (those with such powers were considered virtuous within Athenian society) and, of *Red.*

¹ Thu. 1.3-12

² Thu. 3.104; Hornblower, 1991, p.523

³ Thu. 3.104; Hornblower, 1991, p.523

⁴ Her. Hist. 1.64

⁵ H. Il. 1.1-25; Thu. 3.104

⁶ Thu. 3.104

course, Thucydides' allusions and references to the works of Homer are evidence to this estimation by way of displaying his elite Athenian education⁷.

Word count 443

Good work

To improve

- ① To make a good argument you need to have evidence, not just suggestions, and you must structure it logically.
- ② You must read more scholarship in the issues surrounding your argument.
- ③ Proofread more carefully. Make sure your sentences are communicatively and syntactically correct.

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⁷ Saunders, 2004, 'Plato Laws', p. XXXVI; Xen. Sym. 3.5; Plu. Mor. 2a-2b

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