

1: Phaedra: Phaedra | CliffsNotes

Phaedra, is a Roman tragedy with Greek subject of c. lines of verse by philosopher and dramatist Lucius Annaeus Seneca, which tells the story of Phaedra, wife of King Theseus of Athens, and her consuming lust for her stepson, Hippolytus.

The younger Seneca was educated in Rome, where he studied rhetoric and philosophy and earned renown as an orator while still young. He rose from advocate lawyer, to quaestor a state official, and then to senator. His death sentence was commuted to exile, and he spent the next eight years on Corsica. After Nero became emperor in 54 ce, Seneca remained his advisor, exerting what most believed to be a calming influence on the volatile young ruler. His surviving body of work consists of numerous scholarly essays and at least eight tragic plays, including *The Trojan Women*, *Oedipus*, *Medea*, *The Mad Hercules*, *The Phoenician Women*, *Phaedra*, *Agamemnon*, and *Thyestes*. The latter were all based on earlier Greek models, to which they have often been unfavorably compared. In any case, the tragedies would have a profound effect on dramatists in later eras. In his adaptation of *Phaedra*, the tragedy of a queen who struggles with her incestuous love for her stepson, Seneca adds some distinctively Roman touches to an age-old Greek legend. Scholars contend that the legend originated at Troezen, a town in the northeast Peloponnese by the Saronic Gulf. Over time the legend spread, gaining wide renown in the region with the help of dramatic retellings by two of the foremost tragedy writers of Classical Greece Sophocles and Euripedes. While particulars of the *Phaedra* myth vary, the basic plot remains constant. Hippolytus, the bastard son of King Theseus of Athens and Queen Hippolyta of the Amazons, leads a perfectly chaste life. He worships Artemis, goddess of the hunt, and he shuns all mortal women. Initially *Phaedra* struggles to conceal her incestuous passion for her stepson, but she finally confesses her love to Hippolytus. In another version, she confesses to her nurse, who then informs Hippolytus. Horrified, he rejects her. *Phaedra*, fearing that Hippolytus will denounce her to Theseus, takes matters into her own hands and accuses the young man of attempted rape. Theseus believes her story, curses his son, and calls upon Poseidon to punish Hippolytus with death. Terror-stricken, they fling their master from his chariot and then drag him to his death. Subsequently either human or divine intervention, depending on the version of the tale, proves Hippolytus innocent of the attempted rape. A guilt-ridden *Phaedra* commits suicide. Bereft of wife and son, and distressed by his own part in the tragedy, Theseus is overcome with remorse at having destroyed his son. Dramatic treatments of the myth differ, especially with regard to the characterizations of Hippolytus and *Phaedra*. A complex character, she suffers an internal struggle between her passion for Hippolytus and her deep sense of modesty. Centuries later, Seneca presented an innocent Hippolytus and his own complex, morally ambiguous *Phaedra*. Manipulated by her crafty nurse into accusing Hippolytus of rape, the queen grows so remorseful after his death that she is driven to honorable action. But the values reflected in the course of the play may be likened to those of fifth century bce Greece, when its playwrights began to dramatize the legend. In this era, often called the Classical Age, Athenian women of good family continued to live under the guardianship of their fathers or other male relations until they reached marriageable age. Ideally a young teenage girl of 14 married a man of about 30, mainly to bear his children. Arrangements were often made for blood relatives to marry, the aim being to consolidate family financial and property holdings. Among the elite, marriage became a means to promote political alliances. A girl was expected to marry the man chosen for her, even if she had never met him. The birth of children to carry on the family line was the highest priority of a marriage. Once a bride had borne offspring, preferably sons, she had fulfilled her main marital obligation. Although the marriage has produced two sons, little love appears to exist between husband and wife, as was often the case in ancient Greek and Roman marriages. Throughout antiquity, sexual relations or marriage between close kin was mostly forbidden or condemned. The criteria for incest varied from region to region, allowing for certain exceptions. For example, siblings who shared a father could marry in Athens; siblings who shared a mother could do so in Sparta. Marriages between full siblings could occur in Egypt when it was part of the Greek and then the Roman Empire, but they occurred only rarely, usually to preserve the ethnic identity of a small population. It is telling that the Greeks of Egypt found these marriages shocking

and incestuous, despite their infrequency and their legality. Siblings who were related only by adoption could wed if one of them no longer lived under the legal authority of a paterfamilias father or grandfather. During the reign of Emperor Claudius ce , marriages between nieces and paternal uncles were permitted in Rome, a practice that would later be outlawed. Parent-child incest was universally condemned, a fact reflected in several myths, including those of Oedipus see *The Theban Plays* , also in *Classical Literature and Its Times*. Even when the parent and child commit the sin unknowingly, disaster and divine retribution inevitably follow. The Play in Focus Plot summary The play begins one morning in Athens as Hippolytus, the illegitimate son of King Theseus, prepares for a hunt with his comrades. In his youth, Theseus had many adventures, including the slaying of the Minotaur, a monstrous creature—half-bull, half-man—born of an unnatural coupling between a wild bull and Queen Pasiphae of Crete. Her husband, King Minos, makes use of the monster. Demanding an annual tribute from Athens, he forces its citizens to send him seven youths and seven maidens each year to be devoured by the Minotaur. One year Theseus disguises himself as one of the youths and travels to Crete. In another famous legend, Theseus travels to the land of the fierce women warriors known as Amazons and carries off their queen, alternately known as Hippolyta or Antiope. The queen bears him a son, Hippolytus. Phaedra argues that the absent Theseus is a neglectful, philandering husband and that she is only following her own nature by craving an illicit love. Nonetheless, the nurse continues to exhort Phaedra to resist this illicit love and re-main true to her husband. Phaedra finally yields to these pleas, resolving to commit suicide rather than to expose her love and stain her honor. Phaedra gives vent to an excess of passion, while at the opposite extreme, Hippolytus insists on remaining chaste. When the third act opens, the nurse reveals that the lovesick Phaedra has now taken to her bed, weeping and refusing all comfort. Hippolytus resists, defending his austere way of life and reiterating his hatred of women: Hoping for the best, the nurse draws aside, leaving them alone. Upon reviving, Phaedra tries to confess her love but Hippolytus repeatedly misunderstands her, believing she is pining for Theseus. When the truth of her passion finally emerges, Hippolytus recoils in disgust. At first he considers stabbing Phaedra, then flings away his sword as defiled by her touch and flees to the woods while Phaedra swoons again. Phaedra herself later makes this false accusation, echoing the deceit. The act concludes with another monologue from the Chorus, this one addressing the hazards of male beauty. In the fourth act, Theseus, who was trapped in the realm of the dead until rescued by Hercules, returns to find his palace in an uproar. The nurse enters and tells the king that Phaedra means to commit suicide because of some unknown shame. Phaedra tells Theseus that the bearer of the sword has raped her. The sixth act begins as Phaedra enters, frantic with grief. A devastated Theseus laments his part in the family tragedy, then gives orders for the disposal of the dead. Hippolytus is to receive all ritual honors due his station, but Phaedra will be ignominiously buried: Stepmothers in antiquity Phaedra concerns a classically infamous literary character, that of the villainous stepmother. The ancient Greek legend of the evil stepmother first gained popularity in the fifth century bce and continued to attract audiences thereafter. In general, these stepmothers are an unsavory lot—they tend to be evil, self-centered, jealous, cunning, treacherous, and lacking in self-control. The typical literary stepmother is unequivocally evil while the other characters in these ancient legends are unequivocally good. The legends fall into two main categories: Neither storyline reflects real-life commonplaces in fifth-century bce Athens. But the possibility of the amorous stepmother existed, since, as noted, young girls aged 14 often married older men aged Instead, the legends feature and condemn the stepmother as the root of amorous desire, perhaps because the ancient Greeks and Romans considered women more subject to sexual passion than men. It was furthermore thought that if women acted on these impulses, disaster would follow. Sources and literary context By the fifth century bce, the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus had become well established enough to have inspired at least three Greek plays, one by Sophocles, entitled *Phaedra*, and two by Euripides, both entitled *Hippolytus*. Seneca may also have been influenced by lost dramatizations, such as the *Hippolytus* of Lycophron, a tragedy writer of about bce. The fourth letter in the sequence is from Phaedra to Hippolytus, confessing her love and begging him to love her back.

2: Seneca: Phaedra

Part II includes a detailed discussion of metrics and study questions and comments on Seneca's text. The study questions and comments are grouped by line numbers. A new translation of The Hippolytus of Euripides is included for careful study alongside the Latin play (p. 1).

NURSE [] By these gleaming locks of age, by this heart, worn with care, by these dear breasts, I beg thee check this made love and come to thy own relief. The wish for healing has ever been the half of health. I yield, dear nurse. Let the love which will not be controlled by overcome. Fair fame, I will not suffer thee to be defiled. This is the only way, the one sole escape from evil: For this cause do I deem thee worthy life, since thou declarest thyself worthy death. With the noose shall I end my life, or fall upon the sword? Resist this mad impulse. No one can easily be recalled to life. Wherefore in protection of my honour let me arm my hand.

NURSE [] O mistress, sole comfort of my weary years, if so unruly a passion weighs on thy soul, scorn thou this fame; scarcely doth fame favour truth, being better to the worse deserving, worse to the good. Let us test that grim and stubborn soul. His madness steals to the inmost marrow, while with creeping fire he ravages the veins. The wound he deals has no broad front, but it eats its way deep into the hidden marrow. There is no open peace with that boy of thine; throughout the world nimbly he scatters his flying shafts. The shore that beholds the new-born sun and the shore that lies at this far western goal, the land lying beneath the burning Crab and the cold region of the Arcadian Bear, which sustains its ever-wandering husbandmen, all know these fires of his. How often did he put on lower forms, even he 15 who made heaven and the clouds: The radiant goddess 17 of the darksome sky burned with love and, forsaking the night, gave her gleaming chariot to her brother to guide in fashion other than his own. The son of Alcmena 18 laid by his quiver and the threatening skin of the huge lion, letting emeralds be fitted on his fingers and law be enforced on his rough locks; he bound his legs with cross-garterings of gold and within yellow sandals confined his feet; and in that hand, with which he but now bore the club, he spun out threads with flying spindle. These fires the race of winged creatures feel. Goaded on by love, the bold bull undertakes battle for the whole herd; if they feel that their mates are in danger, timid stags challenge to war. At such a time swart India holds striped tigers in especial fear; at such a time the boar whets his death-dealing tusks and his jaws are covered all with foam; African lions toss their manes and by their roarings give token of their engendered passion. When Love has roused them, then the forest groans with their grim uproar. Love sways the monsters of the raging sea, sways Lucanian bulls, 19 claims as his own all nature; nothing is exempt, and hate perishes at the command of Love. Old grudges yield unto his fires. Why tell of more? How stands it with the queen? Hath her fierce flame any bound? NURSE [] No hope is there that such suffering can be relieved, and no end will there be to her mad fires. Now with failing steps she sinks down as if dying, and can hardly hold up her head on her fainting neck; now she lies down to rest and, headless of slumber, spends the night in lamentations; she bids them to lift her up and again to lay her down, to loose her hair and again to bid it up; her raiment, with itself dissatisfied, is ever changed. She has now no care for food or health. She walks with aimless feet, wasted now in strength. Tears fall down her face and her cheeks are wet with constant drops, as when on the top of Taurus the snows melt away, pierced by a warm shower.

PHAEDRA [] Away, ye slaves, with robes bedecked with purple and with gold; away, scarlet of the Tyrian shell, the webs 20 which the far-off Seres gather from the trees. So, tossed at random, let my locks fall down upon my neck and shoulders and, moved by swift running, stream upon the wind. My left hand shall be busied with the quiver and my right wield a Thessalian spear. Appease the rustic divinity of our virgin goddess.

NURSE [] O queen of the groves, thou who in solitude lovest thy mountain-haunts, and who upon the solitary mountains art alone held holy, change for the better these dark, ill-omened threats. O great goddess of the woods and groves, bright orb of heaven, glory of the night, by whose changing beams the universe shines clear, O three-formed Hecate, lo, thou art at hand, favouring our undertaking. Conquer the unbending soul of stern Hippolytus; may he, compliant, give ear unto our prayer. Soften his fierce heart; may he learn to love, may he feel answering flames. Ensnare his mind; grim, hostile, fierce, may he turn him back unto the fealty of love. Be near, goddess, in answer to our call; hear now our

prayers. Chance has given thee both time and place. Thou must employ thy arts. Why do I tremble? Surely my sire is safe, Phaedra is safe, and their two sons? The realm is in prosperous state, thy house is strong, flourishing under the smile of Heaven. But in this happy lot do thou show thyself less harsh; for distress for thee harasses my anxious heart, seeing that thou in thine own despite dost break thyself with heavy penances. Now hearts are light, now love to youth is pleasing. Let thy heart rejoice. Why dost lie on a lonely couch? God has portioned out its proper duties to each time of life and led this span of ours through its own stages; joy befits the young, a serious face the old. Why dost hold thyself in check and strangle thy true nature? That crop will give to the farmer the best return which in the tender blade runs riot with joyous growth, and that tree with lofty head will overtop the grove which no grudging hand cuts down or prunes away. So will right minds be reared unto a richer fruit of praise, if sprightly freedom nourish the high-born soul. How various are the forms of death that seize and feed no mortal throngs! But suppose these lacking: The unwedded life let barren youth applaud; then will all that thou beholdest be the throng of one generation only and will fall in ruins on itself. In his providence did yonder almighty father of the universe, when he saw how greedy were the hands of Fate, give heed ever by fresh progeny to make losses good. Come now, let love but be banished from human life, love, which supplies and renews the impoverished race: His heart is inflamed by no mad greed of gain who has devoted himself to harmless ranging on the mountain-tops; here is no shouting populace, no mob, faithless to good men, no poisonous hate, no brittle favour. He seeks not in pride of wealth to be sheltered by a roof reared on a thousand pillars, no in insolence plates he with much gold his rafter-beams. No streams of blood drench his pious altars, no hecatombs of snow-white bullocks, sprinkled with the sacred meal, bend low their necks; but his lordship is over the empty fields, and beneath the open sky he wanders blameless. Sweet it is to lie on the bank of some vagrant stream, or on the bare sward to quaff light-stealing slumbers, be it where some copious spring pours down its hurrying waters, or through budding flowers some brook murmurs sweetly as it glides along. It is his passion to flee far from royal luxury. Here slumber more surely soothes as he lays him down, care-free, on his hard bed. They had no blind love of gold; no sacred boundary-stone, judging betwixt peoples, separated fields on the spreading plain; not yet did rash vessels plough the sea; each man knew only his native waters. Then cities were not surrounded with massive walls, set with many towers; no soldier applied his fierce hand to arms, nor did hurling engines burst through closed gates with heavy stones. At first men fought with naked fists [next they began to lay hand to deadly weapons 23] and turned stones and rough clubs to the use of arms. As yet there was no light cornel-shaft, tipped with tapering iron; no long, sharp-pointed sword hung at the side; no helmets crested with plumes gleamed from afar; rage furnished arms. Warlike Mars invented new modes of strife and a thousand forms of death. From this source streams of blood stained all lands and the sea grew red. Then crime stalked unchecked through every home and no impious deed lacked precedent. Brother was slain by brother, father by the hand of son, husband lay dead by the sword of wife, and unnatural mothers destroyed their own offspring. I say naught of stepmothers; they are no whit more merciful than the beasts. Be it reason, be it instinct, be it wild rage: Thou bearest witness to this, of her race the only son. Whither will fortune go? Whither will madness tend? See, my daughter, thine own Hippolytus embraces thee. How blest was my unconsciousness of self! Fearless be thy words, and firm; who makes timid request, invites denial. The chief part of my guilt is long since accomplished; too late for me is modesty â€” I have loved basely. If I follow up what I have begun, perchance I may hide my sin behind the marriage torch. Success makes some sins honest. Come now, my soul, begin! If any comrade of thine is here, let him withdraw. Call me sister, Hippolytus, or slave â€” yes, slave is better; I will endure servitude. Shouldst thou bid me walk through deep-drifted snows, I would not shrink from faring along the cold peaks of Pindus; shouldst thou send me through fire and midst deadly battle ranks, I would not hesitate to offer my breast to naked swords. Take thou in my stead the sceptre committed to my care, accept me for thy slave; it becomes thee to bear sway, me, to obey thine orders. In safety will my father soon return. PHAEDRA [] The overlord of the fast-holding realm and of the silent Styx has made no way to the upper world once quitted; and will he let the robber 25 of his couch go back? Unless, perchance, even Pluto sits smiling upon love! Has he not said enough? I long â€” and am ashamed â€” to speak. Speak out and plainly. A hot fire glows deep in my inmost vitals and hides darkly in my veins, as when nimble flames dart through deep-set timbers.

3: SENECA THE YOUNGER, PHAEDRA - Theoi Classical Texts Library

Seneca's Phaedra is actually remarkably similar to Euripides' Hippolytus, although he concludes his tragedy far more viciously, and with more obvious violence. The chief difference between the two texts is Phaedra, who herself is spared by Seneca until after Hippolytus' death, thus allowing her revelation of his innocence to be all the more disheartening.

But in remodeling the old subjects, Seneca could not follow the classical codes of composing tragedies, set by classical playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. So if we judge with absolute literary criteria, we shall find the plays of Seneca so far inferior to the Greek tragedies. So the principal motive behind the action of this play is revenge, which is to be found in the actions of Hippolytus, Phaedra, Nurse and Theseus. Hippolytus is a young man of extraordinary glamour. He is every atom a prince and a dream-man of young women. But from his speech we come to know that he is more interested in nature than in women. He prefers to pray the hunt-goddess Diana to Venus, the goddess of love. Venus and Diana are antithetical to each other. Venus loathes Diana, as she fails to evoke passion for love in the Virgin goddess Diana. Venus also becomes avengeful on Hippolytus for not engaging in any love affair with women and disliking them. And she provokes an illicit love in Phaedra for Hippolytus. So the cause of the unnatural passion of Phaedra is the revengeful motive of Venus. Phaedra in spite of being a young woman is married to an old man notorious for maltreatment of his wives and is now deserted and betrayed. So her resentment and loneliness finds an outlet in her revengeful wild love for Hippolytus. Phaedra is incredibly selfish and shows no hesitation in making known her passion to Hippolytus. But when Hippolytus refuses her point-blank, the Nurse makes a false charge of violation against Hippolytus and Phaedra consents to act accordingly. And what the Nurse and Phaedra want by this false charge is to take revenge by denouncing Hippolytus to Theseus. When he is informed that his son has violated his wife, he is shocked beyond measure. He feels terrible outrage and curses Hippolytus in the most extravagant manner. He justifies his curse, as an avenging justice. She declares Hippolytus as the innocent boy charged with in chastity and her relentless feeling incites her to end her life. She kills herself to pay the dues of death. At least she takes revenge on herself too. So revenge is a kind of sacred duty to them and they have ethical ground for their revenge. But in case of Phaedra, revenge takes the form of a wild kind of justice. Her revenge is not only ethically ungrounded but also beastly. Moreover, as a tragedian his influence is not undeniable as he established the revenge traditions which helped the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights to form the perfect model for revenge tragedy.

4: Phaedra - Wikipedia

seneca, phaedra SENECA THE YOUNGER was a Latin playwright and philosopher who flourished in Rome in the late C1st A.D. during the reigns of the emperors Claudius and Nero. His surviving work includes ten tragedy plays, nine of which are based on mythological themes.

Jump down to Quiz 2 study guide. Text Access Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. Four Tragedies and Octavia. If it does, how so? If not, how not? How does it at least seem to communicate something relateable? Are there ways that Seneca seems to create distance between us and them? I think this, the kinds of connections that Senecan tragedy seeks to make, matters for taking stock of Senecan tragedy as tragedy. The emperor or princeps styled himself "first among equals" princeps inter pares. Returning to the autocracy engineered by Augustus, it verifiably provided a degree of political stability unknown in living memory. But it also meant that the Senate, long the most powerful and aristocratic governing body at Rome, had its powers greatly reduced; the old Republic was, to all intents and purposes, dead. Things were better, but with so much power concentrated in one person, the ancestral Roman hatred of kings came face to face with the reality of one-man-rule, dynastic strife, and diminished liberty for the old ruling class. Things deteriorated under the rule of the next four Caesars: This was a period when persons of rank had to watch their backs at all times. Any word or deed capable of interpretation as disloyalty to the emperor or his family could bring with it charges of treason. Members of the old senatorial class, because they could not openly criticize Caesar, had taken to doing so covertly, for instance, through the writing of supposedly mythological or historical works. Hence tragedies with titles like Cato Cato the Younger, Republican martyr or Atreus the extremely evil Greek king as a way of maintaining "plausible deniability" when voicing protest. Yet even the faintest hint of disloyalty in a line of drama could prove lethal for the playwright. Philosophy At the same time, two philosophies from Greece were competing for the minds of Roman intellectuals. From a Roman perspective, neither philosophy appealed primarily for its contribution to ancient science, metaphysics, or logic Stoic logic was actually a stupendous achievement unequalled until little more than a hundred years ago! What really matter was the concern of each with ethics: As to the philosophies in question, they can be very briefly summarized as follows: Epicureanism, which taught that the gods exist but ignore human beings, who should imitate the gods by seeking to live lives totally free from disturbance: Nature, the Stoics believed, is guided by rational principles: By living thus, one achieves both wisdom and virtue, and therefore, happiness. Besides wisdom, nothing matters. Wealth, power, pleasure - all of it, though generally viewed as advantages, were viewed by the Stoics not as evil but as "indifferent" adiaphora, indifferentia Connected with early Imperial Roman Stoicism was a fashion for philosophical suicide: Especially for the Stoics, suicide could represent honorable release from intolerable situations. One of those to die thus was our own playwright, Seneca. Rhetoric Finally, a word about rhetoric. Yes, politics of a sort continued to be practiced. Young men were, accordingly, heavily schooled in rhetoric. At the same time, rhetoric itself came to be cultivated as an art form in its own right, with master rhetoricians composing and publishing demonstration pieces - "declamations" declamationes - on a variety of often fictitious or mythological topics. Rhetoric of this type penetrated to all corners of Roman literature, both poetry and prose. Life Lucius Annaeus Seneca ca. His father was a land owner with strong interests in rhetoric and history. Relatives also achieving distinction included: This brother is actually mentioned in the Bible Acts Lucan, distinguished poet forced, like his philosopher-tragedian uncle, to commit suicide by the emperor Nero Seneca himself, as would have been normal for any politically ambitious aristocrat, was educated in philosophy and rhetoric at Rome. Through family connections he reached the questorship during the reign of the emperor Tiberius CE. Soon into the reign of the emperor Claudius , Seneca fell victim to a palace intrigue. He was, as a result, relegated to the island of Corsica for seven-and-a-half years. It was probably during these years following relegation that Seneca composed his tragedies. But Seneca, the philosopher preaching moderation and virtue, also used his connections to enrich himself hugely, becoming, as he did, one of the greatest landowners in the empire. Finally, after the failure of a conspiracy to kill Nero, Seneca probably innocent and his nephew Lucan definitely guilty were implicated in the conspiracy

and forced to commit suicide. Seneca did so in high fashion. Inviting his friends and family to witness the event, he opened his veins and discoursed on learned topics as the life bled out of him. Let me quote C. Herington on that very topic as it applies to the extremely complicated and baffling case of Seneca: What does seem relevant is the clear fact that Seneca himself lived through and witnessed, in his own person or in the persons of those near him, almost every evil and horror that is the theme of his writings, prose or verse. Exile, murder, incest, the threat of poverty and a hideous death and all the savagery of fortune were of the very texture of his career. In Arion 5 [] p. Works Seneca wrote widely:

5: Bolchazy-Carducci: The Phaedra of Seneca

Today, "Phaedra" is one of Seneca's most widely-read works. Tight and compact, following Aristotelian form but more elliptical in its design, it is a work of high passion reined in by carefully constructed language, one of the simplest and most brutal of ancient tragedies.

Use all thy arts. Why do I quake with fear? It is no easy task to do the deed Enjoined on me. Yet she, who serves a queen, Must banish from her heart all thought of right; For sense of shame ill serves a royal will. Why is thy face so sad, Thy brow so troubled? Truly is my sire In safety, Phaedra safe, and their two sons. But Oh, do thou with greater kindness look Upon thy fortune. For my heart is vexed And anxious for thy sake; for thou thyself With grievous sufferings dost bruise thy soul. If fate compels it, one may be forgiven For wretchedness; but if, of his own will, A man prefers to live in misery, Brings tortures on himself, then he deserves To lose those gifts he knows not how to use. Be mindful of thy youth; relax thy mind. Lift high the blazing torch on festal nights; Let Bacchus free thee from thy weighty cares; Enjoy this time which speeds so swiftly by. Now is the time when love comes easily, And smiles on youth. Come, let thy soul rejoice. Why dost thou lie upon a lonely couch? Dissolve in pleasures that grim mood of thine, And snatch the passing joys; [2] let loose the reins. Its proper hue Has God allotted to each time of life, And leads from step to step the age of man. Why dost thou restrain thyself, And strangle at their birth the joys of life? With lofty top That tree will overspread the neighboring grove, Which no begrudging hand cuts back or prunes. So do our inborn powers a richer fruit Of praise and glory bear, if liberty, Unchecked and boundless, feed the noble soul. Suppose the power of Venus over men Should cease, who doth supply and still renew The stream of life, then would this lovely world Become a foul, unsightly thing indeed: The sea would bear no fish within its waves, The woods no beasts of prey, the air no birds; But through its empty space the winds alone Would rove. How various the forms of death That seize and feed upon our mortal race: The wrecking sea, the sword, and treachery! But say that these are lacking: Suppose our youth should choose a mateless life, And live in childless state: Then spend thy life As nature doth direct; frequent the town, And live in friendly union with thy kind. There is no life so free, so innocent, Which better cherishes the ancient rites, Than that which spurns the crowded ways of men And seeks the silent places of the woods. No fickle breath Of passing favor frets him here, no sting Of base ingratitude, no poisonous hate. From hope and fear alike Is he removed. No black and biting spite With base, malicious tooth preys on him here. It is not his with guilty heart to quake At every sound; he need not hide his thoughts With guileful words; in pride of sinful wealth He seeks to own no lordly palace propped Upon a thousand pillars, with its beams In flaunting arrogance incased with gold. Here twittering birds make all the woods resound, And through the branches of the ancient beech The leaves are all a-flutter in the breeze. The windfall apples of the wood appease His hunger, while the ripening berries plucked From wayside thickets grant an easy meal. He gladly shuns the luxuries of kings. Let mighty lords from anxious cups of gold Their nectar quaff; for him how sweet to catch With naked hand the water of the spring! With guilty soul he seeks do shameful deeds In nooks remote upon some hidden couch, Nor timorous hides in labyrinthine cell; He courts the open air and light of day, And lives before the conscious eye of heaven. They were not blinded by the love of gold; No sacred stone divided off the fields And lotted each his own in judgment there. Nor yet did vessels rashly plow the seas; But each his native waters knew alone. Then cities were not girt with massive walls, With frequent towers set; no soldier there To savage arms his hands applied, nor burst The close-barred gates with huge and heavy stones From ponderous engines hurled. The woods gave wealth, And shady grottoes natural homes supplied. Unholy greed first broke these peaceful bonds, And headlong wrath, and lust which sets aflame The hearts of men. Then came the cruel thirst For empire; and the weak became the prey Of strong, and might was counted right. At first Men fought with naked fists, but soon they turned Rough clubs and stones to use of arms. Not yet Were cornel spears with slender points of iron, And long, sharp-pointed swords, and crested helms. Such weapons wrath invented. Warlike Mars Produced new arts of strife, and forms of death In countless numbers made. Thence streams of gore Stained every land, and reddened every sea. No hideous deed Was left undone: Stepmothers need no words; The very beasts are kind compared with

them. Of all these evils woman was the cause, The leader she. I hate them all. I dread and shun and curse Them all. Whether from reason, instinct, blind And causeless madness, this I knowâ€”I hate. Of this thy birth itself is proof enough. But hither Phaedra comes with hasty step, Impatient of delay. What fate is hers? Or to what action doth her madness tend? Phaedra [recovering from her faint]: How well for me Had I sunk down to death! Come dare, attempt, fulfil thine own command. Speak out, and fearlessly. Who asks in fear Suggests a prompt refusal. Even now The greater part of my offense is done. Too late my present modesty. My love, I know, is base; but if I persevere, Perchance the marriage torch will hide my sin. Success makes certain sins respectable. Behold, the place is free from witnesses. My lips refuse to speak my waiting words; A mighty force compels my utterance, A mightier holds it back. Ye heavenly powers, I call ye all to witness, what I wishâ€” Hippolytus: Thy heart desires and cannot tell its wish? Light cares speak out, the weighty have no words. Into my ears, my mother, tell thy cares. The name of mother is too proud and high; My heart dictates some humbler name than that. Take thou the power Which was consigned to me. Make me thy slave. Rule thou the state, and let me subject be. Do thou, who in the flower Of youth rejoicest, rule the citizens With strong paternal sway. But me receive Into thy arms, and there protect thy slave And suppliant. May God on high this omen dark avert! My father will in safety soon return. Unless, indeed, Grim Pluto has at last grown mild to love. The righteous gods of heaven will bring him back. But while the gods still hold our prayers in doubt, My brothers will I make my pious care, And thee as well. Oh, hope of lovers, easily beguiled! Has he [3] not said enough? I long to utter them, but am ashamed. What is thy trouble then? In doubtful words thy meaning thou dost wrap. My maddened heart with burning love is scorched; My inmost marrow is devoured with love; And through my veins and vitals steals the fire, As when the flames through roomy holds of ships Run darting. Oh, what a glorious sight he was! Soft fillets held in check his flowing locks, And modesty upon his tender face Glowed blushing red. Just so he proudly held His head erect; still more in thee shines out That beauty unadorned; in thee I find Thy father all. One house has overthrown Two sisters, thee the father, me the son. Without a spot Of sin, unstained and innocent, was I; And thou alone hast wrought the change in me. See, at thy feet I kneel and pray, resolved This day shall end my misery or life. If now Thou hurlest not thy bolt with deadly hand, What shameful cause will ever send it forth? Let all the sky in shattered ruins fall, And hide the light of day in murky clouds. And thou, great star Of stars, thou radiant Sun, let not thine eyes Behold the impious shame of this thy stock; But hide thy face, and to the darkness flee Why is thy hand, O king of gods and men, Inactive? Direct thy bolts At me; pierce me.

6: Phaedra Summary (Lucius Annaeus Seneca) - www.enganchecubano.com

The reception of Seneca's Phaedra in later literature is also addressed in some detail. C&M thus do an excellent and thorough job demonstrating the complexity and literary aspirations of Senecan Tragedy.

A nurse is a vital role in a society. Seneca has shown the Nurse to have a double-edged personality. As an individual character she has little influence upon other characters. But her influence upon the plot of the play is great, as her persuasion to Phaedra and Hippolytus and forming the plan for denouncing Hippolytus bring the play to the point of climax in the Act III. As the play unfolds gradually we have a conversation between the Nurse and Phaedra, which furnishes the real exposition of the play. Phaedra in a long speech portrays the real picture of her mind, that banished from her motherland and now deserted by Theseus she is intensely miserable in her solitude. Her conversation with the Nurse also imparts us that an extremely powerful passion has and all her desires go unfulfilled. This act shows that there is a deep understanding between the Nurse and Phaedra like a true friend and caring guardian she can read the mind of Phaedra. She warns Phaedra about the fatal consequence of the kind of love, she is cherishing. She urges her to check her passions and uproot all the evil thoughts as soon as they come to the mind. The Nurse in order to bring Phaedra to the right path injects some moral lessons into her mind. Like a stoic philosopher she preaches restraint and contingency. The first and best thing in the life of a human being is to choose the good and follow it throughout the life. And the next best thing is to possess shame and to bridle the sin in time. Though Phaedra does not care about them and gods always choose to hide the forbidden love, but the penalty from within is more severe. She informs her that Hippolytus is a stubborn and obstinate Youngman, devoted to the worship of Diana and indifferent to any persuasion. So systematically eliminates every possibility of committing such a crime successfully. But Phaedra does not hear her and by artfully threatening suicide, bends the nurse to her will. Here we come across a dramatic change of the Nurse attitude when Phaedra gets resolved to suicide if her desires are not satisfied. We are surprised when she assures Phaedra that she herself will induce Hippolytus to bend the stiffness of his stubborn will. Here she recurses to every craft to induce Hippolytus, as she has taken previously to dissuade Phaedra. She has to lose all her ethical teachings to the beastly will of Phaedra. She attempts to create the feeling of love in the mind of Hippolytus. She tells him that life without love is dull and meaningless. She says that solitude makes life distressed. In short, she takes all possible ways to allure the rigid Youngman but all her attempts end in failure. And finally when Hippolytus, frightened by the Phaedra crude advances, abandons his sword and flees as Phaedra pretends to swoon the nurse comes to her rescue. The nurse becomes furious to save Phaedra. So she plans a trap for Hippolytus. She decides to defame Hippolytus. As soon as the king Theseus returns from the underworld after a long sojourn, the Nurse through Phaedra lets him know that Hippolytus has deflowered Phaedra. The Nurse skillfully succeeds in intensifying the fire of the fury of Theseus. Theseus shocked by the news in a long monologue calls upon his father Neptune to destroy Hippolytus, so that no human being seeing the fortune of Hippolytus dares to commit such a blasphemous act. And this constitutes the climax of the play and practically the reversal of fortune for Hippolytus. He is destroyed by the curse given by his father. It has been said that Seneca was involved in the kind of scene which he had so often composed for his characters. In the case of the nurse it is not otherwise. Seneca was the tutor of the Nero, the bloody ruler as well as a stoic philosopher. His various philosophic teachings are apparent from the speech of the nurse. Those speeches in which the nurse tries to dissuade Phaedra from pursuing Hippolytus read like a lecture of Seneca to his pupil Nero, urging him not to embark upon a career of crime. So, considering all the facts we can sum up that the role of the Nurse in Phaedra is a rational role, though her rationality loses its course due to her love to Phaedra.

7: Tragedies of Seneca () Miller/Phaedra - Wikisource, the free online library

Seneca's tragedy Phaedra, also called Hippolytus, is based on the play Hippolytus by Euripides.

Altrix, profare quid feras; quonam in loco est regina? Sed en, patescunt regiae fastigia: Phaedra Remouete, famulae, purpura atque auro inlitas uestes, procul sit muricis Tyrii rubor, quae fila ramis ultimi Seres legunt: Regina nemorum, sola quae montes colis et una solis montibus coleris dea, conuerte tristes ominum in melius minas. Ades inuocata, iam faue uotis, dea: Quid te coerces et necas rectam indolem? Non alia magis est libera et uitio carens ritusque melius uita quae priscos colat, quam quae relictis moenibus siluas amat. Sed dux malorum femina: Cur omnium fit culpa paucarum scelus? Detestor omnis, horreo fugio execror. Saepe obstinatis induit frenos Amor et odia mutat. Solamen unum matris amissae fero, odisse quod iam feminas omnis licet. Sed Phaedra praeceps graditur, impatiens morae. Phaedra Quis me dolori reddit atque aestus graues reponit animo? Cur dulce munus redditae lucis fugis? Aude, anime, tempta, perage mandatum tuum. En locus ab omni liber arbitrio uacat. Sed ora coeptis transitum uerbis negant; uis magna uocem mittit et maior tenet. Animusne cupiens aliquid effari nequit? Curae leues locuntur, ingentes stupent. Committe curas auribus, mater, meis. Matris superbum est nomen et nimium potens: Summus hoc omen deus auertat. Illum quidem aequi caelites reducem dabunt. O spes amantum credula, o fallax Amor! Quodnam istud malum est? Quod in nouercam cadere uix credas malum. Ambigua uoce uerba perplexa iacis: Amore nempe Thesei casto furis? Thesei uultus amo illos priores, quos tulit quondam puer, cum prima puras barba signaret genas monstrique caecam Gnosii uidit domum et longa curua fila collegit uia. Te te, soror, quacumque siderei poli in parte fulges, inuoco ad causam parem: Magne regnator deum, tam lentus audis scelera? Colchide nouerca maius hoc, maius malum est. Et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus: Procul impudicos corpore a casto amoue tactus--quid hoc est? Abscede, uiue, ne quid exores, et hic contactus ensis deserat castum latus. Phoebos colla licet splendida compares:

Today, Phaedra is one of Seneca's most widely-read works. Tight and compact, following Aristotelian form but even more elliptical in its design, it is a work of high passion reined in by carefully constructed language, one of the simplest and most brutal of ancient tragedies.

His stepmother Phaedra confesses her burning love for Hippolytus to her nurse, who tries in vain to dissuade her. The Chorus observes that all things yield to love: The nurse complains that love can result in evil consequences, diseases and violent passions, but, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, she resolves to try to help her mistress. Phaedra appears, dressed up like an Amazon huntress to please Hippolytus. Phaedra enters and eventually admits her love directly to Hippolytus. However, he flies into a rage, drawing his sword on her but then casting the weapon away and fleeing into the woods as the distraught Phaedra begs for death to put her out of her misery. The Chorus prays to the gods that beauty may be as advantageous to Hippolytus as it has proved pernicious and fatal to so many others. All the nurse will say in explanation is that Phaedra has resolved to die. When Theseus threatens the nurse to find out the truth of what has happened, she shows him the sword that Hippolytus had left. Consumed with anger, Theseus recognizes the sword and, jumping to the conclusion that Hippolytus has in fact ravished his wife, curses his undeserving son and wishes him dead. The Chorus laments that, while the course of the heavens and of almost everything else seems to be well regulated, human affairs are clearly not governed by justice, since the good are persecuted and the evil are rewarded. Theseus deeply regrets the death of his son and gives him the honour of a proper burial, although he deliberately refuses this same honour to Phaedra a dire sentence in Roman culture. Analysis Back to Top of Page The myth underlying the story of the play is very old, going back far beyond even the classical Greeks, and is found in various forms all over the Mediterranean area. The particular version involving Phaedra and her stepson Hippolytus was the subject of several classical Greek tragedies, including at least one by Sophocles lost and no fewer than two by Euripides. Seneca cuts the goddesses from the cast, and shifts both the title and the focus of the play from Hippolytus to Phaedra herself. His Phaedra is much more human and more shameless, and she declares herself directly to Hippolytus in the guise of an Amazon. Hippolytus is not present, and he and Theseus do not confront each other over it in any way; all we have instead is a messenger coming in to inform Theseus that his son has been killed in an accident, prompting Phaedra to confess the truth and Theseus to forgive him posthumously. Much of the power of the play stems from the tension between the high emotionality, violence and passion of its storyline, and the eloquent discourse through which Seneca a famed orator, rhetorician and Stoic philosopher communicates the narrative. Although a celebrated hero from Greek mythology, the character of Theseus is portrayed here as a rather battered old man whose best years lie behind him, rash, hot-headed and vengeful, with a terrible fury he does not know how to check. Tight and compact, following Aristotelian form but more elliptical in its design, it is a work of high passion reined in by carefully constructed language, one of the simplest and most brutal of ancient tragedies.

9: Discuss the role of the Nurse in Seneca's Phaedra. - www.enganchecubano.com

Seneca's Phaedra is, like his other plays, much more devastating than the Athenian original by Euripides. Frustrated that Hippolytus will not yield to her love, Phaedra spreads the word that Hippolytus had raped her.

Plot summary[edit] Lines 1â€” Hippolytus , son of King Theseus of Athens, leaves his palace at dawn to go boar-hunting. He prays to the virgin goddess Diana for success in the hunt. His step-mother Phaedra, wife of Theseus and daughter of King Minos of Crete, soon appears in front of the palace lamenting her fate. Her husband has been gone for years after journeying to capture Persephone from the underworld. Phaedra has been left alone to care for the palace, and she finds herself pining for the forests and the hunt. Phaedra wonders if she is as doomed as her mother was. Phaedra explains that she is gripped by an uncontrollable lust for Hippolytus, and that her passion has defeated her reason. Hippolytus, however, detests women in general and Phaedra in particular. Phaedra declares that she will commit suicide. The nurse begs Phaedra not to end her life and promises to help her in her love, saying: The nurse replies that Hippolytus should "show [him]self less harsh", enjoy life, and seek the company of women. Hippolytus responds that life is most innocent and free when spent in the wild. Hippolytus adds that stepmothers "are no whit more merciful than beasts". He finds women wicked and points to Medea as an example. She argues that love can often change stubborn dispositions. Still, Hippolytus maintains his steadfast hatred of womankind. Phaedra hands to her nurse the letter accusing Hippolytus. Phaedra appears, swoons and collapses. When he asks why she is so miserable, she decides to confess her feelings. Phaedra then declares her love for Hippolytus. Aghast, he cries out that he is "guilty", for he has "stirred [his] stepmother to love". He draws his sword to kill Phaedra, but upon realizing this is what she wants, he casts the weapon away and flees into the forest. Phaedra cries out to the citizens of Athens for help, and accuses Hippolytus of attacking her in lust. It is then that Theseus appears, newly returned from the underworld. Lines 2â€” The nurse informs Theseus that Phaedra has resolved to die and asks why, especially now that her husband has come back. The nurse explains that Phaedra will tell no one the cause of her grief. Theseus enters the palace and sees Phaedra clutching a sword, ready to slay herself. He asks her why she is in such a state, but she responds only with vague allusions to a "sin" she has committed. Phaedra intervenes, telling her husband that she has been raped and that the "destroyer of [her] honor" is the one whom Theseus would least expect. She points to the sword Hippolytus left behind. Theseus, in a rage, summons his father Neptune to destroy Hippolytus. The Chorus asks the heavens why they do not reward the innocent and punish the guilty and evil. The Chorus asserts that the order of the world has become skewed: Hippolytus lost control of his terrified horses, and his limbs became entwined in the reins. His body was dragged through the forest, and his limbs were torn asunder. Theseus breaks into tears. Although he wished death upon his son, hearing of it causes him to despair. He orders that Hippolytus be given a proper burial. The Greek playwright Euripides wrote two versions of the tragedy, the lost Hippolytus Veiled and the extant Hippolytus B. Many historians believe that Euripides wrote Hippolytus in order to correct this characterization, and to present Phaedra as chaste, and suffering at the hands of the gods. Since Phaedra was not meant to be acted, historian F. Technical devices such as asides and soliloquies, in addition to a focus on the supernatural and the destructive power of obsessive emotions, can all be traced back to Seneca. According to historian Helen Slaney, Senecan tragedy "virtually disappeared" in the 18th century as drama became more regulated and "sensibility supplanted horror". According to Slaney, today the dramas of Seneca "remain a touchstone for creative practitioners seeking to represent the unrepresentable". The Stoics believed that reason and the laws of nature must always govern human behavior. According to scholar Alin Mocanu, Seneca chooses to describe their preparations with vocabulary, "that would be appropriate both to a hunt for animals and to an erotic hunt". Both Phaedra and her nurse describe Hippolytus as if he were a wild animal, referring to him as "young beast" and "ferocious". Phaedra is referred to as a stepmother four times throughout the course of the play, each time at a moment of climactic action. According to scholar Mairead McAuley, "Roman obsession with both wicked and sexually predatory stepmother figures indicates a prevailing belief that the stepmaternal role led inherently to feminine lack of control and destructive impulses. Impious sin is

worse than monstrous passion; for monstrous love thou mayest impute to fate, but crime, to character.
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