

## From Hunter to Hunted, in Euripides' *Hippolytus*

Desire comes in many forms. It is perhaps best known for the motive of bachelors, making moves in hopes of courting a maiden; however, it can also be attributed to the rationale of sailors, seeking out unfamiliar waters in hopes of finding new lands, or even hunters, chasing after fleeing prey in hopes of capturing them. In each situation, there is an intentional or purposeful pursuit of object of desire; for, desire begets a certain kind of hunger, and this hunger compels us to chase, *to hunt*. But there is always a limit as to how far a chaser can pursue their desire, especially when the chaser is a mortal who wishes to transgress limits that have been set through natural, societal, or divine law; for such actions are hubristic. The mortal's ultimate demise is then a direct result and consequence of their hubristic actions. This is a key element to the hunter-to-hunted trope. In this trope, mortal hunters become pseudo-prey, after some hubristic encounter with divinity, and are subsequently hunted down *not* by the divinities themselves, but by the hunter's helpers who had previously been loyal to them. Beyond the story of Actaeon, who is perhaps the most well-known example of this trope, there are other examples including the stories Pentheus, Lycurgus, Siproites, and Hippolytus whom this paper is centred around. I begin by identifying and defining the five key components of the trope: 1) the hunter and their hunting helpers, 2) the initial prey, 3) the offense against the divine being, 4) the distortion of the hunter's semblance, and 5) the final hunt. The definitions of these components are primarily drawn from the story of Actaeon with additional supporting evidence from the stories of Pentheus, Lycurgus, and Siproites. I then proceed with my examination of the trope within Euripides' *Hippolytus*. My analysis in this section focuses on the play as a variation, and addresses the three distinct ways in which the Euripidean version is different from the other more

commonly considered traditional examples of the trope. First, because the offended goddess, Aphrodite, is an erotic goddess, Hippolytus' hubristic action is the avoidance of her place of worship rather than the physical transgression of it. Second, Hippolytus is neither the only mortal hunter within the play nor the only mortal hunter who transforms from hunter to prey. Most notably, unlike Hippolytus and the others that transform solely from hunter to prey, there is Phaedra who interchanges between the roles of hunter and prey several times throughout the play. Despite this, she nevertheless has a return-from-the-hunt scene, is turned on by her nursing attendant, and eventually tries to flee after said nurse divulges her secret; all of which are key aspects to the role of the mortal hunter. Finally, the final hunt and subsequent death of both Phaedra and Hippolytus do not occur immediately after their physical transgression and hubristic action but rather later, once their wrongdoings are revealed to the other mortals. Even still, both die in a final transgression of physical boundaries during their respective flights, each venturing into the realms which their respective divine hunters govern. In my conclusion I then discuss whether or not the number of variations prevent the Euripidean version from having the hunter-to-hunted trope, and address my rationale for ascribing said trope to this version.