Hunting in Seneca's *Phaedra*

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Abstract

Seneca, in his tragedy *Phaedra*, created an elegiac character using, among other elegiac conventions, the amorous hunting. His Phaedra turns into an aggressive erotic predator who wants to "hunt" Hippolytus whom she is in love with. The prologue of *Phaedra* connects the play with elegiac poetry through the extensive use of venery description, because it highlights Hippolytus' attitude to love: the young man sees the forest as a place of reclusive solitude where he can hide from frenetic passion. The prologue to *Phaedra* is also important from a spatial point of view, for Seneca associates his two main characters with a fundamental difference in locale that recalls the roman elegiac paraclausithyron, where the lover tries, without success, to penetrate into his beloved's intimate space, the house. Furthermore, Seneca reverses the relationship between the lovers: Hippolytus becomes the beloved, Phaedra, the lover, thus inverting the gender roles of normal erotic elegy. At the same time, he amplifies this convention, making it the main theme of his tragedy, for Phaedra has a fundamental impact on the play's action through her desperate attempts to conquer her stepson. Roman love elegy often associates the lover, the feeble man, with the hunter, while representing the beloved, the dominant woman, as his prey. Seneca goes further, because Hippolytus, the true hunter, becomes the erotic prey, while the female character takes on the role of the erotic predator. In this way, Seneca justifies the reversal of the male and the female characters' roles in his use of the elegiac theme of hunting.

Introduction

The myth of Phaedra was a rich source for Greco-Roman literature.[1] In the myth, the theme of hunting plays an important role, but every Greco-Roman author uses it differently[2]. In Euripides' tragedy, Hippolytus, a hunter and a devotee of Diana, disdains Venus; this creates

[1] Euripides, Sophocles, and other Greek tragedians, such as Lycophron (an Alexandrian tragic poet, 3rd century BC), used this myth as a main theme in their plays. Nevertheless, I will not dwell upon the Greek authors. The main focus of the paper is the Roman texts. Ovid adopted and transposed the myth into an elegiac context in *Heroides* 4. Seneca, following Ovid, achieved an interesting mix by inserting a highly elegiac Phaedra into a tragic context, which engaged thoroughly not only with *Heroides* 4, but also with *Amores* 3.1, a poem highlighting Ovid's views about mixing genres, especially tragedy and elegy.
[2] Peter J. Davies, "Rewriting Euripides: Ovid, Heroides 4," *Scholia* 4 (1995), 47-48.

the motif that underlies the action. Ovid plays with the hunting convention in the elegiac context of *Heroides* 4. Hunting becomes an erotic game, a game between lover and beloved, with Phaedra wanting to join Hippolytus in his wanderings: *iudicium subsequor ipsa tuum.*[3] Seneca pushes the theme much further, using hunting as an important elegiac device.[4] His Phaedra turns into an aggressive predator who wants much more than simply to join Hippolytus while he hunts in the woods: she wants to hunt the young man himself. The aim of this paper is to account for Seneca's extensive use of the theme of erotic elegiac hunting in his tragedy.

In the first section of this paper, the prologue receives special attention, for it is an intertextual marker that connects not only with Ovid, but also with elegiac poetry in general, through the entire venery description. It is also important from a spatial point of view because, from the very beginning of the play, Seneca sets up a clear differentiation in locale for his two main characters. Hippolytus is a man of the woods and the mountains, Phaedra, a sophisticated woman from Crete, a civilization known for its cities.[5] Phaedra's attitude towards cynegetic activities adds another dimension to this differentiation in locale. In contrast to Ovid's *Heroides* 4, she becomes the hunter and the young Hippolytus, the prey. As will be shown, Seneca exploits the cynegetic theme fully, and it finally produces a fundamental antagonism between Hippolytus' virginal purity and Phaedra's excessive libido.

Another essential point will be stressed herein. Although *Heroides* 4 presents an elegiac Phaedra, Ovid reverses the relationship between the lovers: Hippolytus becomes the beloved, Phaedra, the lover, thus inverting the gender roles of normal erotic elegy.[6] Seneca affects the same reversal, but he amplifies it, making it the main theme of his play. Indeed, in contrast to the Phaedra in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, who plays a minor role because she commits suicide at the beginning of the story,

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[3] *I am, myself, adopting your tastes.* Ovid, *Epistulae Heroidum*, ed. Alessandro Barchiesi (Firenze: F. Le Monier, 1992), 4.40. NB: All translations are my own.
[4] Rebecca Armstrong, *Cretan women: Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra in Latin poetry* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Davis, *Rewriting Euripides*, 44; Armstrong, *Cretan women*, 261-262.

Seneca's Phaedra has a fundamental impact on the play's action through her desperate attempts to conquer her stepson. Naturally, Roman love-elegy often associates the lover, the feeble man, with the hunter (even though he is not at all suited to a martial activity like hunting), while portraying the beloved, the cruel and dominant woman, as his prey. But Seneca goes further, for as Phaedra and Hippolytus change their roles in his play, another switch occurs: the young man, the true hunter, becomes the erotic prey, while the female character takes on the role of the erotic predator. In this way, Seneca justifies the reversal of the male and the female characters' roles in his use of the elegiac theme of hunting.

The Prologue

The prologue depicts Hippolytus coordinating his men as they prepare to go hunting,[7] which is why Seneca chooses vocabulary with strong cynegetic overtones that would be appropriate both to a hunt for animals and to an erotic hunt: *aper* (boar), *canibus* (*Molossos*, *Cretes*, *Spartanos*) (dogs), *nare sagaci* (keen nostrils), *raras plagas*[8] (wide nets), *teretes laqueos*[9] (rounded snares), *picta rubentia linea pinna*[10] (rope with red painted feathers), *feras* (beasts), *missile telum* (weapon that is thrown), *ferro* (iron – sword), *subsessor* (person who lies in wait for game), *curuo cultro* (curved knife), *retia* (nets).[11] Coffey and Mayer see this scene as proof of Seneca's interest in hunting and of the pleasure he

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[7] The entire passage could also be a metaphor for unrestrained passion, for bestialized love. It introduces the reader to the main theme of the play, with hunting serving as an intermediate theme (Isabel Lopez Cabrera, "Poesia y poetas en la monodia de Hipolito de la Phaedra de Seneca", *Analecta Malacitana Electronica* 16 (2004), 12. Accessed November 22, 2011, http://www.anmal.uma.es/numero16/indice.htm.).

[8] See also Virgil, "Aeneid", *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera*, ed. R.A.B Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 4.131; Ovid, "Ars amatoria", *Amores. Medicamina faciei femineae. Ars amatoria. Remedia amoris*, ed. E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1.270.

[9] See also Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 1.647, 3.591; Ovid, "Remedia Amoris", *Amores. Medicamina faciei femineae. Ars amatoria. Remedia amoris*, ed. E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 502; Horace, "Carmina", *Horatius Opera*, ed. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1991), 1.1.28; Tibullus, *Elegies*, ed. Edward Hiller (Lipsiae: B. Tauchnitz, 1885), 1.9.46.

[10] Seneca, "De Ira", *L. Annaei Senecae opera quae supersunt*, ed. Fredericus Haase (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1852-1853), 2.11.5-6; Virgil, "Georgica", *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera*, ed. R.A.B Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 3.372.

[11] See also Propertius, *Elegies*, ed. S.J. Heyworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.32.20; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R.J. Tarrant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.331.

takes in making lists[12] or imitating an Alexandrian literary technique: "the illusory enactment of a scene as related by an observer."[13] Moreover, they do not accept as Seneca's literary models either Ovid (*Met*. 8.260-444) or Virgil (*Aen*. 4 and 7). They claim that the latter are merely antecedents.[14]

For Zoccali, the entire prologue is an allegory of erotic furor.[15] She provides a detailed list of all the words in the lexical field of *silva* and *ferus,* and argues that this lexical abundance engenders a powerful venery image throughout the prologue.[16] She also notes that Seneca uses the idea of hunting with tragic effects when he has Hippolytus become the sea monster's prey. At the same time, she considers the cynegetic theme as an allegory of untamed erotic *furor*, as the latter comes to expression in Phaedra's unrequited love for Hippolytus.[17] Unfortunately, Zoccali fails to push her analysis far enough, for the hunting metaphor in Seneca's play draws on more than Phaedra's untamed libido. It also makes direct reference to the specific form of elegiac relation that exists between Hippolytus and Phaedra, and this is largely because she becomes an erotic predator, as will be shown in the second part of this paper.

Gazich offers another possible interpretation of the first scene of the play.[18] He maintains that the hunting motif in the prologue refers to Virgil's tenth *Eclogue,* where it is a question of Gallus and his love for Lycoris. Suffice it to say that Rome's greatest elegiac poet escapes his lover's erotic *furor* by heading into the forest:

> *Certum est in siluis inter spelaea ferarum*
> *malle pati tenerisque meos incidere Amores*
> *arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, Amores.*[19]

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[12] Indeed, the scene has the form of a list.
[13] Michael Coffey, and Roland Mayer. ed., *Seneca. Phaedra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 89-90.
[14] *Ibid*., 89.
[15] Francesca Zoccali, "Il prologo *allegorico* della *Phaedra* di Seneca", *Bolletinno di studi latini* 27, t. 2, (1997).
[16] *Ibid*., 444.
[17] *Ibid*., 450-453.
[18] Roberto Gazich, "La *Fedra* di Seneca tra *pathos* ed elegia", *Humanitas* 52, t. 3 (1997), 360-361.
[19] Virgil, "Eclogae", *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera*, ed. R.A.B Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 10.52-54.

[It is better in the woods among the haunts of beasts
To suffer and to inscribe my Love on young trees;
My Love will grow at the same time as they.]

Gazich sees in Virgil's lines the same phenomenon as in the prologue to *Phaedra*, especially since, as he emphasizes, the word *silva* occurs in the very first line of the prologue to *Phaedra*: *Ite umbrosas cingite silvas* (1),[20] as well as in its last line: *Vocor in silva* (82).[21] Moreover, at the end of Hippolytus' dialogue with Phaedra, the disgusted young man invokes the forests and the wild beasts again: *O silvae, o ferae* (718),[22] just as Gallus does.

This brief discussion of the critical literature makes it clear that the beginning of the play allows for myriad interpretations.[23] However, these various readings are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The scholars cited above understand the prologue from different perspectives, but their views are complimentary and serve to create a framework for Hippolytus as a hunter, especially in his opposition to Phaedra.

The possibility of such a framework depends on a correct analysis of the central part of the prologue, where Hippolytus gives his hunting orders to his men:

At uos laxas canibus tacitis
mittite habenas;
teneant acres lora Molossos
et pugnaces tendant Cretes
fortia trito uincula collo.
at Spartanos (genus est audax
auidumque ferae) nodo cautus
propiore liga:

[20] *Go! And surround the shadowy woods!*
[21] *I'm called into the forest.*
[22] *O woods, o wild beast!*
[23] Dupont provides another possible interpretation: she sees Hippolytus as the metaphorical representation of a cruel barbarian king. The entire *canticum* revolves around the parallels between hunting and war, and is based on real life performance situations such as the Colosseum *venationes*, a sort of hunting spectacle where exotic animals were hunted in the arena. (Florence Dupont, "Le prologue de la Phèdre de Sénèque", *Revue des études latines* 69 (1991), 130-131).

ueniet tempus, cum latratu
caua saxa sonent.
nunc demissi nare sagaci
captent auras lustraque presso
quaerant rostro, dum lux dubia est,
dum signa pedum roscida tellus
impressa tenet.
Alius raras ceruice graui
portare plagas,
alius teretes properet laqueos.
picta rubenti linea pinna
uano cludat terrore feras.
Tibi libretur missile telum,
tu graue dextra laeuaque simul
robur lato derige ferro;[24]
[And you, set free the silent dogs
From their leashes
But let the leather strip hold back the ferocious Molossians
And let the wild Cretans pull hard on
The chains around their necks, three times.
And hold in the Spartans (an untamed race, avid for hunting),
Carefully with a tighter knot.
The time will come when, because of their barking,
The hollow rocks will vibrate.
Now let the unleashed dogs with their keen nostrils
Sniff the air and look for
The haunts of the beasts, muzzles on the ground
While the light is still dim,
While the earth still holds the footsteps
Imprinted in the dew.
Let one of you hurry up
Bearing on his heavy neck wide nets.

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[24] Seneca, "Phaedra", *L. Annaei Senecae Tragoediae*, ed. Otto Zwierlein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30-51.

Let another one bear rounded snares.
Let a rope with red painted feathers
Hedge in the beasts with empty frightening.
You, throw your spear
And you, from the right and left
Hurl the heavy club with the iron-head.]

This central part of the prologue, where Hippolytus addresses the hunters, can be schematized in terms of the main hunting methods:

a) lines 30 – 43 – hounds
b) lines 44 – 45 – *plagas*[25] and *laqueos*[26]
c) lines 46 – 47 – *picta rubenti linea pinna*[27]
d) lines 48 – 50 – *missile telum*[28]

It seems clear that the prologue has a textual relation with a passage from Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*. In the passage in question, the poet offers advice on how to escape love's *curae* and pains. Among other things, he advises the following:

Vel tu uenandi studium cole: saepe recessit
Turpiter a Phoebi uicta sorore Venus.
Nunc leporem pronum catulo sectare sagaci,
Nunc tua frondosis retia tende iugis,
Aut pauidos terre uaria formidine ceruos,
Aut cadat aduersa cuspide fossus aper.[29]
[Cultivate the art of hunting: often ashamed, Venus
Retreats vanquished by Phoebus' sister.
Now follow the headlong hare with keen dogs,
Now spread your nets on the leafy hills,
Fright the timid deer with the many-coloured *formido*,[30]

[25] Nets.
[26] Snares.
[27] Rope with red painted feather (*formido*).
[28] Spears.
[29] Ovid, *Remedia Amoris*, 199-204.
[30] *Formido, - inis* = A rope strung with feathers used by hunters to scare game (G.M. Lee ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968), 723, 2b).

Or hunt down the boar, stabbed with your harsh spear.]

In this passage, almost every verse refers to something to do with hunting: dogs, nets, crafty devices, and weapons that are thrown. Hence the order is exactly the same as in the prologue to *Phaedra*. Moreover, line 203: *Aut pauidos terre uaria formidine ceruos* (Fright the timid deer with your many-coloured hunting rope), recalls lines 46-47 in *Phaedra*: *picta rubenti linea pinna / uano cludat terrore feras* (Using a rope with red-painted feathers / Hedge in the beasts with empty frightening). In *De ira,* Seneca describes the hunting device in question, the *formido*.[31] In *Remedia Amoris,* Ovid uses the same term (*formidine*) as well as the term *terreo* (*terre*), which Seneca uses in *De ira* (*terrori*) and in *Phaedra* (*terrore vano*). Although his sharing certain vocabulary with Ovid does not prove that Seneca takes the poet as a model, the references to the *formido* device and the identical ordering of the hunting techniques suggests that he does. Ovid's lines from *Remedia Amoris* propose ways of chasing away the torments of love. The poet advises the reader to replace Venus with Phoebus' sister Diana and then pursue the venery imagery.[32] This clarifies the connection between the two passages: Hippolytus is a chaste hunter, a devotee of Diana, and he regards Venus with distaste, as a goddess and allegory of love. His rejection of Venus is central to the play, a key to its plot. Thus, there could be no better text than Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* 199-204 with which Seneca to link.

The antithesis Diana/Venus is present throughout the tragedy, and not surprisingly, since these goddesses embody the ideas of hunting

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[31] *Nec mirum est, cum maximos ferarum greges linea pinnis distincta contineat et in insidias agat, ab ipso adfectu dicta formido; uanis enim uana terrori sunt . . . [s]ic itaque ira metuitur quomodo umbra ab infantibus, a feris rubens pinna* (Sen., *Ira*, 2.11.5-6) (It is not astonishing that the distinct line adorned with feathers frightens big crowds of wild animals and sends them running towards the traps; because of this, the device is called a formido . . . and thus the fright is feared as the shadow is feared by children and red feathers by beasts).

[32] In Virgil's tenth *Eclogue*, Gallus, the elegiac poet *par excellence*, tries the same remedy without success: *libet Partho torquere Cydonia cornu spicula; / tamquam haec sit nostri medicina furoris, / aut deus ille malis hominum mitescere discat!* (Verg., *Ecl.*, 10.59-61) (Like a Parthian I'm now enjoying myself throwing the Cydonian arrow / As if I could find in that a remedy for my passion, / As if *Amor* feels compassion for human pains!). Note also the use of the words *medicina* (remedy) and *furoris* (passion) that heighten the intertextual links with *Remedia Amoris* and *Phaedra*, where *furor* often designates the heroine's lust.

and love respectively. On the other hand, Diana seems to be the central deity in *Phaedra*: she is the one who has an altar on stage (whereas in Euripides' *Hippolytus* both Venus' and Diana's shrines are present), and she is the one the nurse prays to in order to make Hippolytus fall in love with Phaedra.[33] Boyle notes that the shrine is important to the tragedy, appearing four times (54 ff., 406 ff., 424 ff., and 707 ff.). This suggests that hunting has a much more significant role in *Phaedra* than in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Furthermore, when the nurse tries to obtain divine help to alleviate her mistress's suffering, she prays to Diana, not to Venus, even though her invocation concerns erotic matters.[34] In fact, the nurse asks Diana to make Hippolytus comply with Venus' laws, which raises a question: Why does not the suppliant *nutrix* address Venus directly? The explanation for this odd supplicatory strategy must be sought in Phaedra's complaint at line 125 ff., where she evokes an old quarrel between Venus and her family, after which Venus swore to take revenge, with the result that no woman in the family has had a normal love life since.[35] Thus, in contrast to *Heroides* 4, where Venus remains the main deity throughout, which is standard in erotic elegy, Diana, the goddess of hunting, becomes the main deity in Seneca's *Phaedra*. This proves once again that cynegetic activities are very important for the development of his play.[36]

Another important feature of the prologue is the contrast of spaces or worlds.[37] Although there is no apparent connection between the beginning of the play and its further development—besides the

[33] A. J. Boyle, "In Nature's Bonds: A Study of Seneca's Phaedra", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 32 (2), (1985), 1290.

[34] *O magna silvas inter et lucos dea / [...] / animum rigentem tristis Hippolyti doma / [...] / innecte mentem: torvus aversus ferox / in iura Veneris redeat* (Sen. *Phae.* 409, 413, 415-416) (O great goddess of woods and grooves / tame the inflexible heart of stern Hippolytus / Embrace his heart: harsh, hostile, savage / Push him into the arms of Love!)

[35] *Stirpem perosa solis invisi Venus / per nos catenas vindicat Martis sui / sauasque, probris omne Phoebum genus / onerat nefandis : nulla Minois levi / defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas* (Sen. *Phae.* 124-129).

[36] C.S. Pearsons, "Simile and imagery in Ovid Heroides 4 and 5", *Illinois Classical Studies* 5 (1980), 118.

[37] Charles Segal understands the contrast of the different spaces to which Hippolytus and Phaedra belong as a psychological creation whose result is the language of desire (Charles Segal. *Language and desire in Seneca's Phaedra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), ch. 2-3.

intertextual device that engages with Ovid—the prologue sets the scene for an essential aspect of the plot as it presents Hippolytus' world, the world of hunting. Phaedra tries throughout the play to penetrate this world, to follow the man she loves into it and have him initiate her into all his activities.[38] Highlighting an interesting idea, Vizzoti notes that the opposition between the two world spaces in the play underscores the fundamental opposition between the two main characters: the forests and mountains, described as arid and cold, are existentially symbolic of Hippolytus as a character who is *durus*, whereas the place of Phaedra's existential world, the palace, just like she herself as a character, is "*oppresivo, torrido, pleno de llamas y vapor*" (oppressive, torrid, full of tears and heat).[39] By its dynamic social relations and its "heat" and passion, the palace becomes a representative space for Phaedra, a *mollis* woman. Thus in Seneca's play, the characters' places and worlds modulate the very essence of Roman love elegy: the opposition between man and woman or between *durus* and *mollis*. And once again, it is important to stress that Seneca inverts the gender roles when, contrary to the literary conventions of normal erotic elegy, Hippolytus become *durus* and Phaedra, *mollis*.

For De Trane, the prologue sets up an opposition between Hippolytus' rusticity (the forests and the mountains) and the sophistication of the city-dweller Phaedra (the palace).[40] Indeed, in his conversation with Phaedra's nurse, Hippolytus preaches in favour of a return to ancient values and to a rustic life exempt from treachery, greed, and other material vices. For him, the virtuous life in the wilderness stands opposed to the palace life advocated by the nurse and by Phaedra, which is full of the excessive sexuality promoted by Venus. There could very well be an intended parallel here with Roman love elegy, a literary genre that Ovid (*Amores* 3.1) describes as based on numerous romantic

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[38] Effrosini Spentzou, *Readers and writers in Ovid's Heroides: transgressions of genre and gender* (New York; Oxford: Oxford Classical Press, 2003), 72-73.
[39] Martin Vizzotti, "Catástrofe e invasión discursiva en *Phaedra* de Séneca", *Auster* 10-11 (2005-2006), 101.
[40] Ginetta De Trane, "Spazi e scelte antitetiche nella Fedra di Seneca", *Παλαιὰ Φιλία : studi di topografia antica in onore di Giovanni Uggeri*, ed. Cesare Marangio and Giovanni Laudizi (Galatina: Congedo, 2009).

schemes that involve erotic deceiving, lying, and cheating.[41] The prologue serves, therefore, as an erotic marker, but also as a catalyst for the antinomy of *rusticitas* and *civitas*, which is an extension of the opposition between Hippolytus and Phaedra.

These spatial aspects in their relation to the characters' identities also apply in an erotic elegiac context. In erotic elegy, the lover, outside the house, always tries to penetrate inside to see his beloved, who usually tries to oppose his efforts to do so. In *Phaedra*, the situation is reversed because the roles are switched. The beloved is not the woman anymore, but the man. Accordingly, the spatial aspects of the opposition undergo the same transformation. The lover, the woman this time, adopts the opposite behaviour: she tries to escape from the interior, the palace, to the exterior. She wants to invade her beloved's space, Hippolytus' world, the forests and the mountains. Thus hunting becomes an important component of the reversed elegiac situation that structures Seneca's play. This reversal replaces the role that the paraclausithyron plays in elegy.[42] But there is a difference. In contrast to elegy, which is rarely tragic as lovers are stopped at the door or blocked by cruel gatekeepers, Seneca's tragedy allows for no spatial barriers. Phaedra bursts violently into Hippolytus' world with nothing to stop her, and this provides the tragic tone as well as the tragic end: the young man's death.[43]

Therefore, the main role of the entire prologue is to emphasize Hippolytus' attitude towards love. Gazich correctly argues that the forests represent a place of reclusion, a place to hide from frenetic passion.[44] At the same time, we have seen that the prologue engages with

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[41] *Amores* 3.1 is a programmatic allegorical poem in which Ovid has two formal literary genres confront each other: Love Elegy and Tragedy. Tragedy tries to recruit the poet for her own purposes and puts forward arguments such as her seriousness and *maiestas*, whereas Love Elegy tries to entice the poet with erotic playfulness and the prospect of an exciting love life.

[42] Paraclausithyron is a literary genre involving a male character who begs in front of the closed door of a house and seeks ways to enter inside and see his beloved. Normally, he does not succeed.

[43] As Rosati emphasizes, the desire to commit suicide is portrayed in Roman love elegy, but it never materializes. In tragedy, characters actually kill themselves. (Gianpiero Rosati, "Forma elegiaca di un simbolo letterario. La Fedra di Ovidio". *Atti delle giornate di studio su Fedra, Torino 7-8-9 maggio 1984*, ed. R. Uglione R. (Torino : Delegazione dell'AICC, 1985), 79).

[44] Gazich, *La Fedra di Seneca*, 360-361.

Ovid who, in *Remedia Amoris,* prescribes hunting as a cure for love: the lovesick man should leave Venus and go hunting with Diana. Thus for Hippolytus, hunting is an allegory of purity and virginity.

The prologue also sets up the spatial relations of the Roman love elegy that define the paraclausithyron. In the first lines of the play, Seneca builds an intimate space for Hippolytus, a place for hunting (associated with purity and a lack of sexuality), which will soon be invaded by Phaedra and her excessive libido.

Phaedra the hunter

Hippolytus is not the only hunter in the play. Phaedra becomes a hunter, too.[45] She says so herself, although she does not mention directly what or who the prey is. Ovid provides the model here.[46] In *Heroides* 4, Phaedra manifests her desire to join Hippolytus in his cynegetic wanderings. The origin of this scene is Euripides' *Hippolytus*. But contrary to the Greek playwright, Ovid does not use the motif for tragic purposes.[47] Instead, he relates it to the idea of erotic hunting, a very common convention in Roman elegiac poetry, where the beloved becomes the prey and the lover the hunter. However, the Roman elegiac poet is not as radical as the Roman playwright Seneca. Ovid's Phaedra does not say explicitly that she wants to "hunt" Hippolytus. Indeed, there is no mention of it at all. She merely says that she wants to learn the same skills and do the same things as Hippolytus: *iudicium subsequor*

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[45] Davis, *Rewriting Euripides*, 47-48.

[46] *iuuat excitatas consequi cursu feras / et rigida molli gaesa iaculari manu* (Seneca, *Phaedra*, 110-111) (I enjoy following the frightened beasts as they run away and throwing stiff spears with my soft hands).

[47] In the Greek play, the moment when Phaedra talks about her new desire to become a hunter is a moment of confusion because neither her nurse nor the chorus understands what she is referring to. The insertion of the scene is in fact a first clue to what is happening to Phaedra, but a first clue addressed to the audience only. It seems clear that Euripides uses this scene for narrative purposes, that is to say, to advance the action.

ipsa tuum (I, myself, adopted your tastes).[48] She asks to join the young man—her request seems to involve a literary theme that is very common in Roman love elegy: *servitium amoris* (The slavery of Love).[49] This is no surprise because, as we have already seen, Ovid, as well as Seneca, inverses the gender roles in the elegiac context of the relationship, and Phaedra comes to do what the man normally does: conquer her lover even though it leads to *servitium*. Contrary to her Ovidian twin in *Heroides* 4, Seneca's Phaedra is a true predator who wants very much to hunt Hippolytus himself. Although it involves behaving like a man, at least from the perspective of Roman elegiac poetry, Seneca's Phaedra pursues her desire and molds this behaviour to suit her own purposes.[50]

Seneca uses two different devices to portray her disposition for hunting. The first concerns the way Phaedra and the *nutrix* designate Hippolytus, the second, the ambiguity of the verb *sequor,*[51] which Phaedra uses, on three occasions in the play, in a way clearly modeled on the use of *consequi* in *Heroides* 4, line 110. Davis[52] and Lopez Cabrera[53] emphasize that Phaedra and her nurse continually bestialize Hippolytus through the epithets that they attach to his name: *ferus* (ferocious) (240), *iuuenum ferum* (young beast) (272), *mentem saevam* (cruel soul) (273), *pectus ferum* (cruel heart) (414), *toruus aversus ferox* (wild enraged beast) (416), *truculentus silvester* (rude rustic man) (461), or through the use of phrases with other connotations related to wild animals: *seque mulcendum dabit* (he will let you caress him) (236) *animum rigentem tristis Hippolyti doma* (tame the inflexible heart of sad Hippolytus) (413), *ipse poenis grauibus infestus domas* (you impose on yourself an existence full of severe pain) (439), *obstinatis induit frenos amor* (love takes a hold of those who oppose) (574).[54] The same device occurs in

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[48] Ov., *Her.*, 4.40.
[49] Maria Consuelo Álvarez, and Rosa Maria Iglesias, "La Fedra de Ovidio," *Fedras de ayer y de hoy : teatro, poesía, narrativa y cine ante un mito classico*, ed. Andrés Pociña and Aurora Lópex. (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2008), 186.
[50] *Idem*.
[51] The verb *sequor* means *to follow* but also *to hunt*.
[52] Davis, *Rewriting Euripides*, 48.
[53] Lopez Cabrera, *Poesia y poetas*, 12.
[54] *Mulcendum* underscores the idea that Hippolytus is a wild animal that can be tamed with caresses (Coffey and Mayer, *Seneca*, 113). The verb *domo* occurs twice, and *frenos* refers to the taming of wild horses.

Ovid's *Heroides* 4 where, for example, Hippolytus and his horse are both *ferox* (ferocious).[55] But Seneca uses this device with much more insistence than Ovid. In Seneca's play, Phaedra's desire to hunt her young man is sustained by his being portrayed as a wild, untamed beast from the beginning to the tragic end.

Of course, venery imagery in an erotic context is an Alexandrian, not a Roman invention.[56] However, Roman authors exploit this theme much more frequently. Ovid, in particular, uses it extensively, more so than Propertius or Tibullus,[57] and Virgil makes use of it too, in a passage from the *Aeneid 11:*

> *uenatrix, unum ex omni certamine pugnae*
> *caeca sequebatur totumque incauta per agmen*
> *femineo praedae et spoliorum ardebat amore.*[58]
> [As a hunter, she was pursuing incautiously, recklessly in the middle of the battle
> And all around the enemy lines, only one man from amongst all the others,
> And she was burning with a feminine love for prey and spoil.]

The Amazon Camilla, excited by battle and by a handsome young man with golden weapons, decides to hunt him down.[59] The fragment is ambiguous, and the Amazon's feelings are a mix of violent fury engendered by battle (*certamine pugnae* [the middle of the battle], *agmen* [lines of battle], *spoliorum* [spoils of war]), and luxurious desire (*femineo amore* [feminine desire]), which may also be erotically symbolic, both expressed through the theme of hunting (*venatrix* [hunter],

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[55] Pearsons, *Simile and imagery*, 118.
[56] Armstrong, *Cretan women*, 104.
[57] Saara Lilija, *The Roman Elegists' Attitude to Women* (New York: Garland Pub, 1965), 182. Dörfler quotes 11 occurrences in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*: *Ars Am*. 1.89, 1.253-254, 1.270, 1.646-647, 1.765-766, 2.2, 3.553-554, 3.591-592, 3.661-662, 3.669-670, and *Rem. Am*. 501-502. For Tibullus, he cites two occurrences: 1.6.5 and 1.9.45-46, and for Propertius, just one: 2.32.19-20. To this list, I add the following: Ov., *Ars Am.,* 2.9.10, 3.2.31-32 and Ov., *Rem. Am*., 149, 200-209 (Salo Dörfler, *Beiträge zu einer Topik der römischen Elegiker* (Nikolsburg: Rosenau, 1905), 14).
[58] Verg., *Aen*, 11.780-782.
[59] Again, male weapons can be seen as metaphors for the male genitalia.

sequebatur [follow, hunt], *praedae* [prey]).[60] In Latin, the words *praedae* and *spoliarum* are semantically related. Both may be used to refer to either the booty carried off by the soldier or to the prey killed by the hunter. This semantic relation is natural, because war and hunting both involve violent confrontation and the use of weapons. Moreover, in many ancient cultures hunting served as a type of military education for young men.[61]

It is also noteworthy that in her madness Phaedra hopes to delude Hippolytus by dressing as an Amazon (387-405). This is powerfully symbolic, for Phaedra wants to seduce the young man by taking on the attributes of his mother: *laeva se paretrae dabit / hastile vibret dextra Thessalicum manus / talis severi mater Hippolyti fuit*.[62] Thus her abrupt eruption into Hippolytus' life in the forest and the mountains involves another anomaly that changes the natural world order. The idea that Amazonians lack eroticism may underlie this anomaly. Paradoxically, in her *furor* Phaedra thinks that she can seduce Hippolytus by denying the erotic and emotional implications of their relationship. To do so, she uses a powerful symbol to remind the young man of the only woman for whom he has ever had any feelings. She ends her speech with a reference to the same obsession with the woods[63]: *talis in silvas ferar*.[64] She mixes the two roles together, that of Amazon and that of hunter, in an effort to create a character who will seduce Hippolytus. The same duality of war and hunting occurs in the passage from Virgil quoted above.

The elegiacs link the topos of hunting with the idea of love: the hunter becomes a sexual predator in pursuit of his prey. Of course, in Roman love elegy this creates an opposition between hunting and town life, but the elegiac poets transform the activity of hunting to suit it to the urban setting.[65] A change takes place in Seneca's *Phaedra* because, as

[60] Phaedra's nurse, in her second speech (Seneca, *Phaedra,* 204-211), clearly links luxury and lust, suggesting that the first engenders the second.
[61] C.M.C. Green, "Did the Romans Hunt?", *Classical Antiquity* 15, t. 2 (1996).
[62] *My left hand will bear the quiver / My right hand will throw the Thessalian spear / Such was cruel Hippolytus' mother.* (Sen., *Phae.*, 396-398).
[63] E. Calabrese, "Il sistema delle relazioni nella Fedra di Seneca: Una lettura pragmatica," PhD diss., Universita' degli studi di Verona (2002-2003), 46-47.
[64] *Like this I would go into the woods.* (Sen., *Phae.*, 403).
[65] Eleanor Winsor, "Georgic Imagery in the *Ars Amatoria,*" *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 95 (1964).

we have already seen, the author reintegrates the hunting motif into the *rustica silva*, where it naturally belongs. This makes possible a shift from elegiac town love to elegiac rustic love, a shift which represents an anomaly in terms of literary genres, with the play ending in the tragic deaths of both Phaedra and Hippolytus. This inversion engages directly with *Heroides* 4, where Ovid's Phaedra tries to situate her untamed love in a forest setting, citing three examples of pairs of hunter-lovers who, just like she and Hippolytus, came to a tragic end: Cephalus and Aurora (93-96), Venus and Adonis (97-98), and Meleager and Atalanta (99-100). Noting Phaedra's desire, in *Heroides* 4, to accompany Hippolytus into the forest (101-104) and her effort to convince the young man, Pearsons interprets these three examples of other pairs of hunter-lovers as follows: "presumably, the first is intended to depict the younger lover who submits to the advances of an older woman; the second, to identify the forest as the scene of erotic union; and the third, to portray lovers as companions in the hunt. The exempla, however, bear sinister import—as examples of (1) adultery; (2) incest *Cinyra que creatum* is contrived to emphasize the manner of Adonis' conception; (3) death—note the telling reference to Meleager by his patronymic. He will meet death at the hands of his own mother after he has murdered his uncles."[66] As we have already seen, Phaedra is the one who destroys the elegiac hunting topos by relocating the action, moving it from the town into a rustic elegiac setting. As Pearsons notes, her examples of other pairs of hunter-lovers are supposed to be convincing. Yet, they are not as they represent a corrupted, abnormal love that has tragic consequences. In terms of genre, Seneca's portrayal of Phaedra points to the conclusion that love elegy is a form of townish poetry not suitable for presenting a rustic character like Hippolytus.[67] Tragedy occurs because of Phaedra's intrusion into Hippolytus' life and because of her terrible destructiveness. She claims to want to become a hunter like him, but instead she wrecks havoc in his

[66] Pearsons, *Simile and imagery*, 118.
[67] *Amores* 3.1 heightens this conclusion. In this programmatic poem Ovid makes a fundamental distinction between rustic love and the townish love that is specific to Roman love elegy.

world. She tries to bring an intensely passionate love into an inappropriate place, and this generates the final catastrophe.

Seneca's Phaedra makes her first clear reference to the elegiac convention of hunting at line 111: *iuvat excitatas consequi cursu feras / et rigida molli gaesa iaculari manu.*[68] Hippolytus is a huntsman and, as we have already seen, both Phaedra and the *nutrix* bestialize him throughout the play. The young man's transformation into a beast of prey is strongly connected to the elegiac convention of hunting. Thus, *excitatats feras* (frightened beasts)—by way of a series of inversions often commented upon: huntsman/prey, human/beast, and lover/beloved—may very well refer to Hippolytus as he appears in elegiac hunting contexts. The next line makes this conclusion plausible: Phaedra, with her *molli manu,* throws *rigida gaesa* (stiff javelins). These two short phrases concentrate the expression of Phaedra's excessive sexuality and emphasize the *mollis/durus* antinomy, one of the central oppositions in elegy. As Adams notes, the weapon metaphor is very common in sexual puns.[69] Moreover, the word *gesatus* (a derivation of *gaesum*) has been found on an inscription with sexual connotations.[70] The erotic meaning is reinforced by the adjective *rigida* and its opposite, *mollis*. Thus the strong link between erotic elegy and hunting should be noted here, not only to the extent that it constantly occurs in Roman literature, but also as a marker of the fundamental inversion effected in Seneca's play, where the elegiac man changes places with a passionate woman who hunts him erotically.

The second interesting element is the verb *sequor*, which Phaedra uses in three places to say that she will follow Hippolytus. It is of course the normal verb for expressing the idea of following someone, but Hippolytus' use of *sequor* in lines 61-62 brings out another possible connotation: *tua Gaetulos dextra leones, / tua Cretaeas sequitur ceruas.*[71] In these two lines from the prologue, Hippolytus refers to Diana,

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[68] *I enjoy pursuing the frightened beasts as they run away and throwing stiff spears with my soft hands*. (Sen., *Phae.*, 111).
[69] J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London: Duckworth, 1982), 19-21.
[70] Otto Hirschfield, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. XII*, (1996), 12.5695.3.
[71] *Let your right hand hunt the Gaetulian lions and the Cretan deer.*

the hunter goddess. Coffey and Mayer[72] give as a model for *Cretaeas ceruas* the *Aeneid* 4:

> *Uritur infelix Dido, totaque uagatur*
> *urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerua sagitta,*
> *quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit*
> *pastor agens telis, liquitque uolatile ferrum*
> *nescius; illa fuga siluas saltusque peragrat*
> *Dictaeos;*[73]
> [Miserable Dido burns, and mad, she wanders here and there
> Through the entire city, like a deer struck by thrown arrows,
> Which a shepherd, without knowing and from afar,
> Hits by surprise in the Cretan groves, with the winged iron.
> Then she runs away through the woods and forests of Dicte.]

In this passage, Dido, who is in love with Aeneas, feels a frenzied distress, and the poet compares her to a deer being pursued by a hunter in the Cretan forests and mountains. Virgil's portrayal of Crete as a savage place is strange, given that the island was especially known for its cities, but in the *Aeneid* the situation is more or less ambiguous.[74] Virgil describes Crete as the island of 100 cities, yet he also depicts it as a savage, mountainous land.[75] The recurring phrase *centum urbes* (100 cities) contrasts revealingly with *nemora* (woods), *pastor* (shepherd), *silvas* (forest) or *saltus* (a forest or a pass in a forest). Thus, by referring

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[72] Coffey and Myer, *Seneca*, 95.
[73] Verg, *Aen*, 4.68-73.
[74] *aut ille centum nobilem Cretam urbibus* (Horace, "Epistulae", *Horatius Opera*, ed. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1991), 9.29) (He [goes] to that noble Crete of 100 cities); *Quae simul centum tetigit potentem / oppidis Creten* (Hor., *Carm.*, 3.27.33-34) (Right away she reached that powerful Crete with its 100 cities); *Creta Iouis magni medio iacet insula ponto / mons Idaeus ubi et gentis cunabula nostrae. / centum urbes habitant magnas, uberrima regna* (*Ibid*., 3.104-106) (Crete the island of Jupiter is set in the middle of the sea / Mount Ida is there and the cradle of our race. / People live there in 100 great cities, a prosperous kingdom).
[75] *ut quondam Creta fertur Labyrinthus in alta* (*Ibid*., 5.588) (When long ago in mountainous Crete the Labyrinth was built); *Venus indigno nati concussa dolore / dictamnum genetrix Cretaea carpit ab Ida, / puberibus caulem foliis et flore comantem / purpureo; non illa feris incognita capris / gramina, cum tergo uolucres haesere sagittae* (*Ibid*., 12.411-415) (Venus touched by the unmerited suffering of her son / As a true mother went to search for dittany on Mount Ida in Crete / Adorned with young leafs and purple flowers, this plant is well known by the savage goats / When the fast arrows hit their backs).

to this passage from Virgil, Seneca highlights Crete's dual nature. Although a civilized place, the island's mountainous wilderness landscape makes it favorable to hunters. Seneca transfers this dual nature to Phaedra's character.[76] As a Cretan[77] woman, Phaedra represents her native land's prosperity and the refinements of its great civilization,[78] but as the play goes on, she becomes an erotic hunter, mad with unbridled libido and obsessed with tracking down her lover. The reference to the passage from Virgil reinforces the description of her dual nature because the passage depicts Dido as burning with a frenzied love for Aeneas. Images of fire and madness are called forth by words like *uritur* (burns), *infelix* (miserable), *furens* (maddened), *vagatur (*wanders). Cynegetic metaphors stand out in words and phrases like *coniecta cerba* (deer), *sagitta* (arrows), *pastor agens telis* (a shepherd throwing spears), *volatile ferrum* (the flying iron), *peragrat* (scour); and the constantly recurring words referring to the forest: *nemora*, *silvas*, *saltus*—all three words mean *woods*—also link Seneca's Phaedra to the passage from Virgil.

Lines 61-62 from *Phaedra* provide, therefore, an intertextual marker that has an important role in the further development of the play. They refer not only to Crete, Phaedra's homeland, but also to the passage from Virgil where Dido, madly in love with Aeneas, runs about in a frenzied atmosphere full of fiery imagery and charged with the sexual tension of cynegetic eroticism. Taken together, these elements produce an erotic elegiac atmosphere that pervades Seneca's play from beginning to end. In addition, the use of the verb *sequor* with the meaning *to hunt*

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[76] And Ovid too. *Heroides* 4 begins as follows: *Quam nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, / salutem mittit Amazonio Cressa puella uiro* (Ov., *Her.*, 4.1-2) (The Cretan girl sends her best wishes to the Amazonian boy / Wishes that she will miss if he refuses to grant them to her).

[77] Crete as a geographical entity represents much more for Phaedra. As the birthplace of Zeus and of civilization (Minos), the island offers a mixture of two antagonistic features: it is a known for its cities as well as for its wilderness, and this is reflected in Phaedra's character. Moreover, Crete, Phaedra's birthplace, has been the theatre of failed love affairs such as the one between Ariadne, Phaedra's sister, and Theseus, Phaedra's husband, or of monstrous passions, e.g. that of Phaedra's own mother, Persiphae, who fell in love with a bull. Although this does not concern the present discussion directly, it is quite interesting that Crete should have such importance in the Phaedra myth.

[78] *O magna uasti Creta dominatrix freti, / cuius per omne litus innumerae rates / tenuere pontum, quidquid Assyria tenus / tellure Nereus peruium rostris secat* (Sen., *Phae*., 85-88) (O powerful Crete, ruler of the vast sea, / Your innumerable ships hold the sea and every shore / And their beaks sailed across the plain of Nereus all the way to the land of Assyria).

has important implications here.[79] For this meaning is not restricted to references to Diana. In three places in the play, Phaedra uses *sequor* to express her desire to follow Hippolytus.[80] The verb has an essential ambiguity on which Seneca plays, leaving the elegiac features of the story unclear at the same time. On a first reading, nothing seems unusual about Phaedra's wanting to follow her lover: her passion compels her to do so, but if the play is read from the point of view of love elegy, Phaedra's extraordinary desire, not just to follow her lover, but to hunt him, becomes evident. Again, the inter and intratextual chain is noteworthy: Phaedra continues to use the verb *sequor* long after its first occurrence (61-62) in a context that recalls the ambiguity of Crete and, implicitly, that of Phaedra herself. At the same time, the verb carries a reference to Dido's unrequited love, the latter involving a mismatch of lovers very similar to the one in which Phaedra finds herself, especially with respect to its elegiac character (61-62). Seneca's way of interpreting the words of Ovid's Phaedra is particularly interesting here: *iudicium subsequor ipsa tuum*.[81] After this phrase, Ovid's Phaedra says that she has started to enjoy hunting and wandering in the woods, but Seneca takes the notion of following someone to another level. Not content to follow Hippolytus by simply adopting his outward tastes, his Phaedra pursues the young hero at the very core of his being.

These three examples involving the verb *sequor* bring another conclusive element to the fore, the spatial dimension, which is once again very marked.[82] Every time Phaedra speaks of following Hippolytus,

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[79] The verb is also used with this cynegetic connotation by Ovid *Rem. Am.*, 208 and *Her.*, 9.36 and 4.40.

[80] **Ph**. *Hunc in niuosi collis haerentem iugis, / et aspera agili saxa calcantem pede / sequi per alta nemora, per montes placet* (Sen., *Phae.*, 233-235) (**Ph.** I follow him wherever he likes to go: on these mountains full of snow, on these cliffs where he runs with agile foot through the high peaks and woods); **Nvt**. *Fugiet*. **Ph**. *Per ipsa maria si fugiat, sequar* (*Ibid*., 241) (**Nvt.** He'll run! **Ph.** If he runs, I will follow him even on the sea); **Ph**. *te uel per ignes, per mare insanum sequar / rupesque et amnes, unda quos torrens rapit* (*Ibid*., 700-701) (I will follow you through fire and on the sea, / Through mountains and torrential rivers).

[81] Ov., *Her.*, 4.40.

[82] The idea of following one's beloved wherever he or she wants to go is a topos of the *servitium amoris* genre (Maria Antonietta Cervellara, "Tempesta di passioni : le tragedie di Seneca," *"Amicitiae templa serena" : studi in onore di Giuseppe Aricò*, ed. Luigi Castagna and Chiara Riboldi, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero (2008), 1427-1428). Other examples are Propertius, *Elegies*, 2. 26. 29-30; Ovid, "Amores", *Amores. Medicamina faciei femineae. Ars amatoria. Remedia amoris*, ed. E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford

she also mentions that she would not hesitate to hike through the highest mountains or to sail the roughest seas. Moreover, a shift in addressee occurs. The first time, she speaks to herself in interior monologue (233-235), the second time, she addresses the nurse (241), and finally, she speaks directly to Hippolytus himself (700-701). As she changes addressees, tension builds through her amplification of the space that she would cover in order to join the young hero. The first passage (233-235) is in fact an intratextual marker recalling the prologue, and it shares the same elements: the inhospitableness of the landscape as they descend the mountain slopes, Hippolytus' role as *dux* and the inferiority of his followers, and of course, the hyperbole in Phaedra's descriptions.[83] So that the first time that Phaedra speaks of following Hippolytus, she restricts the spatial reference to the mountainous landscape of Attica where the action takes place. The second time (241), she expands this reference, saying that she would follow or hunt her beloved even on the sea. Finally, when she speaks directly to Hippolytus (700-701), the paroxysm reaches its climax. She claims that she would follow him through blazing fire, and then she ends by enumerating every geographical space imaginable: she would pursue him across seas, through rivers, and up mountain slopes.

Thus Phaedra's use of the verb *sequor* shows how Seneca plays with intertextuality and intratextuality, and how he transforms his mythical personage into an aggressive heroine who is prepared, not only to follow Hippolytus, but also to hunt him down. Seneca is not the only author who exploits the verb *sequor*, but he does so in a unique way that gives powerful expression to fundamental aspects of both elegy and tragedy. For he establishes strong intertextual links that serve to underscore the mixture of tragic and elegiac character traits in Phaedra, an effect also produced by the evocation of the dual nature of Crete, a civilized elegiac realm, which is savagely tragic at the same time. Finally, drawing a parallel between Phaedra and Dido accentuates this mixing of

University Press, 1961), 2.16.21-22; Virgil, *Eclogues,* 10.23, and *Minor Authors of the Corpus Tibullianum*, ed. John Yardley (Bryn Mawr: Thomas Library Bryn Mawr College, 1992), 3.11-14.

[83] Cervellara, *Tempesta di passioni*, 1427-1428.

genres because the passage from Virgil introduces an elegiac atmosphere, even though Dido's tragic end—just like Phaedra's—would be well known to readers from the beginning.

Another text already quoted makes interesting use of the verb *sequor*: *Eclogue 10*. Scholars have noted the intertextual links between Virgil's poem and Seneca's *Phaedra*, but I would like to analyze further some particular aspects of the poem in light of the genre theme of hunting. The poem is dedicated to one of the greatest elegiac Latin poets, so there should be no surprise if an elegiac atmosphere surrounds it.

> . . . *Venit Apollo*
> *"Galle quid insanis?" inquit "tua cura Lycoris*
> *Perque nives allium perque horrida castra secuta est"*[84]
> [Apollo came
> "Gallus! Why do you go crazy?" said he, "By concern for you,
> Lycoris followed you through snows and horrible military camps"]

Although Virgil's use of the verb *sequor* does not clearly suggest a hunting metaphor here, there are some indicators that point in that direction. Phonetically speaking, the name "Lycoris" resembles the word "wolf" in ancient Greek, an animal known for being a ferocious hunter, but also a metaphor for excessive lust. Furthermore, the same spatial elemental in *Phaedra* is found here: Lycoris is ready to follow her lover through snow or military camps (compare the quotation in note 77 above: *Hunc in niuosi collis haerentem iugis, / et aspera agili saxa calcantem pede / sequi per alta nemora, per montes placet*). Taken together, these two literary devices suggest that the use of the verb *sequor* in this passage has elegiac erotic connotations.

Although the present paper focuses on the idea of hunting as a genre marker in Ovid's erotic elegy and Seneca's tragedy, it is necessary to briefly discuss how the same idea is employed in epic texts. Even if the passage from *Aeneid* 4 previously quoted seems to have elegiac as opposed to epic connotations, Dido is *par excellence* the epic character

[84] Verg., *Ecl.,* 10.21-23.

who comes to a tragic end. The entire venery metaphor, analyzed above, precedes a hunting expedition during which Aeneas and Dido become lost and end up in a secluded cave where they make love. Technically speaking, the hunting in *Aeneid 4* is no different from the hunting in *Heroides 4* or *Phaedra*: both the hunters and their tools and equipment (dogs, spears, nets, and all sorts of crafty devices) are portrayed,[85] as well as game (wild boars, deer, goats)[86] and the landscape (woods, mountains, plains). From a stylistic point of view, the discrepancies are not noteworthy. The same can be said for the hunting scene depicted in another epic context: the story of Cephalus and Procris in *Metamorphoses* 7. However, the difference between epic and erotic elegy (*Phaedra)* lies in the genre use of *venation.* In Seneca's tragedy and in Ovid's elegy, hunting is used as a metaphor for erotic activities, but in the two epic texts quoted above, it functions more as a device designed to make the story advance. In epic texts, hunting plays the role of a catalyser or forms the background context where the action takes place. Likewise, *Metamorphoses* 7 presents some interesting aspects that may resemble elegy more closely from the perspective of genre. In the first venery scene, Aurora kidnaps Cephalus, who remains nevertheless faithful to his wife and refuses the goddess. Just as in *Phaedra*, a similar reversal of roles occurs[87]: the hunter becomes a woman's prey and decides at the same time to keep his vows at any cost (in *Phaedra* the price is his own life, while here it is his wife's life):

Cum me cornigeris tendem retia cervis
Vertice de summo semper florentis Hymetti
Lutea mane videt pulsis aurora tenebris

[85] *It portis iubare exorto delecta iuventus / retia rara, plagae, lato venabula ferro / Massylique runt equites et odora canum vis* (Verg., *Aen*, 4.130-132).

[86] *postquam altos uentum in montis atque inuia lustra, / ecce ferae saxi deiectae uertice caprae / decurrere iugis; alia de parte patentis / transmittunt cursu campos atque agmina cerui / puluerulenta fuga glomerant montisque relinquunt / at puer Ascanius mediis in uallibus acri / gaudet equo iamque hos cursu, iam praeterit illos, / spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia uotis / optat aprum, aut fuluum descendere monte leonem* (*Ibid.*, 4. 151-159).

[87] Another resemblance to the Phaedra myth can be found in Cephalus' intractability with respect to questions of love: *nec me quae caperet non si Venus ipsa veniret / ulla erat . . .* (Ov., *Met.*, 7.802-803) (I will love no other woman, even if Venus herself tries to seduce me). Just like Hippolytus, Cephalus preserves his integrity, and by refusing another woman, enhances the final tragedy that leads to Procris' death.

Invitumque rapit . . . [88]
[I was spreading the nets for the horned stags
On the high peak of the eternal flowering Hymettus,
When, after the darkness has been chased away, the morning comes and bright Aurora sees me
And takes me away against my will . . .]

Cephalus manages to escape free, but doubt has been sown in his heart and he wants to confirm Procris' loyalty in deceitful ways. She is offended when she discovers the ruse and decides to run away: *offensaque mei genus omne perosa virorum / montibus errabat studiis operata Dianae* (Ov., *Met.,* 7.745-746).[89] Just as in Virgil's *Eclogue 10*, here too, hunting, or voluntary seclusion in the mountains, appears to provide a cure for the pains of love. Although it is not specifically stated that Procris goes there to hunt, the reference to Diana is more than self-evocative. Moreover, *genus omne perosa virorum* could be referenced to "**Ph:** *Meminimus matris simul* / **Nut:** *Genus omne profugit!*" (Sen., *Phae.,* 232)[90] and "*Medea reddet feminas dirum genus*" (Sen., *Phae.,* 564).[91]

The story ends tragically: Cephalus kills his beloved wife in a hunting accident, and Aurora's predictions become true. The recurrent use of hunting in this epic episode is noteworthy: Cephalus is kidnapped by Aurora while he hunts and his confused wife runs away to become a devotee of Diana. In the end she is killed by her own husband in a hunting accident. Although venery activities are omnipresent, their impact on genre differs from their impact in *Heroides* 4 or *Phaedra*. Ovid treats hunting as the background to the story, as an element that helps to push the action forward. As a result, the implications of the erotic metaphors are much less obvious than in the other two texts.

[88] Ov., *Met.,* 7.701-704.
[89] Offended by me and angry against the entire race of men / She ran away into the mountains to devote herself to Diana's cult.
[90] **Ph:** I shall remind him of his mother as well! / **Nut:** He runs away from our entire race!
[91] Medea caused the entire feminine race to be hated.

Hunting: purity and libido

The present paper has focused on revealing the elegiac topoi in Seneca's *Phaedra* through an analysis of the theme of hunting. The interpretation of the prologue to Seneca's play has shown that it is an textual marker linked to *Remedia Amoris*, where Ovid gives advice on how to escape the torments of love. Gazich[92] sees a more significant connection between the prologue and Virgil's tenth *Eclogue*, where Gallus, the elegiac poet *par excellence*, tries to escape from the perils of love by secluding himself in the forest, just as Hippolytus does in *Phaedra.*[93] Vizzotinotes that opposed spatial identities define the two main characters in Seneca's play.[94] Hippolytus, lacking in passion, feels at home in the cold wilderness of the mountains, whereas Phaedra, full of heat and libido, thrives in the palace. The present paper has pushed the argument further in an effort to prove that the spatial oppositions between cold and hot, and between *durus* and *mollis,* recall the literary device of paraclausithyron. However, there is an important difference: the forest replaces the elegiac house, and through the inversion of gender roles that Seneca brings about (following Ovid), Phaedra becomes the elegiac lover and Hippolytus, the elegiac beloved. However, Phaedra's effort to force her way into Hippolytus' world leads to a tragic end for both of them. This tragic denouement generated by the mixing of two incompatible ideas may contain a moral involving the mixing of the two genres, erotic elegy and tragedy: once a townish elegiac love is shifted to a rustic setting, tragic destruction necessarily ensues. Moreover, a general conclusion is possible: Hippolytus' hunting does not carry any sexual overtones. On the contrary, it is a source of purity and virginity.

With Phaedra and her particular brand of erotic hunting, things are completely different. The analysis of this aspect of Seneca's play has

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[92] Gazich, *La Fedra di Seneca*, 360-361.

[93] Although I agree with Vizzoti, it should be noted that there is difference between the two men: Gallus *becomes* a hunter as an attempt to forget the pain caused by unrequited love, but Hippolytus already is a hunter at the very beginning of the story. His devotion to Diana is based, among other things, on his rejection of Venus, but this does not mean that Hippolytus becomes a hunter because he wants to escape Phaedra's libido.

[94] Vizzoti, *Catastrofe e invasion*, 101.

mainly dealt with the use of the verb *sequor*. The intertextual links involving the theme of hunting reveal that through Phaedra Seneca effects a change in venery perspective. His lustful heroine, the elegiac lover, hunts down Hippolytus, her beloved, because the roles have been reversed, which is why it was necessary to establish the connection with the passage from the *Aeneid* 2 where Dido begins to feel the pangs of her love for Aeneas for the first time. However, the two heroines have much less in common than appearances might suggest. Virgil compares Dido to a deer, so that she becomes the prey, but Seneca transforms Phaedra into the hunter. Although Virgil and Seneca both give their heroines the lover's role, they give them completely different roles when it comes to hunting itself. Dido is a victim, whereas Phaedra is a predator, so that in her case hunting becomes a symbol of her desperate attempt to come to terms with her own wild desires and untamed erotic furor, a symbol that reflects how fundamentally different she is from Hippolytus, the innocent hunter woodsman. Seneca succeeds by using intertextual devices to link his *Phaedra* to those of his predecessors. And by mixing literary genres, he creates a tragic context with elegiac overtones into which both the myth and the character of Phaedra fit perfectly.