

CLSX 148 Fall 2014 Short Writing Assignment #2

Silence permeates Euripides's Hippolytus. Find two characters who fail to verbally respond, intercede on someone's behalf, or relay the truth in a timely manner. (The characters can be humans or deities.) What are the repercussions for these silences in the Hippolytus?

People commonly withhold crucial information related to grave circumstances. They do this either out of fear or to uphold a promise given to another. We see this most often in many crimes. It is always better to disclose information relating to these situations than to conceal it. There are two great examples of this in Euripides' play Hippolytus.

The first example is when Theseus had found out about his wife's death. Before she died, she spoke to the women of Troezan saying, "You noble ladies of Troezan, grant me this, this one request, that what you have heard here you wrap in silence" (Hippolytus, 710-713). After Theseus found out about his wife's death the chorus leader said, "I know no more than this. I too, came lately to mourn for you and yours, King Theseus" (Hippolytus, 804-805). The women of Troezan chose not tell King Theseus the reason for Queen's death to keep their promise with her. Theseus reads Phaedra's suicide note which says that Hippolytus had raped her. This results in Theseus cursing Hippolytus. This curse ultimately kills Hippolytus.

The next example is when Theseus learns the truth about his wife's death. He is speaking with his dying son when Artemis appears to him saying, "Dark indeed was the conclusion you drew from your wife's lying accusations, but plain for all to see is the destruction to which they led you" (Hippolytus, 1289-1291). It is then that Theseus realizes that his son was innocent.

In the first example, if the women of Troezan would have spoken the truth Hippolytus would not have died. Likewise, if Artemis would have spoken the truth before Theseus had acted upon his anger Hippolytus would have lived. It is best to tell the truth to prevent the demise of another.

Grade: 8.25/10

Your first point is solid; I like the example and passage you chose.

You could go in to more detail for your second point. When might have been a good time for Artemis to step in, for instance? Discuss more how Artemis' delay led to Hippolytus' death. What is Artemis' responsibility, and why might it have been right for her to help? What is Hippolytus' relationship to her?

Overall, I would spend more time focusing your efforts on discussing your two examples (especially the second), and less time introducing and concluding. In fact, you could do away with your entire introduction as it does not really specify anything you discuss in your body paragraphs.