

To what extent do the values of the Nurse conflict with the values of Phaedra in lines 433 to 481?

To a large extent the values of the nurse conflict with those of Phaedra, however both agree that one cannot contradict the will of the gods and at different points both coincide that in the given situation it would be better to die.

▲ At the beginning Phaedra expresses her wish to go hunting and horse riding, suggesting that she desires to be near Hippolytus, yet by doing so she would break the social convention that dictated women could only leave the house for religious purposes. The nurse knows this, and warns her that to challenge the norm would be madness 'words that ride on madness'. However once Phaedra's secret is revealed it is the Nurse the one who advocates a departure from the social code, while Phaedra strives to uphold her reputation and society's values. It can be argued that their values differ or alternatively that the Nurse supports the same social values, except to a lesser extent and considers that these do not apply to love.

Yet, both women share the same values which respect to fate and the divine intervention of gods in mortal's lives. Phaedra mentions that she was "failing to win victory over Cypris" this indicates she is aware that she cannot overcome her fate or the god's wishes, so she settles to commit suicide. The Nurse upholding the same value but for a different purpose states "No one can bear the force of Cypris" here she points out that mortals are helpless against the will of the gods and therefore Phaedra should just let things be. With respect to destiny and veneration to gods both uphold the same values however they derive different conclusions from them.

Previously the Nurse establishes her admiration for moderation "I praise excess less than moderation", in contrast Phaedra seems to prefer to have a tendency towards the extremes, first she wishes to go hunting to follow Hippolytus and later to die. Here we see how they have contrasting opinions. ▲ Additionally they differ on what should be done with Phaedra's forbidden love. The Nurse explains that to be in love is nothing extraordinary "you are in love – what is so surprising about that?" her rhetorical question implies that the situation is not atypical and that it can be easily resolved without resorting to extremes. Furthermore she argues that the curse is not Phaedra's fault and that she shouldn't have to die for it.

On the contrary Phaedra wishes to repress her feelings deeming them unacceptable. Meanwhile the Nurse tries to convince her that love is something beautiful and cannot be denied, not even by the gods "Zeus once desired to bed Semele" she implies that Phaedra suppress her feelings but resign herself to them. This goes against every value of virtue and reputation that Phaedra esteems. Phaedra would rather die than be unfaithful, she despises women who "lay claim to virtue" but "dare to commit shameful deeds". She is concerned about her reputation and the effect this one can have on her house and her children.

To this the Nurse responds "mortals should not put too much effort on achieving perfection" implying that she cannot have a perfect reputation. Phaedra expands on the unacceptable behavior of unfaithful women, yet later the Nurse counter argues that men too behave in this way 'many fathers help their sons in love affairs'. They disagree on the worth of reputation, the Nurse revealing her corrupt moral values, however it can be argued that she wishes

to deter her mistress's suicidal intentions. After all she does show great duty towards her and even declares that she "can no longer exist" after Phaedra reveals her secret.

Thus it can be concluded that to a large extent the values of the Nurse conflict with those of Phaedra, however they both coincide that fate nor the will of the gods can be denied. It can be argued that the Nurse's intention is to help her mistress by diminishing the values she upholds and therefore prevent her suicide.