they were uniformly apprehended by the original audience. The book contains some minor irritations ('Forward' for 'Foreword'; March 1987 referred to in the footnote to p. 33 but omitted in the bibliography). But S. has a sharp eye and discusses issues with subtle vigour. She has established some lucid category headings under which critics will henceforth be able to marshall their arguments, and proved their usefulness throughout the chapters of her book.

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GENDER-BENDING SPEECH

LAURA MCCLURE: *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama.* Pp. viii + 203. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Cased, £24.95. ISBN: 0-691-01730-1.

This volume is a well-researched, clearly organized, and often insightful investigation of gendered speech in fifth-century Athenian drama. A revised and much expanded version of McClure's 1991 University of Chicago dissertation on rhetoric and gender in Euripides, the book consists of six chapters that explore the politics of discourse in five tragedies and two comedies: Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, Euripides, *Hippolytus* and *Andromache*, and Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae.* These plays, according to M., were selected because they illustrate in a similar way how disruptive and dangerous women's voices can be if left to themselves, unchecked and uncontained by male-governed social and political institutions.

If that seems a familiar song, it is because M. pays heavy homage to her main influences: Simon Goldhill, Helene Foley, Froma Zeitlin, and Charles Segal. Still, scholars who are familiar with the history of scholarship on this subject will find much to praise in M.'s language-based approach. In Chapter I, M. carefully and articulately explains her main objective: to show that the speech patterns of women in the seven plays reveal Athenian 'anxiety about the transmission and consolidation of power among the political elite during the rise of democracy in Athens' (p. 28).

By employing speech genres such as gossip and seductive persuasion, women in these plays are metaphors for the real-life demagogue who, through the same highly effective and influential speech patterns, poses a threat to emerging democracy in the *polis*. Adopting Winkler's idea that women have the unique capacity to understand and employ both female and male speech patterns simultaneously, M. describes how successful Clytemnestra, Phaedra, and Medea are in subverting the *status quo* by utilizing their talent for rhetorical 'bilingualism' (p. 27).

In Chapter II, M. provides a very useful background to women's speech genres from the archaic to the classical periods: ritual lamentation, ritual obscenity, ritual cries, female choruses, gossip, and seductive persuasion. Though it is risky and often unverifiable to create absolute categories of male and female speech, M. is successful in convincing the reader that it is possible not only to distinguish male and female discourse but also to illustrate in a creative way how gender-bending speech genres can effectively shake up the social order.

Chapter III is devoted to proving how gendered speech works in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Working her way through the trilogy, M. concludes that there is a shift in gender focus from feminine (figurative and erotic, thus false, in the character of Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*) to masculine (divinely sanctioned, thus true, in the

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character of Athena in the *Eumenides*). Not entirely original, granted, but reviving Neustadt's 1929 article on speech acts and inspired by Yopie Prins, M. argues very cogently for interpreting Clytemnestra's '*ἔστιν θάλασσα*' speech as a magical incantation, a speech act that is the destructive power of the play. Words can charm and hypnotize, a fact demagogues and those who oppose them know all too well. This section is exciting and convincing.

In Chapters IV and V, M. explores the disruptive forces of gossip and the 'politics of reputation' in Euripides (p. 116). She compares the destructive power of women's domestic, erotic speech on the *polis* by contrasting Phaedra's slander against *Hippolytus* with Athena's use of persuasion to resolve conflict between men in Aeschylus' *Eumenides.* She describes the juridical framework for the action in the *Hippolytus*, and focuses on Athenian women's rôle in establishing social reputation, arguing persuasively that Phaedra's 'duping' of Theseus is a paradigm for how the Athenian State can be 'duped' by sophistics (p. 157).

M. continues this line of interpretation with the *Andromache*. Women's speech is a *miasma* in the *oikos* that extends to and threatens the *polis.* Here, as in the *Hippolytus*, she argues that Euripides 'feminizes the art of rhetoric' (p. 115), privileging women, rather than men, with the art of *dolos.* Very persuasive in Chapter V is M.'s argument that Euripides' Hermione, as an outspoken Spartan woman, represents the perceived dangers to Athens of the gynaecocratic Spartan education that produced such bold, undisciplined, and licentious women. Adultery destroys the *oikos*, and by extension, the *polis*. Therefore, Hermione is a metaphor for what Athenian citizens fear most—the sophistic mentality that encourages such behavior that undermines the traditional social order.

In her final chapter, M. explores the relationship between social status in Athens and the use of obscenity in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae.* If male and female speech cannot always be distinguished so clearly in tragedy, they can in comedy, according to M., through the use of obscenity. Once again, the author's overall theme is that when women co-opt masculine forms of speech, they are metaphors for demagogues. Tied in with the use of obscenity, as with other forms of rhetoric, is the physical posturing and sexual innuendo in these comedies that combine to create an atmosphere of gendered power. When this atmosphere is gender-reversed, it effects a larger social upheaval that threatens order and stability in the *polis*. Order can be re-established, M. states, when men and women revert to their proper speech patterns and behaviors.

Throughout the book, M. reads the Greek carefully and provides compelling textual evidence to support her views. She makes excellent use of the prevailing scholarship and revives older works to good effect. Though her overarching theme that women are dangerous to the Athenian *polis* when they appropriate male speech patterns is not a new idea, her presentation and approach to this subject in the seven plays is effective and, at times, exciting. It is a bit disappointing that no room was made for Sophocles (surely the *Trachiniae* and *Antigone* deserve more than a reference or two). Overall, there is much that is rewarding in *Spoken Like a Woman*. It will be a very useful resource for any study of the social and political function of gendered speech in fifth-century Athens.

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