right to express personal regret on p. 6 for not dealing with Gluck (those of us lucky enough to have been at Glyndebourne's recent *Iphigénie en Aulide* will appreciate the gap). I feel too that Offenbach's Helen deserved attention; a more subversive view of women's position in contemporary society could hardly be imagined.

M.'s breathless prose exacts a considerable price from the reader; it often left me in a fog of unfollowed-up hints, allusions, and references. The most baffling of the allusions were to the Virgin Mary and/or the Roman Catholic Mass, which, on M.'s analysis, figure in Monteverdi (p. 35), Strauss (p. 118), and Stravinsky (p. 152). Argument is sacrificed to a sort of telegraphic list of propositions (M. is ferociously well read). Here is an example from p. 128:

> Clément and McClary might say that to eliminate a female heroine in this way is hardly the politically correct thing to do. They juxtapose Elektra with Tosca, Mélisande, and the heroine of *Erwartung* singing her mad chromatics. Others simply see Elektra as neurotic. I agree with Abbate who sees Elektra as more than this; she is a heroine triumphant in her song.

The last two sentences are footnoted, and the notes provide not only extended quotations, but, in the second of them, two further substantial references. My feeling is that all of this should have been gathered together into a more coherently argued paragraph (from which a copy editor [what ever became of them?] might have deleted the redundant 'female' before 'heroine').

M. provides a list of operas based on classical myth or history on pp. 243–338. I question the presence in it of Wagner's *Rienzi*, and also wonder why, since the Ezios of many composers are included, Verdi's *Attila* is omitted from it (this opera, by the way, celebrates one of his feistiest heroines, the eye-rolling Odabella). Useful as the list is in principle, it is laid out by composers, who appear in chronological order of date of birth. If, however, you want to track down versions of, say, the tale of Ariadne, you have to trawl through the list yourself, there being no thematic catalogue.

I might mention in concluding, for those interested in Strauss's *Elektra*, that Simon Goldhill has a fascinating chapter on the early reception of this opera in his new book, *Who Needs Greek?* (Cambridge, 2002).

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AN EAST GERMAN CASSANDRA

K. Glau: *Christa Wolf's 'Kassandra' und Aischylos' 'Orestie': Zur Rezeption der griechischen Tragödie in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart*. Pp. 398. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996. DM 98/Sw. frs. 89/öS 715. ISBN: 3-8253-0407-8.

This book, a modified version of the author's Ph.D. dissertation, argues that a comparative study of C. Wolf's *Kassandra* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia* can enhance our understanding not only of Wolf's *Erzählung* but also of Aeschylus' trilogy. G. suggests that Wolf and Aeschylus both conceptualize history as *Aufklärung*, a movement away from archaic myth and its matriarchal structures towards the *logos*-centred world of patriarchal society. Whereas Wolf uses the *Oresteia* myth to denounce this process as violent and corrupting, Aeschylus focuses on its inherent self-contradictions. The book divides into five chapters. After a brief introduction (pp. 11–15), Chapter 2 looks at recent developments in reception studies (pp. 16–38).

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Chapter 3 deals with Wolf's use of myth (pp. 39–175). Chapter 4 tackles the question of to what extent the two texts can be seen as 'tragic' in an Aristotelian or Hegelian sense (pp. 176–251). Chapter 5 offers comparisons of select passages drawn from the *Agamemnon* and Wolf's *Kassandra* (pp. 252–385). A brief epilogue rounds off the discussion (pp. 386–7).

This is a densely packed and ambitious book. Readers interested in C. Wolf and post-war German responses to Greek tragedy will find much of interest in Chapters 2 and 3. I have particularly profited from G.'s discussion of Marxist scholarship in the former GDR (pp. 28–38). I was also impressed by the author's sustained attempt to treat reception as a dialectic process (e.g. p. 11). I do, however, have reservations concerning the conceptual framework developed in Chapters 1 and 4.

G. decides not to approach her topic in terms of post-structuralist hermeneutics (revealingly, Goldhill's work on the *Oresteia* does not appear in the bibliography). Instead, she resorts to timeless categories such as 'the literary' (*Das Literarische*), 'the poetic' (*Das Poetische*), or 'the tragic' (*Das Tragische*) to construct a platform on which Wolf and Aeschylus can enter into a dialogue. Problems with this approach become apparent when Aristotle is taken as a guide not only to Wolf's narrative (e.g. p. 207) but also to fifth-century tragedy (e.g. p. 195). G. tends to blur the lines between the meaning of Aeschylus' text, her own interpretation of it and that of her preferred readers, chiefly Aristotle and Wolf. For example, she contrasts the normative *Verständnis* of Aristotle (his 'understanding' of tragedy) with the 'theory' of Hegel, who mistakenly 'saw the tragic . . . as a means of conveying a philosophical message' (p. 227) without explaining why, in her view, Aristotle is right whereas Hegel is wrong. There are similar problems with G.'s claim that Wolf arrived at an interpretation of the *Eumenides* which resembles the meaning of Aeschylus's play, as G. herself understands it. More generally, it can be said that the position of Wolf as a reader remains curiously unexplored. G. notes in passing that Wolf's views are strongly indebted to Engels's 'Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats' (p. 250). This could have warned her against regarding *Kassandra* as a 'literary repetition' (*literarische Repetition*, p. 251) of Aeschylean themes.

G. praises Wolf for having realized the 'relevance' of Aeschylean drama (p. 251). Her own project of combining Wolf's East German prose with West German scholarship is topical and will doubtless interest historians of scholarship. Those among G.'s readers primarily interested in Aeschylus will be grateful to the author for raising a number of important issues; but they will also find that the argument suffers from an unclear conceptual framework.

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MYTH AND GENDER IN MODERN CULTURE

L. E. DOHERTY: *Gender and the Interpretation of Classical Myth*. Pp. 192. London: Duckworth, 2001. Paper, £9.99. ISBN: 0-7156-3042-3.

This volume uses an interdisciplinary approach to answer questions about the rôle of classical mythology in western culture and how it relates to gender systems. Doherty's target audience is the educated, non-specialist reader; the book is well suited also for undergraduates in mythology or gender studies classes, as well as those who would like an introduction to and overview of major modern theoretical approaches.

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