

current situation of the city but provides a framework for the experience of civil war and the final reconciliation to come in 403.

In the conclusion, 'The Content of Form', W. sums up the results of her analyses. If Euripides' tragedy prefigures aesthetic and political transformations to come in the following century, it is because it has created their psychic and cognitive conditions. The conclusion is followed by notes, a rich bibliography, appropriately including some important non-English studies, and a very useful index of subjects, names and places.

The book is well written and easy to read, and provides an original and interesting interpretation of the 'oddities' and the structural construction of selected plays of Euripides. Nevertheless, it would have benefited from a greater conceptual precision. What W. means by 'politics' and 'form' (both defined in the preface, p. ix) seems to be so vague and omni-comprehensive that we lose sight of the originality and the coherence of the approach. Occasionally, there is an unwelcome confusion between intra- and extra-scenic communication or between the intra- or extra-fictional world. For example, when W. states that the pity for Hecuba has no political effect, is this consideration equally valid for characters and for the audience? Or, when W. focuses on the relation between reality and fiction in *Helen*, does she not confuse intra- and extra-fictional reference? The most interesting readings are delivered, in my opinion, in Chapters 3 and 4, and, beyond any other critical point, we have to appreciate the progress in knowledge that comes from some studies included in this book concerning the emotional and pragmatic effects of the tragedies in question.

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THE ROLE OF COSTUME IN ARISTOPHANES' COMEDIES

COMPTON-ENGLÉ (G.) *Costume in the Comedies of Aristophanes*. Pp. xiv + 198, ills. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Cased, £67, US\$102. ISBN: 978-1-107-08379-0.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X17001998

Although the scholarship on the performance of Greek drama has increased vastly in recent decades, studies on the role of material props and objects in the stage action of individual plays and scenes are still rare. This book fills a gap with regards to the comic use of costume, showing how the items of clothing worn by characters as part of the theatrical physical arsenal of the playwright contribute to the dramatic fabric of comedies and inform our understanding of the genre.

Chapter 1, 'Introduction: Comic Costume in Action', provides a brief but helpful and informative overview of the existing achievements in the field and approaches to the subject. C.-E. rightly observes that much emphasis has been put almost exclusively on disguise as the default comic manipulation with clothes; she sets a goal to rethink comic disguise as part of a larger system of the use of costume in comic plays. She identifies four types of activities related to costume which are significant for the thematic structure of the plays: voluntary stripping; involuntary stripping; the addition of clothes and accessories; and costume changes and exchanges. The evidence for these manipulations with costume is the text of the plays, in particular, verbal references which mark significant stage actions.

Textual evidence is paired with archaeological findings, namely vase paintings and terracottas. C.-E. recognises the caveats of using iconography as a source and explains how it can elucidate the subject: the visual record depicts standard elements of comic costume while the texts tend to pass by in silence the constants of the comic outlook and, on the contrary, highlight anomalous pieces and specific uses of costume in comedies.

This thesis is further discussed in Chapter 2, 'The Comic Body as Costume', which deals with the construction and perception of the comic body and nudity through items of clothing and padding. C.-E. discusses in detail how *somation*, a set of theatrical garments representing the body, is depicted in late fifth- to mid fourth-century BCE iconography. She comes to the conclusion that the comic male body comes across as overtly artificial and fake whereas women are portrayed in a more realistic way, even nude, in other words, lacking comic costume at all. It is then suggested that in comedies the female body could also be perceived as less artificial and more real than the male body. In support of this hypothesis, C.-E. argues that in Aristophanes' comedies the theme of feminisation (e.g. of paratragic or foreign characters) is associated with the deprivation of standard comic elements of the grotesque body silhouette. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to an overview of the use of the comic body in *Knights* and a longer case study of the removal of clothes and nudity in *Lysistrata*. C.-E.'s main point is that the control of costume exerted by women in *Lysistrata* is common for male protagonists and therefore should be interpreted as an instance of the reversal of gender roles, not as a typically female instrument of coming to power.

The argument about the control of costume as a symbol of socio-economic power and status in the plays is developed in Chapter 3, 'Cloaks, Shoes, and Societal Redress', in which C.-E. analyses clothes removal and change in *Wasps*, *Assemblywomen* and *Wealth*. She shows how the manipulation of costume helps Aristophanes to build major themes of each play such as the *oikos/polis* dichotomy in *Wasps* and *Assemblywomen* and the progress from paratragic blindness to comic celebration of healing in *Wealth*. Chapter 4, 'Disguise, Gender and the Poet', focuses on Dicaeopolis' disguise in *Acharnians* as signalling his dominance in the play which is meant to represent the dominance of Aristophanes in the dramatic genre of comedy. The theme of disguise in *Acharnians* shows the success of comic trickery performed by the male hero and, in fact, has no connection with the female. On the other hand, in other comedies, failure in dramatic art is shown through feminisation associated with costume-ineptitude and ineffectiveness of the disguise plan. This is the case of the feminised 'tragic' Dionysus in *Frogs* as well as Euripides and the Relative in *Women at the Thesmophoria*. The idea about gendered control of costume, agonistic in nature, receives further attention in Chapter 5, 'Animal Costumes and Choral Spectacle'. After tracing the tradition of the choral animal costume, including the visual evidence, C.-E. demonstrates how it was used by Aristophanes in *Birds* to indicate the protagonist's supremacy and victory. The conclusion outlines further perspectives of the study of costume in comedies, mainly in terms of the development of costume use in Middle, New and Roman Comedy.

C.-E. limits her study to complete comedies by Aristophanes (although they are not equally covered: *Clouds* and *Peace* do not receive distinct case studies, like other plays, although they are discussed in support of C.-E.'s argument). This decision can be partly justified with C.-E.'s choice of method to contextualise the spotlight on costume in the plays within the broader context of the dramatic action. However, in view of the recent progress of scholarship on fragments of Greek comedy, it might require some further explanation why numerous fragmentary plays by Aristophanes and his rivals are left out without consideration, especially because, as C.-E. claims, the study aims to give insights about Aristophanic comedy and the genre as a whole. Even if a meaningful and comprehensive

analysis is impossible for most fragmentary plays, an overview of fragments that imply some activity with costume would be highly desirable.

The claimed parallel of the control of costume in comedy with the Homeric control of arms, throughout the book, sounds tempting but needs further discussion and grounding in the evidence. Perhaps it would also have been useful to clarify whether the Homeric echoes of manipulations with armour on the battlefield were consciously introduced by Aristophanes as elements of dialogue with the epic genre and whether these echoes could be perceived as such by his audience or whether this resemblance is rather part of a Greek social mentality inherited from Homer unconsciously through the continuum of the cultural and literary tradition.

Despite these shortcomings, this book is an excellent contribution to the study of ancient drama and will undoubtedly be of considerable use for students, scholars and theatrical directors and performers working on productions of Aristophanes.

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THE ROLE OF SIGHT IN GREEK ORATORY

O'CONNELL (P. A.) *The Rhetoric of Seeing in Attic Forensic Oratory*. Pp. xx + 282. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017. Cased, US\$55. ISBN: 978-1-4773-1168-4.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X17001500

The stated purpose of this book is to demonstrate 'how litigants' words work together with their movements and physical appearance, how they exploit the Athenian preference for visual evidence through the language of demonstration and visibility, and how they plant images in their jurors' minds' (pp. 6–7). The book is divided into three parts. In the first part, 'Physical Sight', O'C. discusses what the jurors can actually see. The second part, 'The Language of Demonstration and Visibility', examines how litigants use words associated with sight to create a conceptual world, while the third part, 'Imaginary Sight', shows how litigants encourage jurors to imagine they were present at the events which landed the litigants in court (p. 22). For his purposes O'C. assumes that all extant forensic speeches are records of what happened during the trial, although he understands that post-trial revisions could have significantly altered speeches, arguments and other important details related to the trial.

In the opening section O'C. briefly discusses the possibility that the shocking visual effects reported by authors of later antiquity during the trial of Phryne for impiety could actually hold some truth. Although he is rightly sceptical about this particular case, he underlines that visual stunts were not uncommon in Athenian trials. In the first chapter several important cases are discussed: the appearance of the ailing Polystratus (Lys. 20), the robust Philon (Lys. 31), the older, respectable gentleman (Lys. 3), or the visibly disabled man (Lys. 24) surely could have a direct impact upon the jury. To these cases the reader could add many more, like for example the appearance of the handsome Lycophron, who in his fifties still looked like a seductive lover (Hyp. *Λyc.*), or the blind uncle testifying