

assumption that tragic children are inherently or naturally weak and pitiable. The final chapter also flags several avenues for future research, including consideration of fragmentary tragedy. Scholars and students will find this well-researched book a necessary starting place for research on children in Greek drama.

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MAN (S.-C.) **Instances of Death in Greek Tragedy**. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020. Pp. xxi + 261. €61.99. 9781527547285.

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In this monograph, Sorana-Cristina Man takes an ambitiously broad approach to death in Greek tragedy, presenting wide-ranging discussions of tragedies such as Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Euripides' *Bacchae*, informed by aspects of philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology and Christianity, among others. Man returns throughout to the tension between and conflation of opposites in tragedy (notably animal and human (sacrifice), murder and ritual violence, and determinism and free will), which functions as a connecting thread, drawing together the disparate 'instances' of death promised by the title. Space constraints do not allow for a full synopsis of the diverse topics addressed, but some highlights are noted below.

In the introduction, Man gives a helpful outline of perspectives that inform and underlie many of the discussions in the monograph, notably the control of violence through sacrificial rites (drawing on René Girard) and the role women played in representing violence on stage, allowing the tragedians to challenge the audience and explore themes in a manner not otherwise possible (drawing primarily on Helene P. Foley). Chapter II presents engaging discussions on violence and death, including collective violence in both mythology- and history-based tragedies, noting its genesis in individual will in the latter, most obviously Xerxes' 'despotic arbitrary will' (37) in Aeschylus' *Persians*. Man forwards sensible points about the prohibition of violence on the tragic stage, highlighting the limitations of on-stage presentations resulting in the replacement of 'dromena with legomena' (53), that is, actions with words, although examinations of contested stagings, particularly Ajax's suicide, are surprisingly limited. The chapter ends with a fertile discussion on the conflation of murder and sacrifice/ritual violence, and its paradoxical potential both to restore and disrupt order in tragedies including Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Electra* (52–68).

In chapter III, Man presents various theoretical bases for examining death in tragedy, including considerations of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* through psychoanalysis and anthropology (concentrating respectively on a reassessment of Oedipus' (Freudian) unconscious mind and the concept of the scapegoat) and a discussion of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* through the prism of Heidegger's philosophy (*being-towards-death*), wherein man's understanding of being is informed by awareness of death 'as the horizon he lives in' (101). This is a densely packed but rewarding chapter.

Chapter IV considers symbols and omens of death, examining aspects of hiding, duplicity and doublespeak, such as Orestes returning as a 'stranger' in Sophocles' *Electra* and Dionysus' disguise in Euripides' *Bacchae*, both of which play on the different levels of spectators' and characters' knowledge. This chapter is at its strongest in the subsection on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*'s carpet scene (131–50), which *inter alia* builds on previous points raised about the relationship between determinism and free will. The subsection 'Travesty and implication as modes of playing' (106–30), perhaps as it was

previously published as a stand-alone article, is the least well integrated, and some guidance on what is meant by 'playing' and 'the game' in this context would be helpful.

Chapter V is the most confident, arguing strongly and convincingly for the fortitude of women in tragedy, presenting examples of Euripidean female characters injecting free will into their imposed sacrifices (162–67), and arguing against the 'prejudice' that 'fear is an attribute of femininity while courage means virility' (161). The chapter further discusses, for example, the opposition of *polis* ('city-state') and *oikos* ('home'), primarily through Creon and Antigone (172–83), and comments on the perennial topic of women's paradoxical visibility on stage (194–202).

Man focusses in this monograph on 'those instances of death in the tragedies for which [she has] been able to come up with a new interpretation' (1). This results in an individualistic and laudably broad scope that offers numerous entrance points to death in tragedy and that will appeal to a wide interdisciplinary audience. To this end, the Greek quotations are all helpfully translated into English, and the bibliography offers a basis for further study (although scholarship after the early 2000s is relatively limited); however, line numbers for the tragedies are absent except for direct quotations, and there are some confusing instances when the tragedy is not identified. Owing to the broad approach, the movement between theoretical perspectives and tragedies is somewhat dizzying, and (owing to space constraints?) certain points are declared rather than argued, with previous scholarship presented as conclusive; for example, dreams as portents of death are left largely undiscussed as 'Devereux [1976] interprets them from all points of view, and in great detail' (150), which undercuts possible fruitful alternative readings.

The merit of this book lies in its range, offering multiple theoretical approaches and illustrative tragic examples that allow readers to pursue their own interests. While this sacrifices the particular for the general at times, as Man flags in the title, this monograph is about 'instances' of death, and it succeeds well in this respect, offering flashes of insight into a frequently shadowy topic.

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This volume comprises a fraction of the papers presented at the fifth decennial Greek Drama conference (Vancouver 2017). Owing to the broad theme of the conference, the collection has no strict thematic focus. However, as the editors themselves note, a unifying aspect is the emphasis on fragmentary plays as well as on the reception of Athenian drama in antiquity.

The chronological range of the volume is established in the first chapter, entitled 'The politics of Greece's theatrical revolution, ca. 500 – ca. 300 BCE'. Here Eric Csapo and Peter Wilson explore the question of theatre and politics from the perspective of ancient reception. Although the standard association between theatre and democracy remains strong, the authors' balanced approach stresses the importance of specifics such as time, place and purpose.

Chapters 2–4 focus on Sophocles. Sheila Murnaghan ('Selective memory and epic reminiscence in Sophocles' *Ajax*') discusses the multi-faceted portrayal of Sophocles' *Ajax*, giving fresh insight into Sophocles' relationship with Homer. The resonances