



Appendix 4 offers readings of the text of *Christus Patiens* adopted in the text of Euripides' *Bacchae*.

This book should be used by anyone interested in ancient Greek tragedy and Byzantine literature, and more generally in the reception of ancient Greek cultural heritage. X.-K. opens up possible routes on how Aeschylus influenced Euripides as far as the dramatic use of the Dionysiac ritual is concerned. X.-K. also claims that the reused passages in *Christus Patiens* were carefully chosen, which is already known from older bibliographical sources (such as A. Tuilier's edition [1969]). The book does a good job of presenting a comparison between *Christus Patiens* and its ancient source, but it does not shed light on other issues that would be useful, such as the different ethical values and aesthetics as well as the depiction of emotions in ancient and Byzantine times. On the whole, the book is interesting not so much for its uniqueness on its subject but rather for the attempt to connect the Aeschylean fragments related to Dionysus with Euripides' *Bacchae*. Finally, X.-K. has sought with considerable success to speak to the experts, but also to make the book accessible to general readers.

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QUEERING EURIPIDES

OLSEN (S.), TELÒ (M.) (edd.) *Queer Euripides. Re-Readings in Greek Tragedy*. Pp. viii + 276. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Paper, £24.99, US\$34.95 (Cased, £75, US\$100). ISBN: 978-1-350-24961-5 (978-1-350-24962-2 hbk).

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'I am trying to imagine ...' begins S. Gurd's chapter (p. 110) on *Alcestis*, setting the tone for the volume. Imagination – and its limits – is a recurring theme in the book, which reimagines not just a playwright and his work, but the discipline in which he has most frequently been studied, and the notion of the essay as a vehicle for scholarship. The essay form is disrupted and distilled through the presence of interlocutors (real – as in the case of N.S. Rabinowitz and D. Bullen's conversation – or imaginary), and the collection reverberates with the names of scholars, activists and theorists who form a community across the volume. Reading *Queer Euripides* from start to finish feels like receiving an invitation to a conversation, a collective, an in-crowd, a protest, a manifesto for change. And it leaves me trying to imagine the scale of the invited transformation.

I am trying to imagine what it would mean to queer Classics. The contributors are alive both to the thrill of this journey and to the roadblocks that stand in its way. One of my favourite lines in the volume is A. Blanshard's gentle testing out of his readers when he goads 'queer this and you queer the entire Trojan War' (p. 137). In almost every chapter we read that queering Classics has something to do with time. From R. Andújar's 'asynchronous reality' (p. 176, thinking with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) to D. Orrells on Euripides as the eternal *fin-de-siècle* playwright, from Telò's 'circularities' (p. 91) to K. Bassi's queering of the temporal boundary between life and death and the image of temporal potentiality (always becoming) of L. Deihr's transgender egg – problems of

time dart and dive throughout the chapters of the volume. It is easy to see why. Time and the timeline are perhaps the biggest obstacles for queering Classics. The discipline is traditionally described as one that is temporally bounded, though since its beginnings it has been difficult to say precisely where those temporal boundaries are – and classical reception has consistently subverted, and occasionally queered, them. Classicism is, write the Postclassicisms Collective (2020), founded ‘on a narrative of time’ (p. 20). The alternative to calling a text, artefact, idea or author ‘classical’ (especially if we want to avoid the association between the classical and value, which all too often haunts classicism) is to say that it is ‘ancient’ – or, in other words, to ascribe to it a fixed temporal location.

But narratives of time have often been problematic for more activist disciplines, and in particular for those disciplines that arose in the wake of historic (and ongoing) injury – such as queer studies, Black studies, decolonial theory, disability studies and some feminisms (among others). The timeline, clock time, periodisation, capitalist time and other cogs of the apparatus of straight time have been critiqued and subverted in these disciplines that have instead argued that queerness ought to entail the freedom to, as Rasheedah Phillips (2017) puts it, ‘organise your own temporality’. For Annamarie Jagose (‘Feminism’s Queer Theory’, *Feminism & Psychology* 19 [2009], 158), queer temporality describes ‘a mode of inhabiting time that is attentive to the recursive eddies and back-to-the-future loops that often pass undetected or uncherished beneath the official narrations of the linear sequence that is taken to structure normative life’. It is clear that the queering (if not the all-out destruction) of the timeline is one of the keys to queer liberation – as well as to decolonisation, as Giordano Nanni pointed out (*The Colonisation of Time* [2012], p. 3) when he reminded us that clocks ‘do not keep *the* time but *a* time’, specifically ‘the necessary culture of time for building empires’. But where will organising our own temporality leave Classics, a discipline founded on a linear narrative of time? What *is* Classics, in other words, without the timeline? The authors of *Queer Euripides* remark on this destructive potential, with E. Haselswerdt pointing out that queering Euripides is also an act of ‘profound temporal and epistemic disruption’ (p. 57), and P. Rankine making use of Jack Halberstam’s notion of the ‘indiscipline’, an image of disciplinary unravelling.

The benefit of an author-focused study like *Queer Euripides* is that the timeline *can* be subverted. Now that classical reception has left the trappings of source study behind, there is no longer any expectation that influences ought to move in a single direction or be obedient to older models of lines of descent, traditions or timelines. And *Queer Euripides* uses this opportunity for disobedience to the fullest, drawing attention to positions in time and space that straight time (or straight space) would deem an impossibility. J. Goldberg’s chapter remarks on Anne Carson’s desire for queer relation across time – Carson wanted to learn Greek in order to *be* Oscar Wilde –, and other chapters fundamentally queer relation and space too. M. Mueller’s ‘besideness’ (p. 186), D. Boyarin’s ‘queer juxtaposition’ (p. 207), S. Nooter’s reading of Medea’s wishes as moving backwards in time and across space not only adopt but celebrate the impossible play of time and space that is at the heart of queer relation. Alternative genealogies are a theme throughout the volume too, echoing some of the earliest rejections and reconfigurations of the nuclear family structure for which queer studies is perhaps best known. B. Radcliffe sees care that is expansive and extends beyond the nuclear family as a kind of provocative queerness in *Children of Heracles*, and for K. Ormand the *Ion* hints at (though does not fully realise) a queering of the inheritance models of identity that characterise Athenian racialisation practices.

Disorder, dismemberment, dislocation and disidentification are celebrated for the queer spaces they open up in this volume – and they are firm fixtures of the plots of many Greek

tragedies too – but they are less commonly said to be attributes of the discipline of Classics. O. Baldwin's comment that 'the wild and queer *Rhesus* questions the order(ing) of Classics' (p. 36) is, in his chapter, a statement of the play's marginality within the Euripidean canon. But it could also offer us a description of the whole *Queer Euripides* project. Messiness and the refusal of neat categories are joyfully embraced in a variety of ways. Readers only have to follow the parade of animals through the book – wolves, a genderqueer deer, the serpent of Ares among others – to notice that even 'the human' does not hold up as a fixed category. Olsen's chapter describes a 'catfight' that happens not between cats (as one might expect) but between Andromache and Hermione. And it is not just specific categories, but the very practice of categorisation that finds itself subverted. D. Youd's chapter is the most explicit in this sense, setting itself against older ways of reading ancient sexualities according to hierarchical models, imaginary binaries of penetrator and penetrated, or grids and other fixed orientations. Tumblr's most famous Greek tragic gay lovers – Orestes and Pylades – find themselves serving as proof of the 'inadequacy of the conceptual tools ready to hand to apprehend the affinities that bind them' (p. 160).

Inadequacy, unravelling, undiscipline. I am trying to imagine this future for Classics. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this volume is that *failure* is its most pervasive idea, its thread running throughout almost every chapter. Lee Edelman's 'no future' (*No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* [2004]) functions not so much like a tragic chorus in this book, but like the chorus of a pop song, bringing us back always and insistently to the possibility that Classics might not rise to the challenge that queer theory poses, the possibility that undiscipline might be its destruction, rather than its transformation or liberation. And *Queer Euripides* never allows its readers to forget that this transformation is urgent. The focus throughout on the process of marginalisation (for instance in C. Freccero's chapter) becomes, in I. Ruffell's final chapter of the book, an important reminder that a 'pre-history of trans' (p. 239) is a not just an academic provocation but a pressing need in the lives of real people. Queering is not some kind of clever semantic game that we play with ancient texts – Gurd's words stayed with me as I read each chapter: 'I am not trying to be cute' (p. 118). What feels quietly revolutionary about the volume is that the no future that haunts it is always the failure of Classics and never the failure of queerness. Failure is a productive part of the process of transformation (and indeed, readers who enjoyed *Queer Euripides* less than I did could point to occasional 'failures' to meet its own queer aspirations too: its reinscribing of a West vs East binary that felt disappointingly straight when referring to *Medea* as 'one of the foundational texts of Western tragedy', p. 1, for instance), and it is precisely this failure that opens up the possibility for a different future. Queer liberation is necessary for survival and cannot fail. Classics, though, might find in its 'no future' a radically different one.

The editors of *Queer Euripides* end their introduction not only with this image of destroying and 'building anew', but with a wish for the embrace of "'wildness" as a queer methodology for Greek tragedy and classics as a whole' (p. 14). For this reason, it is through this image of the rewilding of a discipline that I want to close my reflections on their project. Writing this review in the Global North, from a country that is contributing to rather than experiencing the worst effects of the climate catastrophe, it seems naïve (and unjust) to use rewilding as a metaphor detached from the politics of world-ending. I turn, therefore, to a book of environmental philosophy *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* (edited by E. Gan, A. Tsing, H. Swanson and N. Bubandt [2017]). In their introduction the editors reckon with the uncomfortable necessity of destruction for the creation of an alternative future – drawing heavily on queer theory's 'no future':

Ghosts, too, are weeds that whisper tales of the many pasts and yet-to-comes that surround us. Considered through ghosts and weeds, worlds have ended many times before. Endings come with the death of a leaf, the death of a city, the death of a friendship, the death of small promises and small stories. The landscapes grown from such endings are our disaster as well as our weedy hope. (p. 6)

I feel deeply grateful to the editors of *Queer Euripides* and to its contributors for this volume that in its reckoning with the failures of Classics is no less full to the brim with ‘weedy hope’. I am trying to imagine the landscapes that will grow from such endings.

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THE DEPICTION OF THE COMIC BODY

PIQUEUX (A.) *The Comic Body in Ancient Greek Theatre and Art, 440–320 BCE*. Pp. xviii + 365, b/w & colour ill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$115. ISBN: 978-0-19-284554-2. doi:10.1017/S0009840X23000562

P.’s examination of the staging and perception of the comic body is a welcome contribution that ties together the growing conversation on fragmentary comedy, especially that from the mid-fourth century BCE, and the established scholarship on the relationship between vase painting and dramatic performance, as exemplified by J.R. Green (*Theatre in Ancient Greek Society* [1994] and a series of articles throughout the 1990s and 2000s), E. Csapo (*Actors and Icons of the Ancient Theater* [2010]) and O. Taplin (*Comic Angels* [1992] and *Pots and Plays* [2007]). Building on Green’s work in particular (although she identifies Taplin’s *Comic Angels* as her starting point, p. 2), P. aims for a thorough account of the many ways in which the body appears on the comic stage or is imagined in comic scripts from Old Comedy to 320 BCE (Menander’s plays are addressed several times as points of comparison, but are not a focal point in the study due to significant changes in costuming and staging post-320). P.’s stated goals are to explore how a character’s identity was constructed through visual cues and how this changed over time with the emergence of clearly marked character types such as the parasite, how the ugliness of the comic body was exploited on stage and, finally, how visual aspects of costume related to speech in performance (p. 6).

The book opens with an account of how vase painting from Attica, South Italy and Sicily depicts comedy, with an eye to audience perception of dramatic performance and the ways in which vase painting adopted comic imagery for its own purposes (what P. calls a ‘fiction’ to distinguish this from those vases that document real performances, p. 72). This section establishes the cautious delineation of geography and chronology that characterises the book, beginning with Attic vases and separating Lucanian and Apulian vases from their Paestan and Siceliot counterparts while tracing connections between images from those areas to Attic comedy. The following chapter looks at the development of comic costuming across all those geographical areas, noting changes in masks, padding, stage nudity and the inclusion of the phallus in comic costume, arguing for a generic link to ‘visible artificiality’ that lends an air of ‘innocuousness’ to spectacle