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**Kathleen McCarthy, I, the Poet: First-Person Form in Horace, Catullus, and Propertius. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. Pp. 258. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-5017-3955-2). \$52.95.**

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community in Rome centuries before Romulus' birth represents the inclusivity of women's ritual standing in opposition to male violence, usurpation, and exclusion symbolized by Hercules' bulldozing impiety. Ovid's (*Fasti* 6) retelling of the legend of Mater Matuta (Ch. 15) similarly offers a message of female inclusivity: Ino's epic journey, from Juno-hounded Theban princess to Roman goddess Mater Matuta, finds an echo in Hercules' Juno-driven peregrinations as he, transformed and transformative, becomes an object of devotion on Roman soil. Hercules is an apt savior of Ino, for he also suffered through traumas of "infanticide, madness and violence" (200). Tellingly, Propertius' Hercules stands as an "obvious model for the *princeps* and the state" (187), while Ovid's celebration of Mater Matuta's cult, centering on women's mutual beneficence, may also be linked to Augustus' notions of family values (201). In Statius' (Ch. 16) reworking of the myth of Achilles' immersion in female-only cult in his *Achilleid*, the maidens of Scyros all but stamp out the masculinity of the hero in their charge. As Achilles is kept safe from Hera's wrath, female rituals become the sole vehicle by which to keep in check Achilles' rampant masculinity; crucially, rituals that are meant to control and shape maidens are shown here to provide them with the power to resist and control men, in turn (204).

In the Epilogue, Panoussi brings together the disparate threads of argument in her discussion of the hidden, nocturnal worship of Tacita revealed for all by Ovid (*Fasti* 2), rites emblematic of the rituals investigated throughout the book. In this tale, the garrulous nymph Lara, viciously mutilated by Jupiter and rendered speechless, becomes the punishing goddess Tacita, in turn silencing others through the women who practice magical rites in her name. Demonstrating that these episodes represent more than glorifications of violence against women ubiquitous in antiquity, Panoussi argues that literary collisions of ritual, gender, and genre are unique spaces in which to uncover women's voices as well as to "contemplate the relationship between power and poetry" (222). With this fascinating book, Panoussi has surely opened the door for more illuminating work on literary portraits of women's ritual acts.

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Kathleen McCarthy, *I, the Poet: First-Person Form in Horace, Catullus, and Propertius*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. Pp. 258. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-5017-3955-2). \$52.95.

When Horace says *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum / Soracte* (*Odes* 1.9), the second person address invites readers to observe speech happening through the medium of a written text. But who is Horace talking to? When Thaliarchus is introduced in the second stanza, the presence of a named addressee does not invalidate a possible sense that

the poet's question is also meant for us, accompanied by thoughts along the lines of "No, I don't see Soracte, but I can picture it." And because the actual visibility of Soracte from wherever the poem is set is famously unknowable, someone in the room with Horace's speaker might also pursue the same sort of imaginative projection. There is great potential for comparison and interaction between perspectives within the scene and at the point of reception by a reader. And that separation equates to different speakers, in effect different Horaces, the quasi-dramatic speaker in a sympotic setting who wants a drink and a fire and some wistful memories of young love, and the poet of the book, that masterful crafter and sequencer of metaphorical and thematic material.

The functional gap between poet and speaker, creating space for interplay between levels of communication, is the central focus of Kathleen McCarthy's book and where she looks to identify something characteristically appealing about Roman poetry. I cite the example of the Soracte ode, which she does not discuss, to credit the wide and intuitive applicability of her simple set up. The dual nature of many Latin poems as both speech communicating within a represented setting and as the text of the poem communicating with its audience is common nearly to the point invisibility. McCarthy advocates resistance to the tendency to "paper over" (20) any distinction between poet and speaker by contextualizing and distinguishing between various scenarios of authorial speech that might otherwise be subsumed under deceptively broad terms such as persona or fiction or voice. Over the course of four chapters, drawing on a tight selection of first-person verse consisting of Catullus' polymetrics, Propertius' books 1 and 2, Horace's *Odes* 1-3 and *Epistles* 1, she sustains her analysis thanks in large part to the variety of situations these poets project their voices into. Dramatic monologues and other forms of character speech are either put to the side or cited primarily for contrast. Even within her defined range, treatment is highly selective. The focus throughout is on individual poems or clusters of linked poems rather than, for example, book dynamics and sequences encountered in linear reading. In chapter 1, poems primarily from Propertius 1 exemplify speech doing work, like wooing, in social settings, a mode she labels "conversational" (32). Horatian hymns and Catullan invectives illustrate a contrasting performative mode, where the utterance is framed as a performance within the represented world, in chapter 2. To explore instances of closer affiliation between the speaker and poet, chapter 3 turns to Propertius book 2, Catullan aesthetics, and Horatian symposia, while chapter 4 interrogates the alignment of written form in epistolary poems, not only *Epistles* 1 but also certain poems of Catullus, notably 35 and 50. In a coda Ovid *Tristia* 1 extends the discussion forward in time and into a text that ostensibly aligns poet and speaker as fully as discourse and story, i.e., poems that are letters trying to accomplish in the world of the reader the same aims they seek as represented communication.

Thus McCarthy addresses examples of the most important genres of Roman personal poetry, elegiac, lyric, iambic, and hexameter, with the exception of satire, which

seems well suited to the application of McCarthy's schemata but would, I concede, dilute the discussion of texts more closely interrelated. She does not, however, rest on the explanatory power of genre to account for differences and similarities in speakers, their roles, contexts, and audiences. Instead, different varieties of socially-placed speech in a Roman frame of reference define categories. A key to McCarthy's recognition of space for Roman poetry to operate independently while maintaining its genetic relationship with Greek traditions is the conversational mode, so called not because it is close to spoken language but because it depends on the notional transformation of ordinary speech into a poem, constructing a speaker unaware of the stylized or thematized nature of his own words. The conversational mode, which Horace, Catullus, and Propertius deploy to different degrees, can appear in any poetic format that features a poet speaking to an addressee or audience. The traditional genres, by contrast, depend on (the appearance of) stability stretching back to Greek performative settings, and McCarthy rejects the notion that Romans were striving to emulate, or lamenting the impossibility of recreating, Greek performance. She thus aligns herself with Lowrie, Feeney, and others who have in recent years steered Latin literary studies towards a new validation of textuality. The favor she nevertheless shows for consolidation and pursuit of threads of unity in the scholarly tradition makes her generous in the citation of alternative views. Inasmuch as the questions she is engaging with have been centered in Roman studies since the 90s, there is a lot to account for. On the whole, her book may be taken as a sign that debates about what Romans did or did not perceive as lost in the transition from archaic Greek poetics to their own book-based literary culture, if not necessarily settled for all participants, are becoming almost *passé* for some.

For McCarthy rigorous attention to formal competencies correlates to the pleasure and intrigue of reading Latin poetry. She premises her approach on the fact that the Romans knew the Greek poets through books and suggests that Roman poets developed a complex sense of what it might mean to relate to a diffuse and unknowable reading audience from having been readers of Greek poetry themselves, aware of their cultural distance from the context of creation. She finds here the basis for an analogy between these poets and the position of a present-day reader interacting with their texts. In practice, McCarthy's reader tends to represent a singular posture through which textual effects are measured, and the disparate contextual impacts these texts might have had, or might still have, through reading are of less interest. She is understandably cautious about the prospect of recovering the perspectives of historical readers, but it remains the case that the reading experience she describes is just as much a construct as the speakers whose complexity of form and construction her book effectively illuminates.

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