



Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature (Women in Culture and Society)

Froma I. Zeitlin

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Relations between the sexes was a pervasive concern of ancient Greek thought and literature, extending from considerations of masculine and feminine roles in domestic and political spheres to the organization of the cosmos in a pantheon of gods and goddesses. In *Playing the Other* Froma Zeitlin explores the diversity and complexity of these interactions through the most influential literary texts of the archaic and classical periods ranging from epic (Homer) and didactic poetry (Hesiod) to the theatrical productions of tragedy and comedy in fifth-century Athens.

Zeitlin demonstrates the indispensable workings of gender as a major factor in Greek social, religious, and cultural practices and in more abstract ideas about nature and culture, public and private, citizen and outsider, self and other, and mortal and immortal. Focusing on the prominence of female figures in these male authored texts, she enlarges our perspective on critical components of political order and civic identity by including issues of sexuality, the body, modes of male and female maturation, and speculations about parentage, kinship, and reproductive strategies. Along with considerations of genre, poetics, and theatrical mimesis, she points to the powerful mythmaking capacities of Greek culture for creating memorable paradigms and dramatic scenarios that far exceed simple notions of male and female opposition and predictable enforcement of social norms. Consisting of both new and revised essays, *Playing the Other* is a wide-ranging account of a central category of Greek literature by a scholar who pioneered an approach to classics through the perspective of gender.

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