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Review of Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender: Othring of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles*. BZNW 164. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

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This is a welcome and useful contribution to New Testament scholarship. Only a handful of studies have addressed gossip in the Pastorals, and gossip is rarely studied by classicists, so Kartzow has to plow some new ground in building a textual foundation to explore how the ancients viewed gossip, and offer a framework for translating these discourses into the interpretation of the Pastorals.

From her outline of the history of gossip studies, which focuses on modern gossip theory, Kartzow chooses to present characteristics of gossip rather than formulate a concise definition. These characteristics include (using her terms): the content of what is said (evaluative talk about third parties who are known but not present, information about third parties whether true or false, intimate details about someone, a touch of secrecy, news and scandals, rumors from an anonymous person); function and effect of what is said (related to pleasure, entertainment, amusement and relaxation; it can effectively pass on true facts/news and undermine people in power); description of the talker(s) in a moralizing tone (gossip is part of a caricature of a person who is overly curious or cannot keep a secret); and playing on stereotypes (the gossipy slave, old people).

Kartzow examines the root *fluar-* as a test case because it is used in 1 Tim 5:13 to describe this kind of speech, embodying the characteristics listed above. In Plutarch, she finds that *fluar-* appears 47 times, and almost always negatively. Examples are given concerning how gossip or nonsensical speech are not becoming of men (the philosopher, the good citizen, and a cultured man) and how such speech undermines the safety of the city and household. Concerning women, Kartzow points to the prophecy that Cicero's nurse had concerning Cicero's importance and the how the priestess of Hera and Dionysus should be kept apart due to their inability to refrain from jealous nonsense.

In further review of the usage of *fluar-*, Kartzow is able to find many writers who use gossip as gendered speech. Dio Chrysostom (*Oration* 66.23.2) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Literary Composition*, 18.205) clearly characterize their male opponents as feminine or emasculated due to their nonsensical speech. Dorotheus, a first century astrologist, advised men not to marry wives who were gossips. The seventh century John of Damascus stereotyped women as gossipy because the weak Eve listened to the slander of the snake in the Garden.

Kartzow moves on to ancient texts that portray gossip and gossipers. She begins in Greek texts with the very early Semonides, who characterizes woman as made out of a dog so she cannot stop yapping about things that have nothing to do with her (*Fragmenta* 7.12-20). This characterization will expand to children with Andocides (*On the Mysteries*, 130-31), who may have understood that women and children spread news from the court effectively (p. 73). Kartzow also interprets a complex situation in Lysias (*On the Murder of Eratosthenes* 15-17), where a man is told of an affair by an old female slave of a matron – private actions are made public by a person twice prone to gossip – and the information is correct and useful.

The Roman texts that Kartzow presents are principally from Plutarch but she also includes brief discussions of Juvenal, Apuleius, and Jewish texts. From Plutarch, Kartzow presents stereotypes: talkative wives, busybodies, and whispering female friends. One of the most popular misogynists of his time, Juvenal, is used for his generalization of women as gossips. In Apuleius, Kartzow locates an old female slave whose gossip is correct.

Jewish texts are presented as fairly similar to the Greco-Roman traditions. Philo says that a woman should not be a busybody (cf. Plutarch); Aseneth regrets her usage of gossip to delay her marriage to Joseph, and in some cases rabbis in the Mishnah accept gossip as trustworthy witness to the private lives of other women.

Several very important Roman texts are completely unexamined. Pliny the Younger's epistle to Calpurnia Hispulla (Ep. 19) indicates that his wife sent messengers to hear about the outcomes of Pliny's orations. The famous letter from Pliny to Trajan (Ep. 10.96) deserves attention because it involves the destructive power of gossip to the Christian community and the torture of female (Christian) slaves, and in both cases it seems that the gossip relays reliable news.

Even more importantly (and shockingly), several relevant Stoic texts that explicitly address the ideal woman are missing: Seneca the Younger, Musonius Rufus, and Hierocles. Seneca's *Consolation to Marcia* begins with a praise to her character – she is free from effeminate weakness – and he imagines a compliment that the Stoic philosopher Areus gave to the grieving Julia, “you have taken pains that no one should find anything at all in you to criticize; and not only in the larger matters, but in the smallest trifles, you have been on your guard not to do anything that you could wish public opinion...” (LCL, trans. Gummere). In *Consolation to Helvia*, Seneca encourages his mother to flee from her natural lack of self-control and draw on her philosophical studies that she did with more than a woman's pleasure: for the purpose of display (17.4). Musonius Rufus argues that a philosophically educated woman will be self-controlled and not engaged in “other pleasures of indulgence” (3, 4, 13A, trans. Lutz). Musonius also argues that men should not consider household chores to be effeminate, which would have been useful in Kartzow's discussion of gender. The second-century Stoic Hierocles deserves mention because he describes the perfect marriage: the husband should marry a good free-born woman for the generation of children and companionship and not the size of her dowry or her beauty. Husband and wife should be of one mind and support each other (*On Marriage* = Stobaeus, *Anthology*, 4.67.22-24).

Through her evaluation of ancient texts, Kartzow has demonstrated that the control of speech was important in ancient life: it can destroy households or cities. Second class humans (women, children, and slaves) and effeminate men were considered most likely to engage in gossip. Several ancient writers used these stereotypes to characterize the nature of their opponents or their arguments. The threat to the household by making private matters public undermined the male control of public information.

The critical contribution of this work is the multi-faceted comparison of the Greco-Roman texts to the representation of female gossipers in the Pastoral Epistles and the participation of the Pastoral Paul in ancient gossip discourse. Kartzow argues that the Pastoral Paul assumes that women are gossipers unless told not to gossip (1 Tim 3:11, 4:7; Tit 2:3-5; 2 Tim 3:6). False teachings are associated with “old wives' tales”; the Pastoral Paul is thought to have used this stereotype like other philosophical polemicists, undermining the reliability of his opponents. The silent obedience of slaves in 1 Tim 6:1-2 and Tit 2:9-10 upholds the patriarchal social structure and can preserve the authentic teachings of Paul (slaves do not pass on conflicting traditions if they are silent). Blameless women are mentioned – ideal women with controlled speech – and presented as exemplary: Eunice and Lois (2 Tim 1:5; 4:21).

The order of widows in the Pastorals receives much attention. Kartzow argues that the Pastoral Paul uses a variety of stereotypes in 1 Tim 5:3-16 for specific rhetorical effects. In 1 Tim 5:3, the Pastoral Paul says that young widows (any woman not dominated by a man – a young virgin, divorced woman, or a woman whose husband has died) should not be enrolled in the order because they have learned to be idle gossipers and busybodies. Elsewhere, the Pastoral Paul instructs old women to teach younger women (Tit 2:3-5), which is odd because the younger widows are especially vulnerable to the gossip of old widows, and women are instructed to learn in silence and

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not to teach (1 Tim 2:11-12). Kartzow suggests that the group of all females is tightly regulated in their speech, following the conventional rules for domestic life.

The significance of Kartzow's work is the uncovering of gossip in the Pastorals as part of ancient discourse. By employing one or more of these discourses, several possibilities present themselves. The use of the discourse could indicate that gossip as gendered speech is a source for true information; it can be quite dangerous to the household, city, or church; it can be subversive of male control of everything in the ancient world. The Pastoral Paul may be addressing a reality that women are gossipy, he could be misrepresenting them, women may have gained too much power in the church and he is attempting to undermine their speech, or the Pastoral Paul could have not encountered any gossipy women and he is simply employing ancient stereotypes to weaken his opponents and preserve the Pauline tradition.