

the prophecy of Teiresias and some implications of the observation that even though the poem ends, Odysseus' own story is not finished.

With this monograph, Christensen offers a nuanced and attentive reading of the *Odyssey* through the lens of contemporary psychology and cognitive science. Though some readers might disagree with his approach, interpretative choices or details of his findings (as he himself anticipates in the conclusion), the book is well-argued and thought-provoking. That being said, despite the plausibility of his individual arguments, the reciprocal effects between audience responses, therapeutic function and the formation of the poem, which are mentioned in the introduction, are otherwise not considered systematically.

One final observation that emerges from this reading of the *Odyssey* is how human and humanely the epic depicts its characters. Contrary to the *Iliad* and traditions of heroic poetry that present their protagonists as 'larger than life', the *Odyssey* shows its eponymous hero – together with Telemachus and Penelope – as psychologically vulnerable humans, subject to traumatic events and sensitive to public opinion. In this, they are neither superior nor fundamentally different from the members of the audience, which facilitates their identification with the poem's characters and its therapeutic effects. These in turn may account for, as well as contribute to, the influence of the reception of earlier versions on later performances that Christensen postulates.

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FARAONE (C.A.) **Hexametrical Genres from Homer to Theocritus**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xiii + 288. £64. 9780197552971.  
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Ancient literary criticism on the nature of hexametrical poetry and its subgenres is traced in Hellenistic poets who experimented with the so-called idea of πολυειδεία ('generic versatility') and refashioned the Archaic poetic genres in a new meta-poetic level. Alan Cameron concluded that any 'hexameter-poet' could be called ἐποποιός (*Callimachus and His Critics* (New York 1995), 268–69); categories, such as the subversion or parody of the (male) heroic ideal, a focalization on femininity and on non-canonical versions of stories and myths, emotionality or subjectivity, were different aspects of hexametrical poetry that many times were blended or were embedded in larger epic narratives (see Silvio Bär, 'Inventing and Deconstructing Epyllion: Some Thoughts on a Taxonomy of Greek Hexameter Poetry', *Thersites* 2 (2015), 23–51, at pages 29–31). Within this context, Faraone's new book is an insightful addition to modern scholarship about embedded hexametrical subgenres, such as hymns, incantations, oracles and laments, found in longer epic narratives. The book consists of a thorough introduction, five chapters on the main hexametrical subgenres, five appendices that serve as examples *par excellence* for the theoretical background discussed in these chapters, a detailed bibliography and four indexes.

In the first two chapters, Faraone briefly and substantially exploits some aspects of the theoretical background of hexametrical genres; more specifically, Mikhail Bakhtin's observation on the shorter genres incorporated into modern novels is also applicable to Homeric poetry, which embedded shorter genres in its longer narratives, composed in dactylic hexameters. These hexameters were well-known to their audience and enhanced a dramatic or narrative situation, fulfilling or disrupting the audience's generic expectations (4–7). What is more, Hellenistic poets revived the older hexametrical poetry, providing some otherwise lost details about ritual performance, place and timing, as well as the identity of performers and audience (8). It is worth noting here that a valuable

source for these genres were lyric and iambic poets of the Archaic and Classical periods, who sometimes used hexametrical verses in ways that suggest they were guided by 'generic constraint'. For example, we may observe Alcman's hexametrical *prooimia* before his *partheneia*, or the fact that the Homeric Hymns were considered themselves to be introductions to a performance of epic narrative. Then, Faraone makes some preliminary remarks by reviewing two cases: epitaphs and the so-called genre of *hupothekai* (a speech of advice normally given by an older to a younger man), to indicate that Homeric poetry used a pre-existing oral tradition recited in hexameters (21–30). In addition, Sappho's hexametrical fragments (*epithalamia*) show how readers might handle a mimetic poem like Theocritus' *Idyll* 18 in order to understand its original performative context (31–40). At the same time, we may examine the Pseudo-Herodotean *Life of Homer* to explore in a broader sense the variety of hexametrical genres the poet performed in the late Archaic or early Classical period (41–48).

Let me draw some striking notes on Faraone's thorough argumentation in the following chapters about hymns, oracles, incantations and laments. Cult hymns (chapter 3) normally focused on human and divine interactions and on aetiological explanations of the origins of rituals, temples or festivals. Callimachus refashioned the Homeric hymns to Apollo and Demeter in his mimetic poems, where he described rituals and gave aetiologies for them. Faraone suggests that the composers of the Homeric hymns knew and embedded local cult hymns from Delos, Crisa or Eleusis into their own Panhellenic narratives. The same fact is also applied for oracles (chapter 4) narrated by Aristophanes or Herodotus, which share common features with the speeches of some Odyssean characters, such as Teiresias (he is called a prophet in *Odyssey* 11) and Circe (in *Odyssey* 10). These instructional speeches imitate the hexametrical genre of oracle probably to invest these characters with a kind of authorial voice. Besides, it was believed that dactylic hexameters bridged the gap between gods and mortals as a kind of 'ritualised communication' (18 n.74). This special status was probably extolled, as we see in chapter 5, because the Muses or Apollo inspired human performers or otherwise transmitted through them. Faraone explores some texts from the Classical period that claim that it was Paeon or Orpheus who composed hexametrical incantations to protect humankind, or that it was Aphrodite who taught the first erotic incantation to mortals. Finally, in chapter 6, Faraone tries to answer the question of whether Greeks sung, chanted or simply spoke when they performed these dactylic hexameters. We may claim that the level of musicality was rather low and singers ranged from simple speech to chanting to recitation. However, there is some evidence for group laments in dactylic hexameters where different women sung short solos punctuated by communal responses. The brevity of these solos suggests that they might have been sung in a simple or repeated melody, a format also traced in Theocritus' *Idyll* 18 that imitates an *epithalamium* of Helen's girlfriends when she and Menelaus retire to their wedding chamber.

Overall, this book offers convincing evidence of a number of hexametrical genres that already existed in the early Archaic period and were performed in a variety of ritual contexts, such as religious festivals, oracular consultations, weddings or funerals. From Homer down to Hellenistic poetry, experts in hexametrical poetry knew these subgenres (probably from an oral tradition), they embedded or imitated them in their poems and experimented with them as a play on the generic expectations of their audiences or readers.

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