CHRISTENSEN (J.P.) **The Many-Minded Man: The *Odyssey*, Psychology, and the Therapy of Epic** (Myth and Poetics II). Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 342. $39.95. 9781501752346.
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In the introduction, Joel Christensen sets the stage for his monograph by making the 'basic and simplest contention … that through long-term engagement with the [Homeric] poems during performance in different contexts, ancient audiences were influenced emotionally and intellectually by them; and that this process shaped the epics too, making them more sensitive to and reflective of human emotional and mental states' (15). With the intent of 'present[ing] a reading of the *Odyssey* in its entirety from the perspective of modern psychology and relat[ing] it to the general therapeutic function of the poem' (21), the first chapter ('Homeric Psychology', 21–45) provides the theoretical and methodological underpinnings for this endeavour, drawing on approaches from cognitive science, clinical psychology and psychotherapy as well as literary studies.

Chapter 2 ('Treating Telemachus, Education, and Learned Helplessness', 47–69) discusses Telemachus' coming of age in terms of claiming agency, and chapters 3 ('Escaping Ogygia, an Isolated Man', 71–85), 4 ('Odysseus's *Apologoi* and Narrative Therapy', 87–114) and 5 ('Odysseus's Lies: Correspondence, Coherence, and the Narrative Agent', 115–47) focus on Odysseus reclaiming his identity and sense of self. On the theoretical basis of the psychological practice of narrative therapy, Christensen argues that Odysseus' tales at the court of Alcinous as well as his various, consciously mendacious narratives contribute to a recovery from his initial learned helplessness on Ogygia to the reassertion of his heroic agency. In these steps, Christensen asserts, the *Odyssey* depicts the importance and salutary effects of taking control of one's own narrative.

These observations find their complement in an investigation of marginalized groups in the epic, such as women and slaves, through the lens of disability studies in chapters 6 ('Marginalized Agencies and Narrative Selves', 149–73) and 7 ('Penelope's Subordinated Agency', 175–202). In contrast with the male protagonists, subordinate characters have a limited sense of self, which is defined by their relation to others, and constrained agency, insofar as their activities and initiative are only socially acceptable when they are exercised in support of or in service to their superiors.

Finally, chapters 8 ('The Politics of Ithaca: From Collective Trauma to Amnesty's End', 203–39) and 9 ('The Therapy of Oblivion, Unforgettable Pain, and the *Odyssey*'s End', 241–73) focus both on how the political and private spheres on Ithaca overlap and collide and on what effects the *Odyssey*'s narrative might have had on its audience. Christensen acknowledges that the epic tales likely developed in a time when individual households (οἶκοι) were the dominant units of social organization but envisions a situation on Ithaca more corresponding to the age of rising city states (πόλεις). He notes that the people of Ithaca have been traumatized by the lack of leadership and political order caused by Odysseus' absence, as well as by the loss of several young men, first because of the Trojan War and then because of the slaughter of the suitors. As a result of Odysseus' vengeance following his return, the community is fractured and divided about how to respond, and the situation ultimately requires Zeus' intervention of ἔκλησις ('amnesty', *Od.* 24.485). Christensen concludes that the epic is not only sensitive to individual but also to communal psychology and engages its audience in contemplation of the damaging discourse of vengeance.

The conclusion ('Escaping (the) Story's Bounds', 275–89) offers a defence of the book's approach of applying modern psychological theories to the epic by briefly reviewing the tradition of allegorical interpretation of the *Odyssey*. Christensen closes with reflections on

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.

Fabian Horn
LMU Munich
Email: fabian.horn@lmu.de

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