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A CALIFORNIAN HYMN TO HOMER

Edited by
Timothy Pepper

CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES
Trustees for Harvard University
Washington, DC
Distributed by Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England
2010

Theoclymenus and the Poetics of Disbelief: Prophecy and Its Audience in the *Odyssey*

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IN THIS ESSAY I will reconsider the role of Theoclymenus, soothsayer (*mantis*) of the *Odyssey*, in the light of current ideas about performance in Homer. I hope to retrieve Theoclymenus from relative obscurity by showing that he functions, at the heart of the *Odyssey* and especially at a crucial juncture, as the bridge between the very practice of formal performance that underlies Homeric poetry and the theme of *atasthalia* 'wantonness'. A proper understanding of Theoclymenus should lead to a better appreciation of how epic itself depicts the relationship between the performing poet and his audience. We will also see that, on the sole occasion when that relationship breaks down, the breakdown is condemned in the harshest terms by the *Odyssey* itself.

Let us follow Theoclymenus through the tale. He appears out of nowhere in Book 15 (xv 223), on the run from murder charges, a *mantis*, heralded by a veritable Homeric fanfare: thirty lines of biographical introduction and genealogy (225–255). In itself, this is remarkably lengthy; but it is the apparent discrepancy between the grandeur of Theoclymenus' introduction and his subsequent role that used to provoke Analyst disdain.¹ Yet the genealogy is "still typically Homeric in that it only provides information that is relevant for the role Theoclymenus is to play" (de Jong 2001:372). We may go further: while Theoclymenus' great-grandfather Melampus is the only ancestor to enjoy a full ring-composition (226–242), further adventures both of his second cousin, Amphiaraus (the best *mantis* of his day [252–253] who "died in Thebes

¹ See the bibliography at Fenik 1974:233n1. Most disdainful is Page 1955:86–88, whose arguments Fenik refutes one by one. Here both argument and counterargument, framed in terms of character motivation and intention, remind us how much has been gained from the integration of the concept of cultural poetics into Homeric scholarship. My own approach agrees with that of Derek Collins (2002), who identifies "rhetorics of divination" and notes that "divination relies on a discourse not between the gods and the diviner . . . but between the diviner and his audience" (20). The present essay may be read as an analysis of how the *Odyssey* employs Theoclymenus in the cultural context described by Collins.

on account of presents to a woman" [247]), and of his uncle, Cleiton (whom "golden-throned Dawn seized on account of his beauty, so that he might be among the immortals" [250-251]), are hinted at. Amphiaraus stars in Pindar's *Pythian* 8, while Gregory Nagy has shown that the "rapt by the Dawn" motif, experienced by Cleiton, is widely paralleled (Nagy 1999:190-204). In short, Theoclymenus' biographical introduction features more compression than expansion of potentially fruitful epic material. We may conclude that its length, including the expansion of Melampus' ring-composition, is well calculated; perhaps the parallel of Melampus' plight in "fleeing his fatherland" (228) with the situation of his great-grandson Theoclymenus has prompted the select expansion of the Melampus story. In any case, a legitimate thirty lines point to a more significant role for Theoclymenus than scholars have yet been able to establish. Can he meet these high expectations? The answer can be found through careful examination of his three prophecies.

First Prophecy: Telemachus

Theoclymenus' first prophecy, to Telemachus, gives us our first glimpse of this *mantis* in action, but poses a riddle as to mantic technique.

After the introductory fanfare, Theoclymenus supplicates Telemachus, receives welcome, and sails back to Ithaca with the young prince, who has just learned the minds and cities of at least a few men and is at last on the road to manhood.² The narrative then cuts to Eumaeus and Odysseus at dusk; at daybreak (495) we return to Telemachus' ship. The crew breakfasts on a beach on Ithaca; Telemachus, warned by Athena of the suitors' plans to waylay him on return, bids his comrades sail on without him; and Theoclymenus makes his first prophecy.

It will be worthwhile to go through the context and procedure of this prophecy carefully. At 506-507, Telemachus promises his comrades a feast, addressing them with the second-person plural *ὑμεῖς* twice (503 and 506). Theoclymenus intervenes to ask, essentially, "What about me?"

πῆ γὰρ ἐγώ, φίλε τέκνον, ἴω; τεῦ δῶμαθ' ἵκωμαι
 ἀνδρῶν οἱ κραναῆν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν;
 ἢ ἰθὺς σῆς μητρὸς ἴω καὶ σοῖο δόμοιο;

² Theoclymenus' age is not specified, but he addresses Telemachus as *φίλε τέκνον* at xv 509; his father, Polyphoides, took over as premier *mantis* from his own first cousin once removed, Amphiaraus, who died prematurely amid the pre-Trojan generation's "Seven against Thebes" cycle (xv 246-247); all in all, Theoclymenus is presumably, like Odysseus, middle-aged. Contra Hoekstra suggests that he is old (Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989 *ad loc.*).

Where shall I go, dear child? Whose house shall I reach
 Of the men who hold sway over rocky Ithaca?
 Indeed shall I go straight to the house of your mother and to
 your halls?³

Odyssey xv 509-511

The last line is clearly an attempt to garner an invitation. Telemachus politely remarks that this is impossible in the present dire circumstances at his house (512-517). Remarkably, he next suggests that Theoclymenus should go to the house of Eurymachus, one of the suitors (518-520) and thus his enemy;⁴ and though Telemachus does add that he is the best of them (521), he doesn't fail to wish that they may be destroyed by Zeus before marriage (524).

At this point the dialogue is interrupted by the narrator, who produces a bird of good omen (*δεξιὸς ὄρνις*, a 'right-hand bird') in the form of a hawk tearing a pigeon apart in its claws (525-527). Theoclymenus calls Telemachus over to speak to him privately (529), and then prophesies. His speech is four lines long. The first two lines affirm that the bird in question is a bird of omen indicating a god's will,⁵ and the last two contain the "message" of the prophecy. As to the affirmation that a bird of omen has flown past, it is notable that Theoclymenus characterizes the bird to Telemachus in just the same terms as the narrator has done to us: thus Telemachus is evidently unaware of anything unusual until Theoclymenus takes him aside. Certainly no one else notices the bird, in contrast to a previous bird of omen at Sparta earlier in Book 15, at whose apparition "those looking on rejoiced, and everybody's heart was glad" (xv 164-165). Here Theoclymenus' interpretation is very straightforward:

ὑμετέρου δ' οὐκ ἔστι γένος βασιλεύτερον ἄλλο
 ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς καρτεροὶ αἰεῖ.

There is no race more kingly than yours (pl.)
 In the land of Ithaca; rather you (pl.) [are / will be] always
 powerful.

Odyssey xv 533-534

³ Translations are my own throughout.

⁴ See Page's Analyst objections at Page 1955:98n5.

⁵ The narrator has already described it as *δεξιὸς ὄρνις* / *κίρκος*, 'Ἀπόλλωνος ταχὺς ἄγγελος', which leaves some doubt as to whether it is meant that all falcons are swift messengers of Apollo, that this particular falcon is one, or that "right-hand birds" are (naturally) messengers of the god of prophecy.

It is interesting that verb, and thus tense, are omitted from the last half-line.⁶ To this Telemachus replies,

αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τετελεσμένον εἶη·
τῷ κε τάχα γνοίης φιλότητά τε πολλά τε δῶρα
ἐξ ἔμευ, ὡς ἄν τις σε συναντόμενος μακαρίζοι.

Ah, stranger, may that word come to pass!
Then you would swiftly know friendship and get many presents
From me, so that whoever met you would call you blessed.

Odyssey xv 536–538

He immediately calls to his trusty companion Peiraeus and addresses him (540–543), first characterizing him as his most loyal comrade (540–541) and then telling him to take Theoclymenus to his own house and “be hearty friends with him and honor him ‘til I come” (ἐνδουκέως φιλέειν καὶ τιέμεν εἰς ὅ κεν ἔλθω), to which Peiraeus consents (544–546).

Let us review what has happened here. Theoclymenus invites himself to Telemachus’ house (509–511). Telemachus counters, not without a hint of self-pity, that this is impossible (513–517) and tells him to go to the house of one of his enemies (518–524). A bird flies by. Theoclymenus takes the young man aside and tells him forcefully that a god-sent bird of omen has appeared, and that his lineage is unbeatable. Telemachus says, “May it come to pass,” and he immediately sends the soothsayer to his best friend’s house.

Clearly the whole scene revolves around the question of where Theoclymenus is to stay in Ithaca. Since the prophecy lies squarely between the initial, shoddy invitation and the subsequent, hospitable invitation, the question is not whether Theoclymenus has made use of his prophetic ability for his own advantage, but how, and why it should be so effective. In order to answer this riddle, we must explore the relationship of mantic prophecy and archaic epic.

Rhapsodes and Manteis in Panhellenic Greece

Although “ordinary” people in the *Odyssey* make prophecies and interpret omens (Mentor/Athena, Helen, the disguised Odysseus) and, on one occasion, try but fail to do so (Menelaus), Theoclymenus differs from them in being a professional.⁷ The *Odyssey* classes the profession of *mantis* with those of *iêtêr* ‘healer’, *tektôn* ‘carpenter’, and *aidos* ‘singer of tales’ as being *demioergoi* or

⁶ On the fluidity of temporal boundaries in epic prophecy, see Collins 2002:22.

⁷ On non-professional bird interpretation, see Collins 2002:27–29.

‘workers for the *dêmos*’, that is, itinerant craftsmen (xvii 382–386; see Nagy 1990a:56–57). As we have seen from his biographical introduction, however, Theoclymenus’ professionalism is not one he has taught himself, as has the *aidos* Phemius (xxii 347); rather, it runs in the family: his father (Polypheides), grandfather (Mantius), and second cousin (Ampharaus) were all *manteis*.

This reminds us of that most famous professional lineage, the *Homêridai*, or “descendants of Homer,” the title used by Chian rhapsodes whose claim to possess the authoritative Homeric tradition depended on at least a notional descent from the archetypal epic poet (Nagy 1990a:74–75). Within the rhapsodic tradition’s representation of poetic and prophetic function, however, the parallel is not primarily with Homer but with Hesiod, a major figure in the rhapsodic repertoire (Athenaeus XIV 620c), whom the Muses provide with an αὐδὴν / θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα (a voice / Divine, so that I might give renown [*kleos*] to what is to be and what has been before; Hesiod *Theogony* 31–32). In the same manner, the *mantis* Calchas is described as one ὃς ᾔδη τὰ τ’ ἐόντα τὰ τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα (who knew and/or saw what is, what is to be, and what has been before; *Iliad* I 70).

To describe the *mantis* as a “prophet” in the modern sense of one who foretells the future, is thus misleading, since he functions with regard to present, future, and past alike: indeed, Theoclymenus’ three prophecies, the latter two of which are specifically described with the verb *manteuomai* (*Odyssey* xvii 154, xx 380), all concern present events. It is also significant, as we will see, that Calchas’ mantic relationship to present, future, and past is described by means of the verb *oida*, which in Homeric Greek signifies, equally and simultaneously, both ‘know’ and ‘see’.⁸ Rather than defining mantic activity in terms of temporal relationships, we should look to the *mantis*’s source of inspiration, Apollo: the *mantis* taps into the omniscience of the god (θεοπροπίας ἀναφαίνεις; *Iliad* I 87) and declares divine knowledge publicly,⁹ just as the omniscient Muses (*Iliad* II 485) and also apparently Apollo as well (*Odyssey* viii 488) inspire the *aidos*, the rhapsode, and the praise-poet in performance.¹⁰

⁸ For an analysis of the visualizing epistemology of *oida* in Homer, see Onians 1951:15–18.

⁹ On the use of φαίνω in the visualizing poetics of mantic interpretation, see Nagy 2003:25–36.

¹⁰ Nagy 1990a:163n82 offers a suggestion on the relationship between *mantis* and Muses: “The very form *Mousa/Moisa* (from **mont-ia*; possibly **month-ia*) may well be revived from the same root **men-* as in *mania*. This possibility, along with others, is discussed by Chantraine 1968:716. If this etymology is correct, then the very word for ‘Muse’ reflects an earlier stage where not only the one who is inspired and the one who speaks the words of inspiration are the same, but even, further, the type of mental state marked by *mania* is not yet differentiated from the type of mental state marked by formations with **men-t-* and **men-h2* ‘remember, have the mind connected with’, which of course is the source of the ‘mant’ in *mantis*.”

Theoclymenus' own name is archetypal in this respect, meaning "he who listens to the god."¹¹

These links both with the Homeric and Hesiod poetry of the rhapsodic repertoire and with the representation of epic poetry in Homer via the *aidos* Demodocus prompt us to ask what relationship may obtain between a *mantis* like Theoclymenus inside Homer and *manteis* outside Homer in Panhellenic culture. Certainly it is clear, as Nagy has shown, that the representation of epic by epic is subject to a process he terms *diachronic skewing* (Nagy 1990a:21–24), whereby the depiction of occasional, lyre-accompanied performances by Demodocus and Phemius belies the attested reality of rhapsodic practice while nonetheless insisting on key elements of real rhapsodic poetry, such as the invocation of the Muse or the subject-matter of *nostoi* (*Odyssey* i 326). How then does the depiction of Theoclymenus correspond to the reality of prophecy in the archaic period?¹²

The obvious starting point is Delphi. There the *mantis* of *manteis*, the Pythia, delivered inspired utterances (χρησμοί) direct from Apollo that were formulated as hexameter verse by a *prophētês*¹³ and delivered back and presented to the secular community by a *theôros* 'sacred emissary', three stages that may be termed "oracular utterance," "oracular formulation," and "oracular performance."¹⁴ Nevertheless, in Pindar's *Homer* Nagy notes, first, that in the *Odyssey* the distinction between the *mantis* (concerned with the oracular utterance) and the *prophētês* (concerned with the oracular formulation) can be blurred, in that "the figure of Teiresias represents a stage where the *prophētês* is the *mantis*" (Nagy 1990a:163). He goes on to note, secondly, that we find in Theognis an appropriation of the term *theôros* by the Theognidean poet himself, who, being concerned with the crafting of verse, would more naturally fall into the category of *pro-*

phētês.¹⁵ In other words, just as the representation of an occasional, lyre-strumming *aidos* like Demodocus harks back, via diachronic skewing, to a stage in which lyre-players and rhapsodes were as yet undifferentiated,¹⁶ so too the representation of a *mantis* who hears a god's voice and presents it to the community all by himself represents a diachronically skewed mantic tradition that will later be differentiated into oracular utterance, oracular formulation, and oracular performance as a result of the centralizing effects of Panhellenic oracular centers, chiefly Delphi.¹⁷ Essentially, Theoclymenus is to the oracular tradition of Delphi as Demodocus is to the rhapsodic tradition of Homer, each an extension of Panhellenic realities into the fabulous realm of epic.

Since Theoclymenus, as an itinerant *mantis*, thus subsumes both oracular utterance (by his very name) and oracular performance (by his activity in the *Odyssey*) in a historical context of retrojection, we are on firmer ground in considering his role in oracular formulation. If Homer represents Theoclymenus as participating in a tradition of soothsaying that extended to contemporary times,¹⁸ and if that tradition was integrated into a broader pattern of divinely inspired performance whose contemporary medium was the dactylic hexameter, what could be more natural than to suppose that Theoclymenus' medium for oracular formulation while wearing his *prophētês* hat should be the regularly metered verse of Delphi and the rhapsodes, if not the dactylic hexameter itself?

In support of such a hypothesis, I turn to Egbert Bakker's analysis of the nature of the hexameter in *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse*,¹⁹ though I can do no more here than summarize his principal argument. Bakker has shown that the "paratactic" style of hexameter poetry closely corresponds to the way we verbally reactivate visual memory "piece by piece" in telling stories, in which "the intonation unit is the linguistic equivalent of the focus of consciousness, the amount of information that is active at any

¹¹ Cf. Nagy 1990a:422, on *kluô*: "Homeric poetry . . . is marked by the privileging of the auditory metaphor, at the expense of the visual: the inability of the poet to *see* is a guarantee of his ability to go beyond personal experience and thus to *hear* the true message of the Muses, which is the *kleos* 'glory' (from verb *kluo* 'hear') of Homeric poetry (*Iliad* II 486)."

¹² The following discussion draws largely on Nagy's discussions (1990a) of the diachronic relationship between rhapsodes and soothsayers. For a succinct recapitulation of these ideas, see Nagy 1990b.

¹³ Nagy 1990a:162, drawing on Plato *Timaeus* 72a, ὅθεν δὴ καὶ τὸ τῶν προφητῶν γένος ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐνθέοις μαντείαις κριτὰς ἐπικαθιστάναι νόμος for the *prophetes* and *Timaeus* 72b, τῆς δι' αἰνιγμάτων οὕτοι φήμης καὶ φαντάσεως ὑποκριταί for the meaning of *hypokritai*. The parallel of a 'lineage' (γένος) of *prophēteis* with the inherited authority of the Homeridai, as with the mantic forebears of Theoclymenus, is noteworthy.

¹⁴ For a discussion of public performance in the consulting city as the consummation of fifth-century oracles, see Maurizio 1997.

¹⁵ Further, for a study of Hesiod's status as the outsider whose authority depends on his "otherness," see Martin 1992.

¹⁶ We may suppose, too, that, whether historically or notionally (or both), such undifferentiated performers would have been practitioners of composition-in-performance; Collins (2002:36) identifies the apparent spontaneity with which Homeric characters interpret bird omens as parallel to such bardic composition-in-performance.

¹⁷ Signs of oracular centralization, whereby the public comes to the *mantis* instead of the *mantis* going to the public, can be seen in the description of the *mantis* Polyphēides, Theoclymenus' father, ὅς ῥ' ὕπερησῆνδ' ἀπενάσσατο πατρὶ χολωθεῖς / ἐνθ' ὄγε vaietῶν μαντεύετο πᾶσι βροτοῖσι, which must represent something like a "private" oracle. See further Nagy 2003, chapter 1, on the interpenetration of mantic, oracular, and epic poetry.

¹⁸ For surveys of the *mantis* figure, see Roth 1982 and Parker 1999.

¹⁹ See Bakker 1997, esp. chaps. 3–5.

one time in a speaker's consciousness" (Bakker 1997:48). The "segmentation of spoken discourse into intonation units," whereby "each unit represents a single focus of consciousness" corresponds to the segmentation of Homeric verse by means of particles such as (most commonly) δέ, καί, δῆ, and ἄρα. The result is a "syntax of movement" by means of which the storyteller chooses a sequence of details, each expressed in a single intonation unit and momentarily filling the consciousness of the audience, and thus guides his listeners' thoughts in precisely the direction he wishes. Although the interaction of intonation units and the hexameter's metrical cola cannot be reduced to a simple formula, patterns are evident, chief among them the division of the line at the medial caesura into two balanced halves; each of these typically represents a single focus of consciousness, as in the following verses. I have taken them at random, inserting the symbol | to indicate the correspondence of meter with "syntax of movement," and included a literal translation.

ἔκ ῥ' ἀσαμίνθων βάντες | ἐπὶ κλισμοῖσι καθίζον,
 χέρνιβα δ' ἀμφίπολος | προχόω ἐπέχευε φέρουσα
 καλῆ χρυσεῖη | ὑπὲρ ἀργυρέοιο λέβητος

Now getting out of the bath | they sat down on the chairs
 And hand-washing water, the maidservant, | she poured it into the
 bowl, having brought it,
 And lovely and golden the bowl was, | poured the water over the
 silver basin.

Odyssey xvii 90–92

We may compare it to the style of spoken discourse we encounter every day; for example: "Those ballplayers, and the steroid question, all those boutique drugs they've got these days, well, I don't want to prejudge it—the damage to the sport, to the fabric of it, it could be substantial. But let me tell you, if my own son had that advantage, well, a boy like that could go far, no question about it."

One obvious difference between a sports-bar conversation and Homeric performance is that of dignity; another is that of regular meter. As Nietzsche noted, "above all, [in employing verse] men desired the utility of the elemental and overpowering effect that we experience in ourselves as we listen to music: rhythm is a compulsion; it engenders an unconquerable urge to yield and join in; not only our feet follow the beat but our soul does too" (Nietzsche 1974:84). The effect of a large dose of regularly metered verse on an audience is above

all one of mild hypnosis,²⁰ an effect that leads Homeric poetry to describe itself as *thelkteria* 'bewitchments'.²¹ This mild hypnosis is a channel for *visualizing* communication, so that what the poet sees in his "mind's eye" is transferred, image by image, to the "mind's eye" of his audience. Bakker writes:

[The linguist Wallace] Chafe has drawn attention to the capacity of the human mind to be activated not only by sensory input from the immediate environment, but also by what is not in the here and now. In the latter case, which Chafe calls "displacement" (as opposed to the "immediacy" of our physical environment), the speech-producing consciousness receives its input, by way of remembering or imagining, from another consciousness that is either the speaker's own or belongs to someone else. This remote consciousness is located in another time and/or place in which it does the actual seeing. The human mind appears to have a natural inclination to turn away from the physical present and to create a mental here and now, either by producing speech or listening to it. The obvious sign of this imaging potential in human discourse is the ubiquitous deployment of evidentiality markers and other linguistic devices pertaining to the here and now—the pretence is that what is remembered or imagined is actually *seen*, and the devices are deployed on *the assumption that the listener is willing to play along with the pretence*.

Bakker 1997:77–78; emphasis added

Communication between poet and audience is thus fundamentally *visual*, despite the aural medium of verse;²² and as we will see, the fact that the mechanics of hexameter communication depend on willing audience participation will prove important during Theoclymenus' third prophecy.²³

²⁰ In the course of performing a 1000-line poem in English dozens of times, I have myself verified this effect on the audience. But one need only consider the experience of seeing a Shakespeare play acted: the first five minutes are difficult and require close concentration, but soon we are hypnotized by iambic pentameter and follow readily.

²¹ Penelope to Phemius in Book 1: Φήμιε, πολλὰ γὰρ ἄλλα βροτῶν θελκτῆρια οἶδας (i 337) besides his woeful *nostoi* songs.

²² See n11 above.

²³ Similarly, in comparing archaic bird interpretation with contemporary African divinatory practice, Collins reports that "divination shifts the cognitive processes involved to what has been called a nonnormal or nonordinary mode" (Collins 2002:20) whereby "even when participants may acquiesce in shifting to a nonnormal mode of cognition, it is in the processes of mediation and synthesis" (what I have termed 'oracular utterance,' 'oracular formulation,' and 'oracular performance' above) "where we find the vested structures of power that must

In the meantime, however, I can now suggest why Theoclymenus' first prophecy was so effective in convincing Telemachus to send him to Peiraeus' house instead of to Eurymachus'. If, within the overall world of the dactylic hexameter in which the Odyssey unfolds and in which every speech-act,²⁴ no matter the genre, is performed, Theoclymenus is privileged to employ, by virtue of his status as professional *mantis*, formal and consciousness-manipulative speech, probably in verse, and most likely the oracular dactylic hexameter itself, we can see that in four lines he wrests control of his audience's psyche and bends it to his own ends. The first two lines,

Τηλέμαχ' οὐ τοι ἄνευ θεοῦ ἔπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις·
ἔγνω γάρ μιν ἐσάντα ἰδὼν οἰωνὸν ἐόντα

Telemachus, not without a god has a right-hand bird flown past
And I understood, beholding it face-to-face, that it was a bird of
omen

Odyssey xv 531–532

assert his authority through the bird, while the last two, quoted earlier, redirect the authority onto Telemachus' lineage. Since this newly conferred authority depends on the intermediary of the *mantis*, Theoclymenus has impressed his own status on the young prince in the most forceful way possible: by verse-based magical performance, or forcing his solitary audience to see his own kingliness.

Second Prophecy: Penelope

Theoclymenus' second prophecy, to Penelope, takes place at Odysseus' house, in Book 17. Here we discover a different sort of reaction to mantic performance than applied in the case of Telemachus, and a second riddle to consider regarding audience response.

To recap: the prince, having encountered his father at the swineherd's hut, proceeds to town; being a good son, he must visit his mother. She asks him about his trip (xvii 44); but he fobs her off (46–51) and, remarkably, says that he must go fetch Theoclymenus immediately (52–56)—so strong is his new bond with the soothsayer as a result of the first prophecy. He then brings Theoclymenus back to his house (from which the suitors are absent) and gives

be present to authorize the oracular reading. Without collective subscription to those structures, as constituted both in general and at the given moment, the interpretation will fail to persuade" (Collins 2002:21).

²⁴ See Martin 1989:1–42 on the Homeric designation of authoritative speech acts as *muthoi*.

him the full *xenia* 'hospitality' treatment (84–95), incidentally showing up the initial excuse that prompted the first prophecy (xv 513–517). Penelope arrives and again asks Telemachus if he has heard of his father; he recounts his adventures (xvii 107–149), including Menelaus' second-hand report that Odysseus is on Calypso's island (140–147). Of course, Telemachus is by now aware that his father is on Ithaca, sowing doom; in restricting his account to Menelaus' report, he is being economical with the truth. The news that Penelope's husband may be alive "rouses the heart in her breast" in a whole-line formula used to indicate an emotional reaction.²⁵

At this point Theoclymenus breaks in suddenly and prophesies.

ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος
ἧ τοι ὄ γ' οὐ σάφα οἶδεν, ἐμεῖο δὲ σύνθεο μῦθον·
ἀτρεκέως γάρ τοι μαντεύσομαι οὐδ' ἐπικεύσω.
ἴστω νῦν Ζεὺς πρῶτα θεῶν ξενίη τε τράπεζα
ἰστίη τ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀμύμονος, ἦν ἀφικάνω,
ὡς ἦ τοι Ὀδυσσεὺς ἤδη ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ,
ἦμενος ἢ ἔρπων, τάδε πευθόμενος κακὰ ἔργα,
ἔστιν, ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει·
οἶον ἐγὼν οἰωνὸν ἐυσέλμου ἐπὶ νηὸς
ἦμενος ἐφρασάμην καὶ Τηλεμάχῳ ἐγεγώνευν.

O reverend wife of Laertes' son Odysseus,
Indeed he²⁶ does not know/see clearly; listen to my speech

[*muthos*],²⁷

For I will prophesy [*manteusomai*] to you precisely and not hide
anything.

Let Zeus first among the gods bear witness, and this hospitable
[*xenios*] table too,

And the hearth of the blameless Odysseus at which I have arrived,

That indeed Odysseus is already in his native land,

Sitting or approaching, and learning of these evil acts,

But he is sowing evil for the suitors one and all:

Such was the bird of omen that, while upon the well-benched ship

I was sitting, I pointed out and described to Telemachus.

Odyssey xvii 152–161

²⁵ For example, iv 366, xiv 361, xv 486, xvii 47 (especially), and xvii 216.

²⁶ The pronoun refers to either Telemachus or Menelaus; for arguments supporting Menelaus see Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, and Heubeck 1992 *ad loc.*

²⁷ See n24 above.

We learn from the scholia that this passage was a point of discrepancy in ancient editions: the χαριέστεροι²⁸ (lit. “more gratifying”) versions of Homer athetized the last two lines (160–161), while the κοινότεροι (lit. “more universalizing”) athetized the whole speech, together with Penelope’s reply. As to the χαριέστεροι, their objection to the last two lines must be that Theoclymenus was not sitting on the well-benched ship when he made his first prophecy, according to Book 15: the crew had just been breakfasting on the shore (xv 499–500). What is more interesting for my purposes is that the message reported from the bird of omen in Book 15 was nothing like what Theoclymenus is now saying it was. There, the lineage of Odysseus was kingly and powerful forever; now the lineage is forgotten and Odysseus is on the prowl. This more serious inconsistency has prompted the κοινότεροι, though not the χαριέστεροι, to doubt the whole passage.

Fortunately we are now more familiar than were ancient scholars with the idea of *reperformance*. Gregory Nagy has been chiefly responsible for the application of this concept, which lies at the root of oral tradition, to archaic Greek poetics. In a recent formulation:

The notional “sameness” of a Homeric response on each occasion when Homeric poetry is being performed is part of an overlap mentality of unchangeability in Homeric performance itself. Such a mentality . . . is revealed by the Homeric contexts of *hupokrinesthai* [the verb used for the interpretation of omens]. In other words, Homeric poetry presents itself as the same thing each time it is performed, just as the words of heroes (and gods) that are quoted by the poetry are imagined to be the exact same words on each occasion of each new performance.

Nagy 2003:22

Gregory Nagy has produced a model for the evolution of the textual status of Homer,²⁹ one in which this “notional sameness” gradually results in the degree of real textual fixation we are familiar with, and Homeric poetry gradually sheds its *aidos*-esque occasionality. Mantic performance, however, is by its very nature occasional, depending on flashes of lightning or the flight of birds, difficult to replicate at, say, a competition at the Panathenaea. As a result, when the occasion arises to articulate the will of the gods in a context

in which these mantic *accoutrements* are not available to the speaker, reference must be made to *prior* mantic interpretations, which are then reperformed, notionally identical to the original interpretation but in fact as fixed in the context of performance as Homeric poetry. Thus in *Iliad* II, Odysseus “reperforms” Calchas’ vision of a snake devouring birds and being turned to stone, a vision that he reinterprets to suit present circumstances and to inspire the Achaean troops (II 299–330). In this context, whether or not Odysseus has correctly quoted Calchas, or even described the vision correctly, is irrelevant: the point is that he has borrowed Calchas’ authority as *mantis* for the duration of his performance.

If Odysseus was forced to reperform Calchas’ omen because, as a non-*mantis*, he lacked the authority to appropriate the will of the gods without recourse to past performances, Theoclymenus in his second prophecy has been forced to fall back on his prior bird of omen for a simple enough reason: there are no birds inside the secular space of Odysseus’ house. Nor would his principal audience, Penelope, be aware of a contradiction with his first prophecy: the occasionality of reperformance triggers the reinterpretation of the bird of omen, but the suitability of the performance itself remains the only criterion of authenticity.³⁰

But how does Penelope react? We can suppose that Theoclymenus has deployed the same “consciousness-shifting” technique that was so effective with her son; indeed, the speech to Penelope is even more formalized. He begins (line 152) with a full line of address; the next line discredits other sources of authority; the third defines the terms of his speech-act, and he deploys the professional verb *manteuomai*. The next two lines are an oath that draws especially on the theme of *xenia* ‘hospitality’ that Theoclymenus is linked with throughout. We may note that the “message” of the prophecy that follows again describes a situation in present time; even the intimation of future action (that Odysseus is “sowing evil for the suitors”) follows from a present tense verb. Interestingly, the touchstone for this mantic performance is now placed at the end of the speech; if it followed the order of the first prophecy (touchstone, then message), the last couplet would fit between lines 154 (“I will prophesy”) and 155 (the oath).

Nevertheless, despite the elaboration of this speech, Penelope’s reaction differs markedly from that of her son—although she replies with precisely the same words, remarking,

³⁰ Cf. Collins 2002:22: “The ‘truth’ of divination . . . refers to its performative, and performable, efficacy.”

²⁸ See G. Nagy’s 2002 Sather lectures (in the forthcoming *Homer the Classic*) for a full account of this history of χαριέστεροι and κοινότεροι versions of Homer in Alexandria, as attested in the *scholia maiora*.

²⁹ Nagy 1996, as well as the forthcoming 2002 Sather lectures.

αἴ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τετελεσμένον εἴη·
τῷ κε τάχα γνοίης φιλότητά τε πολλά τε δῶρα
ἔξ ἔμευ, ὡς ἂν τίς σε συναντόμενος μακαρίζοι.

Ah, stranger, may that word come to pass!
Then you would swiftly know friendship and get presents
From me, so that whoever met you would call you blessed.

Odyssey xvii 163–165 (= xv 536–538)

This speech is followed directly by a change of scene as we cut to the suitors outside the house; the line in question is the well-known scene-ending marker, ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον (“Thus they conversed with one another in that manner”; *Odyssey* xvii 166). In other words, Penelope does not react in any concrete way whatsoever to Theoclymenus’ second prophecy, and the scene initially appears anticlimactic. I will argue, however, that more can be understood from Penelope’s reply than first meets the eye.

Her three-line response, which I will call the “may it come to pass” triplet, also appears at a critical juncture for psychological assessments of Penelope, namely her first interview with the disguised Odysseus in Book 19. Traditionally she has been considered a “naïve Penelope” unaware of vengeance-related goings-on until her reunion with Odysseus in Book 23; in 1950, P. W. Harsh first promulgated a “sly Penelope” who recognizes the beggar’s true identity quite early on in Book 19 (Harsh 1950:1–21). My own view is that a middle course is more sensible: Penelope achieves gradual recognition of the disguised stranger—or rather, gradual recognition that the stranger is disguised.

It will be helpful now to summarize Odysseus’ speeches and Penelope’s reactions to them in their first interview in Book 19. The case for a “sly Penelope,” or at least a Penelope skilled in the rhetorical arts, starts strong: after she begins with the typical *Odyssey* “Who are you?” couplet (104–105), Odysseus deploys an elaborate compliment to her before refusing to answer on account of his woefulness (107–118). Penelope counters by implying that she perceives his compliment as such but that his flattery is inappropriate in light of her own woeful situation in her husband’s absence (124–163); the theme of her speech is *dolos* ‘trickery’ (137). In the last two lines she repeats her request that he identify himself (162–163), and we understand that, rhetorically, her woeful narrative constitutes a rebuttal to Odysseus’ excuse that he is too woeful to describe himself: “Don’t talk about woe to me!” is the implication. He replies with his third “Cretan lie,” once again misidentifying

himself as an old *xenos* ‘guest-friend’ of Odysseus’ from Crete. This speech is an inspired blend of fact and fiction³¹ that the narrator describes as “many lies very similar to the truth” (ἴσκει ψεύδεα πολλά λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα; 203) in a line nearly identical to that put into the Muses’ own mouths in Hesiod as they describe their essence (ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλά λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα; *Theogony* 27), an unmistakable sign that Odysseus is here appropriating the characteristics of a performing bard. Penelope’s emotional reaction to this tale is vividly described with a simile of melting snow (203–208). But she proceeds to declare that she will test the stranger by asking him to describe Odysseus (215–219); when he does so (221–248), her reaction is even more emotional (249) and she remarks that she is now in complete sympathy with the stranger, though she will not see Odysseus again (253–260). Odysseus counters with another blend of fact and fiction, concluding with the announcement that Odysseus will shortly be coming home:

ἦ μὲν τοι τάδε πάντα τελείται ὡς ἀγορεύω·
τοῦδ’ αὐτοῦ λυκάβαντος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ’ Ὀδυσσεύς,
τοῦ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνός, τοῦ δ’ ἴσταμένοιο.

Indeed now all these things shall come to pass just as I declare.
In this very month Odysseus shall come hither,
While this month is waning or while the next one is rising.

Odyssey xix 305–307

To this Penelope replies with the very same “may it come to pass” triplet we encountered in her own and her son’s reactions to Theoclymenus’ prophecies above.

It is especially noteworthy that in replying to this amateur prophecy of her husband’s return she shows no emotion and does not do so for the rest of the interview in Book 19, which features another three speeches by Odysseus; this contrasts with her previously emotional reactions just as her cool reaction to Theoclymenus in Book 17 contrasts with Telemachus’ hearty reaction in Book 15.

In looking over the three instances of the “may it come to pass” triplet, two patterns of incongruity emerge. Firstly, the first two instances, those spoken to Theoclymenus, do not fit with the content of his prophecies; specifically, this triplet refers to future action, whereas Theoclymenus has been describing present-tense situations. Secondly, with regard to the trip-

³¹ For an analysis of the blend of fact and fiction in this speech, see de Jong 2001:468–469.

let's promise of *xenia*, in the first instance Telemachus' acceptance of Theoclymenus as a *xenos* does not depend on any "fulfillment" of the latter's words, since Telemachus immediately shows him all welcome; in the second instance, Theoclymenus has already received *xenia* from Telemachus (xvii 84–95) by the time Penelope promises it to him (xvii 162–165); in the third instance, Penelope has previously remarked that in requital for the beggar's news of Odysseus he will be welcome and revered in her halls (xix 254), and in any case immediately offers him the bath of welcome (xix 317).

What are we to conclude from these seeming incongruities? Simply that the "may it come to pass" triplet is neither a simple expression of a speaker's personal reaction nor tailored to suit the occasion of utterance. Instead, given that the common denominator of all three instances is that of audience response to a statement of empirically unverifiable facts that the audience is asked to accept on trust, it seems that the "may it come to pass" triplet is no more than Homeric poetry's way of politely reacting to an act of mantic performance. We have seen that Odysseus himself, while no *mantis*, nonetheless shares in the Book 19 scene a line of characterization with the Hesiodic Muses, and I noted earlier the mantic affinities of Hesiod. By expressing solidarity, as it were, with the *mantis*'s statements the audience acknowledges the validity of the performance, if not of the content of the message. Indeed, in the case of Odysseus, Penelope's reaction may be considered as the turning point at which "naïve Penelope" begins to change into "sly Penelope," ceasing to weep, and proceeding to test Odysseus with her dream in the latter half of Book 19: clearly she has her suspicions of the stranger, provoked by her perception that he is lying—or rather performing. The irony in the Book 19 instance of the "may it come to pass" triplet, then, is that Odysseus' lying tale culminates in a prediction of his own imminent return, which is genuine—but we have already met a "lying" or performance-based description of Odysseus' ongoing plans for vengeance in Theoclymenus' second prophecy. Thus, given the parallels between Odysseus' mantic act in the first half of Book 19 and Theoclymenus' in Book 17, what could be more natural than to conclude that Penelope, in deploying the "may it come to pass" triplet with Theoclymenus, communicates her awareness that an act of performative prophecy has taken place?

We should thus be wary of thinking that Penelope simply "disbelieves" Theoclymenus. As we see from her unemotional reaction to his performance (parallel to her noted absence of emotion in reacting to Odysseus' prediction), which contrasts with Telemachus' whole-hearted enthusiasm for the sooth-

sayer after the first prophecy, she has evidently not allowed her consciousness to be affected by Theoclymenus' mantic verse.

Penelope's awareness of performance, then, contrasts with Telemachus', whose consciousness clearly *is* affected. This contrast readily corresponds to our own experience of performance—of opera, for example.³² While attending an operatic performance, one is conscious of simultaneously being *at* the opera—that is, sitting in a dark opera house surrounded by the rest of the audience and listening to dramatized music—and being *in* the opera, involved in the unfolding story on stage to the extent of following the turn of each musical phrase and feeling the sweep of a soprano's arm. From the arguments I presented earlier, it can be seen that Bakker's "consciousness units" correspond to musical phrases in an aria that affect us—manipulate our consciousness—insofar as we are *in* the opera, while the applause at the end of a moving aria reflects audience awareness that they are *at* the opera, and corresponds to the "may it come to pass" triplet of mantic performance as deployed by Telemachus and Penelope. It is possible, however, to be *at* and *in* the opera in a different way: as an opera singer or an opera connoisseur in the audience. In that case, one's presence *in* the opera instead constitutes an insider's awareness of how the music and production are put together. For the outsider, the entrance of the ghost in *Don Giovanni* is terrifying, since he is in the grip of the plot and of Mozart's chilling melody; for the insider, the entrance of the ghost differs from many another such entrance in other *Don Giovanni* productions and may be evaluated as such. The insider's interest is no less keen—rather the contrary—but his heightened awareness is critical and meets art, as it were, on equal terms.

This review of the rhetorical ability of Penelope on display in Book 19, and particularly in the skillful speech of xix 123–163, which refutes Odysseus' unwillingness to identify himself, has surely demonstrated that she, like her husband, is rhetorically skilled enough to recognize skilled performance when she sees it. In this light, the fact that Theoclymenus' second prophecy leaves her cool, unemotional, but nevertheless polite and engaging (in deploying the "may it come to pass" triplet) reflects a quite different type of audience reaction to mantic performance than the one that resulted from Theoclymenus' first prophecy to her more naïve son: hers is the collaborative "insider's" reaction.

³² See Nietzsche's (1974:80) interesting analogy between the formal performance of Italian opera and the formal performance of verse. I use the example of opera because our culture is not very familiar with formal performance in narrative verse.

Third Prophecy: The Suitors

Theoclymenus' first two prophecies, to Telemachus and Penelope, constitute mere preludes to his great confrontation as *mantis* with the suitors in Book 20. Here my conclusions as to the nature of mantic performance and of audience reaction can be applied more briefly and with somewhat greater contrast.

Odyssey 20 is an important, though short (394 line), book whose function is to set the stage for the bow contest in Book 21 and the revenge in Book 22. It does so on the levels of plot and theme alike: it brings all the characters together at Odysseus' house, and it showcases the wantonness (*ἀτασθαλία*) of the suitors. The wantonness gains greater and greater momentum as the book rolls to a climax in Theoclymenus' third prophecy. It is expressed, moreover, through the prolific slaughter and eating of animals, a theme that underlies Theoclymenus' vision and mantic response.

Egbert Bakker has noted that, among Odysseus' adventures, the only one to appear in the *Odyssey's* proem is that of the slaughter of the Cattle of the Sun (Bakker 2005:15), whereby Odysseus' companions αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο ("perished as a result of their very own wantonness [*atasthalia*]"; *Odyssey* i 6). Bakker further observes that both this slaughter and the Suitors' depredations are characterized as ἀτασθαλία (Bakker 2005).

Now let us turn to Book 20 and briefly consider the rising tempo of wantonness as the book approaches Theoclymenus' final prophecy. Dawn breaks at line 90. Soon (xx 147–156) Eurycleia rouses Odysseus' household to work, since the suitors are in the habit of showing up early (μαλ' ἤρι νέονται—a present-tense verb, with repeated aspect) and "then there is [always, continuing the sense of habitual activity] a feast for all of them" (155–156). Next, Eumaeus arrives, leading three pigs (162–163), and asks the disguised Odysseus if the suitors are still dishonoring him, to which Odysseus replies,

αἶ γὰρ δὴ, Εὐμαιε, θεοὶ τισαῖατο λῶβην
ἦν οἷδ' ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανῶνται,
οἴκῳ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ, οὐδ' αἰδοῦς μοῖραν ἔχουσιν

Ah, indeed, Eumaeus, may the gods avenge the outrage,
the outrage that these men in their arrogance wantonly devise
in the house of someone else, and they don't show proper respect.

Odyssey xx 169–171

(The phrase wantonly devise is formulaic, applied elsewhere to the suitors at iii 207, xvi 93, xvii 143, and, reconfigured, at xxii 47). Next (xx 173) the goat-herd arrives, leading goats "to be a banquet for the suitors"; then the cowherd

arrives "leading a cow for the suitors" and remarking that the suitors are in the habit of ordering him (κέλονται, another verb with repeated aspect) to "bring cattle for them themselves to eat" (213) and that he would be on the point of fleeing to another land if he didn't still hope for Odysseus' return (222–225). At 241 we find the suitors now planning to kill Telemachus openly; but instead they proceed to Odysseus' house:

ἐλθόντες ἐς δώματ' Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο
χλαίνας μὲν κατέθεντο κατὰ κλισμούς τε θρόνους τε
οἷ δ' ἴερευον ὄϊς μεγάλους καὶ πίονας αἴγας,
ἴρευον δὲ σύας σιάλους καὶ βοῦν ἀγελαίην

Coming to the halls of the godlike Odysseus
They put down their cloaks upon the chairs and seats
And they slaughtered great sheep and fat goats
And they slaughtered shiny pigs and the cow from the herd

Odyssey xx 248–251

Soon they are threatening to "put an end" to Telemachus in his own house (273–274) for his objections to their behavior. At 284–298 a suitor mocks Odysseus and throws a cow's foot at him; soon another is mocking at length the household's hope that Odysseus may yet come home (321–337). When Telemachus then announces that he will consent to his mother's marrying her choice of them, the suitors break out in unquenchable laughter (346). What follows bears quoting in full:

οἷ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελῶων ἀλλοτρίοισιν,
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόνον δ' ὠίετο θυμός,
τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοείδης·
"ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων
εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε γούνα,
οἰμωγὴ δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παραιναιί,
αἵματι δ' ἐρράδαται τοῖχοι καλάι τε μεσόδμοι,
εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
ἰεμένων Ἐρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον, ἥελιος δὲ
οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀχλύς.

And they were now laughing with the mouths of different men,
And now they were eating blood-soaked meat; and look, their
eyes,

They were filled with tears, and the heart was fixed on wailing.

And among them spoke forth the godlike Theoclymenus,
 “Ah, wretches, why are you suffering this blight? For night
 Has been wrapped around your heads and faces and your limbs
 beneath.
 A sound of wailing has been kindled, and your cheeks have been
 covered in tears;
 The walls and the handsome rafters have been spattered with
 blood,
 And the porch is full of ghosts, and the hall is full of them as well,
 Ghosts longing to go to Hell, in the gloom beneath; and the Sun,
 It has disappeared from the sky, and a blighting mist has fallen.

Odyssey xx 347–357

This is Theoclymenus’ final prophecy, seven lines long. It is linked with the poem as a whole in two ways: by the narratological device of focalization (with a twist), and by way of the grand theme of *atasthalia*.

To begin with focalization, Theoclymenus’ intervention here is altogether sudden: we have not heard mention of him previously in Book 20, in fact not since Book 17. Thus, although it is clear to us *in retrospect* that the three line vision of 347–349—a description fixed in a tableau by means of imperfects (γελῶν, ἦσθιον, ὤϊετο)—are “focalized” through the eyes of Theoclymenus (who presents them, with perfect-tense verbs, as *faits accomplis*),³³ they initially appear to be entirely legitimized by the narrator as regular narrative. We have seen that his first prophecy Theoclymenus was obliged to assert that he had seen a bird of omen, and it was not clear whether his audience had also seen it; here it is clear from the suitors’ subsequent irony (xx 362) that they do not see this vision, and presumably no one else does.³⁴ In performance of the *Odyssey*, then, the vision is only subsequently focalized: rather, it is a case of perspectival *zeugma*,³⁵ belonging to (and authorized by) the narrator firstly and only subsequently restricted to Theoclymenus. As we have seen from his first two

³³ On focalization, see de Jong 1997:29–40.

³⁴ Contra Guidorizzi’s view, to my mind highly improbable, that “after [Theoclymenus’] words, the suitors return to their senses and resume their arrogant and violent attitude, evidently forgetting what has just happened” (Guidorizzi 1997:2). I rather agree with the scholiast, who remarks: “No disappearance of the sun occurred: rather Theoclymenus sees such things while prophesying (μαντευόμενος) in some sort of divine inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμοῦ) that the sun disappears on them (αὐτοῖς). The suitors are unconcerned, seeing nothing of the sort” (scholia B *ad loc.*).

³⁵ The rhetorical term *zeugma* (‘yoking’) refers to the use of a word that carries two distinct meanings simultaneously: see Edwards 2002 for a fruitful analysis of the new resonance of *zeugma* in the context of oral performance.

prophecies, however, Theoclymenus is more than capable of extracting more performative meaning from his divine inspiration than he was given, and if his subsequent exposition (352–357) includes more details than his focalized vision, we may suspect that he is again, in good faith, more concerned with performance than with reporting precisely what he sees.

Nevertheless, though the narrator and Theoclymenus thus narratologically overlap in this prophecy, they coincide still more in the pattern of thematic reference governing both vision and exposition. Specifically, the supernatural details correspond to those attending the slaughter of the Cattle of the Sun by Odysseus’ companions, described in Book 10 but of course highlighted in the *Odyssey*’s proem (i 6–7). Following the slaughter, the gods “presented visual omens (τέραα προύφανον), and the skins crawled, and the meat on the spits mood—the meat both raw and cooked—and there came a sound like cattle” (xii 394–396); most importantly, the sun god Helios threatens to “go down to Hades and shine among the dead” (xii 382–383), by implication leaving the earth in perpetual night. *Chez Ulysse*, these details are paralleled in the aural portent of wailing (xx 353), the raw meat the suitors are suddenly eating (xx 348),³⁶ and most of all by the disappearance of the sun from the sky (xx 357).

The suitors’ reaction to all this is not simple disbelief but ridicule. They laugh at Theoclymenus (358); one declares that he is crazy (ἀφραίνει, 360) and zeroes in specifically on the vision of Night (whose cosmic resonance I have just noted) for his mockery. Theoclymenus responds with a proud speech (364–370) in which he defends his sanity, but in which the prophetic note is not struck—the first time we have seen him in secular mode since he beseeched Telemachus for hospitality in Book 15. Interestingly, his last words include the “ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάσθε” formula applied six times elsewhere to the suitors; then “he went back to the house of Peiraeus, who warmly received him”: a telling contrast to the violation of *xenia* by the suitors, who finally proceed to “ridicule the guests” (374). They one and all (375) try to provoke Telemachus, slandering the disguised Odysseus and suggesting that both he and Theoclymenus should be sold. As to the unidentified Theoclymenus, the suitors remark, ἄλλος δ’ αὐτέ τις οὔτος ἀνέστη μαντεύεσθαι (“And this other fellow, whoever he is, stood up to prophesy”; *Odyssey* xx 380), an activity they couple with begging for bread and wine uselessly, like the disguised Odysseus (377–379).

³⁶ For a view of this detail as a reference to the Dionysiac practice of ὀμοφαγία (the eating of raw meat), see Guidorizzi 1997:4–7.

An evaluation of the suitors' reaction in terms of audience response to performance shows that Theoclymenus' technique of consciousness manipulation has here had no effect at all; or rather, the suitors have not allowed themselves to participate in the performance as an audience must.³⁷ To continue the operatic analogy, they are rather in the position of someone, or rather a group of people, at the opera who are unable to *hear* the music as more than noise: they are simply at the opera and cannot enter *in*; and the natural reaction is laughter and mockery. Otherwise, while perhaps disregarding Theoclymenus' message, as Penelope does, they would at least acknowledge the legitimacy of his performance. As we have seen from line xx 380, however, the fact of Theoclymenus' performance is itself, for them, a subject of irony and ridicule. With that Book 20 ends: following the law of the rising climax, the suitors' arrogance can go no further.

Prophecy and Self-Referentiality

This essay has followed Theoclymenus through his three prophecies in the *Odyssey* and has tried to explain why a figure seemingly so marginal should enjoy the most prestigious "introductory biography" in all of Homer.

Examining Theoclymenus' first prophecy, to Telemachus, I sought to explain the uncanny power of his words, which successfully reversed Telemachus' decision as to where the soothsayer should stay on Ithaca, by exploring the ways in which the figure of the *mantis* in Homer corresponds to the figure of the *aidos* on the one hand and to the reality of oracular activity in archaic Greece on the other. I found that the *formality* of mantic performance is analogous to the formality of rhapsodic epic and of Delphic oracular verse. Drawing on Egbert Bakker's understanding of the hexameter as a tool for the manipulation of consciousness, I concluded that Theoclymenus must, in prophesying, be employing a formal device with equal psychological potency, if not the hexameter itself. The conversion of Telemachus—thereafter the soothsayer's warm friend—can thus be understood as partaking of rhapsodic magic.

Coming to Theoclymenus' second prophecy, to Penelope, I reconsidered the question of what it means for an audience to "disbelieve" a *mantis*. We saw that Penelope's reaction constitutes a formal acknowledgement of the fact of performance, achieved through deployment of the "may it come to pass" triplet. With reference to another instance of this triplet in Book 19, which again coincided with a cool, unemotional reaction by a rhetorically skilful woman, I interpreted her "disbelief" as the "insider's" perspective

on performance, one in which the insider is able to remain autonomous by means of an awareness that she is both *in* and *at* the performance—in contrast to Telemachus, the young "outsider," who was wholly *in* to the extent of responding to the performer's will.

In considering Theoclymenus' third prophecy, to the suitors, I found that the suitors, while aware that a mantic performance had taken place, reacted with mockery and sarcasm both to the performance itself and to the very idea of mantic performance. They were definitely not "in" but merely "at"; and Theoclymenus left in a rage, never to be heard from again.

Throughout the investigation of these prophecies, I also noted three types of affinity between Theoclymenus the *mantis* and the poet of the *Odyssey*. First, there is the relationship with the rhapsodic tradition. Delphi and the rhapsodes shared the same meter; the rhapsodic hero Hesiod is described with the same line that characterizes the *mantis* Calchas in the *Iliad*—they know present, future, past. Within the *Odyssey* itself, however, *aidoi* (representatives of the *Odyssey* poet) share the same source of inspiration with *manteis*, namely Apollo, and they are classed together as *dēmioergoi* (xvii 382–386). Second, beyond the rhapsodic tradition as a whole and its self-representation, I found that Theoclymenus is in collusion with the narrator in two respects: he obviously knows what is going on in the *Odyssey*'s story to a greater extent than anyone but Odysseus, though the source of his knowledge is somewhat ambiguous as he is ready to reinterpret omens to suit his own purposes on the spot; and he is involved in two "perspectival zeugmas" on the narratological level, whereby the narrator discloses information first to the audience as the narrator and subsequently makes it clear that his own statements were focalized through the soothsayer: in such situations, narrator and soothsayer blur.³⁸ Third, however, and most significantly, we have seen how Theoclymenus' final prophecy corresponds to the *Odyssey*'s central theme of *atasthalia* and its discontents, as Theoclymenus' speech to the suitors draws on imagery not seen since the wantonness of Odysseus' companions. As a *xenos* himself, moreover, Theoclymenus embodies both the well-treated guest and the ill-treated guest, receiving welcome from Telemachus and abuse from the suitors.

In the end, then, what is Theoclymenus' role? How is the thirty-line fanfare at his first appearance justified by his subsequent actions? I believe we can conclude, in light of these arguments, that Theoclymenus represents the idea of formal performance in the latter half of the *Odyssey*, as well as

³⁸ Cf. Martin's suggestion (Martin 1989:234–236) that Achilles and the *Iliad* narrator narratologically overlap.

³⁷ See p. 57 above.

being the articulator of the *atasthalia* theme. This is a role that cannot suit a rhapsode or an *aoidos* inside the story, since that story is still in the process of unfolding and epic's province is the past. The *mantis*, however, represents the divine will, which is readily identified by epic *with* epic, *inside* epic.³⁹ The suitors' response to Theoclymenus is clearly contrasted with Telemachus' and Penelope's engagement with mantic performance; but their rejection of formal performance is expressed in a simultaneous rejection of the very theme of the *Odyssey*. Pitilessly enough, this twofold rejection of both epic message and epic medium, effected through the figure of Theoclymenus, is equated in the *Odyssey* with unforgivable folly.

³⁹ Cf. Collins's general conclusion on the representation of bird divination in epic, that "early epic can draw analogies between an internal character's performed bird divination and its own external performative mode" (Collins 2002:35; see generally 35–40).

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3

The Places of Song in Aristophanes' *Birds*

Dan Sofaer

Birds' Ideal Music between Tradition and Utopia

Scholars of Greek Old Comedy often treat comic lyric in a limited manner: meters are analyzed, the occasional allusion to Anacreon or Pindar is noted, the emotional effect of a song is surmised, but somehow these analyses rarely affect our reading of the play in its larger context. For that, we are advised to make ourselves well-informed about law courts, contemporary political figures, and other prosaic facts, from the dull to the obscene. Such an approach to the lyrics of comedy is, as I will be arguing here, inadequate, largely because music in its various guises was such an important fact of life in Athens, so much so that even the most frivolous-sounding comic song may have had serious overtones by virtue of its intervention in an ongoing discourse about music and society. For recovering this socially charged musical discourse, recent studies of nondramatic lyric could provide alternative approaches, as they emphasize less the personal/confessional (and bare textual) aspect and more the social, religious, and economic aspects of performance occasions.¹ For the Greeks, as these other studies show, a song is more than just words and music: who is singing, who is listening, and where and when and to what instruments a song is sung reveal as much as the song itself. Complications arise when applying these contextual approaches to comic lyric, since it is part of a genre with its own conventions and occasions. Still, taking as our model

I would especially like to thank Mark Griffith for his help with this essay. I am also indebted to D. J. Mastrorarde and R. P. Martin for two helpful courses in Aristophanes, and to all those at Berkeley who commented on this paper.

¹ See, for instance, Gentili 1988; Calame 1977 (vol. 1 translated into English as Calame 1997); Nagy 1990:9 ("If the occasion [of a song] should ever be lost or removed, then the intent of the utterance is destabilized"); Kurke 1991.