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INSPIRATION AND NARRATIVE IN THE HOMERIC *ODYSSEY*

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NATALIE TREVINO

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ABSTRACT

One can read the *Odyssey* as the product of a poetic tradition interested in innovating the very process of its own narrative performance. In my thesis I focus on examples of metanarrative that feature a particular type of internal narration: the communication of gods with men. In particular, the *Odyssey* features two apparent aberrations of the standard portrayals of 'Homeric' divination—one, a dream scene, Penelope's 'symbolic' dream in Book 19, another, a moment of prophecy, Theoklumenos' 'ecstatic vision' in Book 20. I will argue, however, that Penelope's and Theoklumenos' scenes are not aberrant so much as purposefully exceptional. In other words, I will propose that both scenes can be understood more productively as depictions that have been conscientiously stylized by the poet(s) to encourage a reception by their audience that is similarly aware of the scenes' metacommentative, and especially metapoetic, significance.

Indeed, by manipulating the standard representations of gods and men as they communicate within epic narrative, the poet has crafted an innovative and self-referential exploration of the vehicle of that communication between gods and men, the medium. Along with the poet, both Penelope and Theoklumenos are mediums within the epic because they act as the intermediary between the gods and mankind in moments when information from the divine sphere is shared with the human sphere. I will argue that the poet takes advantage of the metanarrative nature of these scenes, in order to disclose to his audience the essence of his own poetic contributions which are otherwise obfuscated by traditional elements of the genre. In line with the other metanarrative innovations of the *Odyssey*, the poet uses the scenes of Penelope and Theoklumenos as internal descriptions of his own role in order to challenge traditional conceptions about divination and divination's sister craft, *poesis*.

INTRODUCTION: FINDING A PLACE FOR THE ABERRANT PROPHECIES OF PENELOPE AND THEOKLUMENOS

I.1 Innovation, Aberration, and Metanarrative

One can read the *Odyssey* as the product of a poetic tradition interested in innovating the very process of its own narrative performance. By using non-linear chronology in a novel manner, by embedding extended narratives, and by commenting on story-tellers themselves, the poem explores the act of creating narrative beyond what was conventional. In the following analysis of epic performance, I will focus on examples of metanarrative that feature a particular type of internal narration: the communication of gods with men. In particular, the *Odyssey* features two apparent aberrations of the standard portrayals of 'Homeric' divination—one, a dream scene, Penelope's 'symbolic' dream, another, a moment of prophecy, Theoklumenos' 'ecstatic vision'.¹ Although some scholars have noted in passing the exceptional nature of both scenes, none have tried to interpret the scenes in a way that conclusively aligns with any school's literary critical approach to the epic. In fact, the exceptionality of both scenes has led to scholars simply noting their grammatical difficulties, or marking their oddity and leaving their commentary at that.²

I will argue, instead, that Penelope's and Theoklumenos' scenes are not aberrant so much as purposefully exceptional. In other words, I will propose that both scenes can be understood more productively as depictions that have been conscientiously stylized by the poet(s) to encourage a reception by their audience that is similarly aware of the scenes' metacommentative,

¹ *Odyssey* 19.535-554 and 20.345-359, respectively. Greek texts cited and included are taken from the Standard Loeb editions. All translations are my own. Names are transliterated according to the Greek spelling, except for those names, like Odysseus, that are so entrenched in the English-speaking culture in their Latinized spellings that they are jarring to see in their Greek transliteration.

² Monro 1901; Russo 1988; de Jong 2001. The exception here is de Jong's commentary, which takes a narratological approach to decoding both scenes, but has not addressed the narratological oddities in either scenes as they depict divination.

and especially metapoetic, significance. I will demonstrate that, by manipulating the standard representations of gods and men as they communicate within epic narrative, the poet has crafted an innovative and self-referential exploration of the vehicle of that communication between gods and men. Henceforth I will refer to this vehicle as the medium. By convention, the epic poet is the medium of *poesis*, the vehicle by which the divine information of the epic's storyline is communicated from the Muses to the mortal audience of the song. Both Penelope and Theoklumenos themselves become mediums within the epic because they also act as the intermediary between the gods and mankind in moments when information from the divine sphere is shared with the human sphere. I will argue that the poet takes advantage of the metanarrative nature of these scenes, in order to disclose to his audience the essence of his own poetic contributions which are otherwise obfuscated by traditional elements of the genre. In line with the other metanarrative innovations of the *Odyssey*, the poet uses the scenes of Penelope and Theoklumenos as internal descriptions of his own role in order to challenge traditional conceptions about divination and divination's sister craft, *poesis*. Though this project focuses primarily on just two scenes in the *Odyssey*, the exploration of the metanarrative about divination and *poesis* reveals a whole new perspective on such representations throughout the poem and the Homeric tradition.

I.2 Scholarly Opinions, A History of Devaluation

Eccentricity marks both Penelope's dream-scene in Book 19 and Theoklumenos' prophecy-scene in Book 20 and, as I mentioned above, as a result both scenes have been dismissed in scholastic circles as atypical outliers. Neither scene has been harvested successfully for evidence of a generic type of divination or of contemporary practices and, as a result of their uniqueness and disjunction with the surrounding narrative, both moments have been variously

written off as interpolations or moments of incongruity by the poet. Between the two scenes, Penelope's dream of the eagle and the geese has received the lion's share of commentative attention, with Theoklumenos' macabre prophecy being relegated to the bin of Homeric oddities. Once scholars note the ubiquitous death symbolism in the *mantis*' pronouncement, analytical attention is generally redirected instead onto the moralizing closing lines of the episode by the narrator.³ Penelope's dream-scene, however, has been analyzed time and again for its singular depiction of a symbolic dream-type and for its potential insight into the mental state of the queen, and most commonly her cognizance of her husband's return.

By and large, we have E. R. Dodds to thank for the fixation on the symbolism in Penelope's dream. According to his analysis and other typologies of dream-types, the dream of Book 19 has been set aside as the only Homeric instantiation of a non-message dream and, therefore, as a Homeric anomaly.⁴ Instead of the normative message dream type-scene, Dodds asserts that Penelope's presentation of the scene through the visual portrayal of a bird omen marks her dream as the only symbolic dream in Homer and as a precedent for the predominant modern dream, which requires interpretation.⁵ In her own words, Penelope describes the contents of a bird sign that appeared to her while she was sleeping and which she did not realize was a dream until after the fact—an eagle swoops in and kills her geese as they were ranging in the palace courtyard.⁶ Furthermore, Penelope tells her audience that she reacts to this portent with lamentation and distress, at which point the eagle delivers an interpretation of the sign that it has just performed, explaining that it is Odysseus and that he will return and kill the usurping suitors.

³ Monro 1901, 195-198 focuses on the symbolism of Theoklumenos' speech; Russo 1988, 124-125 highlights the omen's motifs of death and then turns to the moralizing narrator speech; Mitchell 2011 attempts to award Theoklumenos' speeches more weight but, I believe, arrives at an insupportable conclusion in his attempt to enlighten our understanding of how the speeches were composed and to what effect.

⁴ Dodds 1951.

⁵ Ibid. 106.

⁶ *Odyssey* 19.535-553.

The dream then ends and Penelope is left guessing at its meaning. Scholars have attended carefully to the fact that Penelope does not believe the in-dream interpretation by the eagle and the fact that she initially bewails the death of the geese. These two details of the dream-scene, in particular, have informed greatly the psychoanalytic readings of the episode and serve as the foundation for understanding the dream-scene as psychological exposition, detailing the mental state of character through more than the narrator's insight.⁷ As a result, most of the exegetical energy has been directed towards what the dream entails for Penelope's current emotional state instead of towards what the structure and delivery of the dream itself entails in terms of the narrative, as well as the metanarrative.

Additionally, this focus has biased scholars, who are predisposed towards combing the scene for evidence of Penelope's mental state and towards using Penelope's phraseology and presentation of the dream as evidence of her intuition of Odysseus' identity and *nostos* plot. In the very least, these readings promote an interpretation of Penelope's dream-scene that, because of the content and form of her narration, she is semi-consciously in sync with her husband.⁸ At the most extreme, scholars of this bent suggest that Penelope has anticipated the *anagnorisis* of the couple's reunion and is colluding with or manipulating her husband through the coded language of the dream.⁹ In either case, such approaches rely heavily upon anachronistic conceptions of the depiction of internal realities within literature and more or less completely bypass the stylistic qualities of the dream-scene that have allowed such open-ended analyses of the episode to persist.¹⁰ As Pratt has clarified, a more native duality is conveyed by Penelope's

⁷ Harsh 1950, Amory 1963, Austin 1975, 205-238, van Nortwick 1979, Russo 1982, and Winkler 1990, 142-143.

⁸ Russo 1982 proposes that Penelope has an intuitive *homophrosune* with her husband; e.g. their synced-up dreams.

⁹ Vlahos 2011.

¹⁰ Pratt 1994 and Loudon 2011 both take a strong stance against this inclination, with Pratt focusing on the anthropologically supported interpretation of Penelope's dream and Loudon evaluating the thematic patterns of the epic in order to do so.

dream-narration that relies upon contemporary numerological practices and that does not usurp the thematically established *anagnorisis*-scene at the denouement of the epic or rely upon anachronistic perspectives on character psychology.¹¹ By Pratt's estimation, Penelope's dream-scene contains two viable options for *oionomanteic* significance—the reading given by the dream itself and the numerological interpretation that Penelope assumes and seems to maintain. Thus, Penelope's dream-scene has been analyzed regularly and used to support theories about consequential, and sometimes unique, aspects of the poem, but the larger exceptional quality of the episode has not been addressed.

The same cannot be said for Theoklumenos' scene. There is, in fact, a comparative dearth of scholarship addressing the ominous series of events that features prophecies from the seer and the narrator. Yet, the same exceptional distinction marks the episode and has rendered it, largely, as inscrutable as Penelope's dream-scene. Narratively, the poet has signaled both Penelope's and Theoklumenos' prophetic moments. Unlike Penelope's dream-scene, which is encapsulated solely in the queen's own account of the dream's occurrence, Theoklumenos' scene seems, at first glance, to be repetitive. First, the narrator relays for the external audience how Athena causes a number of omens surrounding the suitors, after which Theoklumenos narrates his own version of those same omens. Next, once the suitors have dismissed the value of Theoklumenos' pronouncement of the omens, Theoklumenos provides an interpretation of the event, which is then followed by a summary prolepsis by the narrator that also provides a kind of interpretation on the episode. Where Penelope's scene is cloaked in vagueness, Theoklumenos' seems muddled with redundancy.

¹¹ Pratt 1994 gives a full interpretation of the omens included in the dream (pgs. 150-2) and a more accurate analysis of Penelope's reaction to those signs than the traditional Freudian reading of the scene (pgs. 148-9 for Pratt's reaction to the Freudian tradition).

Altogether, most commentaries note that Theoklumenos' performance is a striking depiction of prophecy, full of standard death symbolism, and includes another iteration of dramatic irony concerning the suitors' fate.¹² In other words, scholars note that the scene has interesting literary and thematic value, but little else. At the very worst, they argue against it having any value within the poem, noting how incongruous it feels with its context or how it disrupts the pacing of the narrative.¹³ Moreover, aside from de Jong's *Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*, most in-depth treatments of the scene focus on the implications of the individual components—for instance, the possible import of the ghost imagery, the thematic consistency of the suitors' laughter, or the historical omen of a solar eclipse—or seek to defend the scene's thematic and structural integrity within the rest of the epic.¹⁴ Very few have considered Theoklumenos' final prophecy performatively or as a reflection on divination beside noting its singularity as an ecstatic vision.¹⁵ Mitchell has argued that Theoklumenos exhibits a form of “mantic persuasion magic” due to the style of his divinations.¹⁶ While I do not agree with his conclusions, Mitchell has taken a much needed step towards seriously considering Theoklumenos' performances as a purposeful depiction by the poet. It is precisely with this purpose in mind that I will analyze both scenes, with an eye to articulating their value, as well as to illuminate the impact that each scene has in relation to one another and to the entire poem.

I.3 Decoding the Inscrutable: Genre, Inspiration, and The Poet

As we have just seen, the state of the field has left something to be desired when it comes to Penelope's dream and Theoklumenos' prophecy. Either by dominating the discussion with one

¹² Monro 1901, 195-198; Russo 1988 124-127.

¹³ Kirk 1962, 242; Page 1955, 83 ff.

¹⁴ Levine 1983, Colakis 1986; more on de Jong 2001 later.

¹⁵ Fenik 1974, 233-244.

¹⁶ Mitchell 2011.

interpretative approach or by glossing over the scene, scholars have left both to fall under the label of ‘inscrutable’. I will make a case, however, not only for the congruity of both scenes with their story contexts but also for an overarching metacommentary that places both scenes in dialogue with one another and with other moments of similar divination. These scenes not only belong in the poet’s story, but reflect the poet’s own contribution to the epic. In defense of this assertion, I aim to analyze of Theoklumenos’ Book 20 prophecy and to provide a reading of the scene that illuminates more than its ominous imagery. I also intend to rescue Penelope’s dream-scene from the anachronistic general consensus that her singular, ‘symbolic’ dream is a moment of psychoanalytic reflection on the queen. By contextualizing and unpacking both scenes, I will demonstrate the metapoetic bent of these carefully crafted depictions. *Metapoesis* relies upon a particular understanding of the agent behind the song and, for this reason, I will assert that the identity of the poet of the *Odyssey* is inherent to these scenes’ import. Moreover, I will argue that, by portraying Penelope and Theoklumenos as mediums of communication between gods and men, the poet seems intent upon influencing the reception of his poem and himself as its creator.

Throughout this thesis, I will consistently refer to “the poet” as the agent of composition and performance behind the extant *Odyssey* that we have today.¹⁷ However, I use this terminology only for the sake of brevity and for lack of a better term for the long line of oral performers who modified, innovated, and re-performed the numerous versions of the epic poem

¹⁷ In an effort to acknowledge the “Homeric Question” without addressing it directly, I have here noted that I will consistently use the shorthand approach to naming the author(s) of the *Odyssey* as “the poet”, despite the fact that such a label does not necessarily align with oralist theoretical approaches to composition of the Homeric epics, which I formally follow. I wish to stress that any arguments I put forward here about “the poet” achieving narrative coherence throughout the work do not necessarily indicate that there was a single composer of the epic. In fact, I would argue that the oral nature of the epic and its narrative coherence are not mutually exclusive, but rather could reflect the influence of several possible compositional circumstances, including but not limited to a professional association of rhapsodes who interacted consciously with the result that a coherent performance tradition was created, or to a single scribe who preserved for posterity the written text that is extant and predominant.

that resulted in the written text that we are examining.¹⁸ In this regard, the agency that I assign to formal modifications and stylistic adjustments in such scenes must be attributed to a guild of singers or, perhaps, the zeitgeist of the epic rhapsodes during a specific period, and not to any one individual. As with all folk literature, the name and personal contributions of the individual performers are lost to time and made indeterminable by us once they become incorporated into the tradition.¹⁹ Accordingly, it is not my purpose to establish the intent or motivation of “The Author” but rather to demonstrate the metacommentative disposition or mood of one of the last eras in which the epics remained oral and were still malleable; that is, before they were formalized and concretized in the written form extant today. In regards to Penelope’s and Theoklumenos’ scenes, I will consider how the constructions of the scenes imply a performance context to which a long line of singers would have been reacting and against which they might have been pushing. I will investigate therefore, among a poetic atmosphere that was so invested in innovating *poesis*, the embedded narrations that have been composed by a generation of self-reflective performers.

For innovation to be undertaken, of course, there must be a presiding tradition to reinvent, and Homeric epic constitutes a profound genre with fairly conservative standards and well-established formal guidelines to structure and style.²⁰ Throughout this thesis, I will presume several traditional preconceptions of epic genre to be understood by the performer and his audience as informing their understanding of and expectations for the poem. These ideas about genre and convention are provisional but are supported by conclusions that can be drawn from the epic texts themselves, as well as other, although non-contemporaneous, similarly received

¹⁸ For more on orality see Nagy 1992, 18-35, with bibliography, among many others.

¹⁹ As oral theory asserts, oral epic constitutes folk literature. Lord 1960.

²⁰ For a discussion of epic as the genre of tradition see Martin 2005, 15-18.

works of Greek fiction.²¹ For this project, the principal conceit of epic performance is its status as an inspired production; that is, the epic poet was not merely a talented performer, but rather a craftsman literally inspired by the gods, someone in communication with the divine through his art. For this reason, an analogy equating *poesis* and divination can be drawn and exploited metapoetically by using scenes like those that feature Penelope and Theoklumenos as mediums that enable communication between the gods and men—a functionally equivalent process to what the poet enables between the Muses and his audience.

This conceit of poetic inspiration appears to have been more than a literary device at one point, and rather a formative belief. For at least part of its performance history, epic poetry was genuinely conceived of as an inspired creation.²² Inside the epic, the self-promotion of its divine qualities appears early and is later re-emphasized by invocations to the Muses.²³ Thus, on at least a conventional level, credit is given to the Muses for providing the poet's beginning or, less literally, for blessing the endeavor. The narrator, therefore, is nominally indebted to the Muses, a condition which could be defined loosely as inspiration on that evidence alone. However, the nature of poetic inspiration is defined further by the epic in a self-reflective way, in its depiction of singers.

Inspired performers of epic song are, in epic, 'godly'. Time and again singers are ascribed qualities that relate them in some way to the divine, whether by the simple modifier *theios* or even by one feature of the Phaiakian singer, Demodokos, which so ties him to other

²¹ Primarily Hesiodic hexameter and the Homeric Hymns, though the mythemes and motifs often carry over into tragedy and general mythical canon.

²² For scholarly contributions to epic inspiration theories see: Sperduti 1950, Barmeyer 1968, Vernant 1985, Murray 1981, and Detienne 1994.

²³ Homeric evidence for self-endorsement of this belief can be found, for instance, in the proem's invocation (*Ody.* 1.1-10), which indicates the desire for the goddess to guide the poet on a particular narrative route, and the transition from proem to narration signposts that guidance, just along a different path (1.11 ff.).

inspired mouthpieces—his blindness.²⁴ As in the case of Teiresias, with one sight taken another is bestowed.²⁵ Demodokos has the divine ability to recount truths beyond his physical, first-hand perception and, in doing so, to captivate.²⁶ Phemios, though not blind, still attributes in part his song-abilities to the gods. Like Hesiod in the *Theogony*, he is given the gift for song, yet retains his own creative agency.²⁷ He claims, "I am self-taught (*autodidaktos*) and the god has instilled all the paths of song in me."²⁸ Thus, the gods provide the material for the song, the paths, and he, the poet, makes it a reality. This cooperation in creation is the sum meaning of archaic inspiration, it seems.²⁹ It is a joint effort with both parties participating and creating a hybrid product. The poet retains agency in his own creative contribution, but imparts authority and gravitas on the performance through his personal connection with the gods. This is the reality of inspiration that epic internally promotes and self-represents as embodying.

The agonistic nature of epic performance would only support this. It is definitive to the poem that the epic be a performance of tradition.³⁰ In its essence, it is a work of preservation through reiteration; it allows in each retelling a story to be revived that could date back numerous

²⁴ Theos: e.g. *Odyssey* 1.336, 4.17, 8.43, 8.48, 8.97, 8.539, 13.27, 16.252, 17.359, 23.133, 23.143, 24.439; For Demodokos' blindness: *Odyssey* 8.62-4.

²⁵ Teiresias' second sight is later explained in a similar episode where with his vision taken he is given the gift of prophecy as compensation (Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheka* III.6 saves such a myth). It is, of course possible that the association already existed concurrent with the performance of the *Odyssey* and following the same logic—he might only have ultra-human sight with his mortal vision removed.

²⁶ As explained in his introduction, the Muses took his sight but gave him the gift of song. His accuracy is demonstrated by Odysseus' reaction to his recounting of the events at Troy (lms. 8.83 ff.). In 8.477-82, when Odysseus compliments Demodokos, he goes on to declare something akin to Phemios' vaunt (22.347-348) that the Muses instill the song in bards. At 8.487-91 Odysseus continues and explicitly praises the singer's accuracy in recounting, going so far as to say that it was as if he himself had been present or heard a firsthand account. Notice here that, beyond attributing his talent to the instillation by the Muse, Odysseus also credits being taught by a Muse or Apollo as part of the minstrel's excellence.

²⁷ Lms. 22-34.

²⁸ *Odyssey* 22.347-348.

²⁹ The invocation to the Muses in *Iliad* 2 before the Catalogue of Ships (lms. 484-93) enforces this reading. Plato, too, has a formative conception of inspiration because of its reflection upon the role of ecstasy and possession, in the *Ion* (535b ff.).

³⁰ Nagy 1999, 27-8; Martin 1989 xiv ff., 65-69, and 77-82 for agonistic performance ethos.

generations.³¹ Its themes, characters, plots, and even the event of the performance are passed down from poet to poet, audience to audience, and it is the poet's reputation that is at stake in his endeavors not to compromise the integrity of the epic. Here the gods, beyond representing a source of significance for the performance, act as guarantors of legacy. By making the gods the fount for tradition, there is a social pact established ensuring that the performers communicate the heritage pristinely through their access to the divine, unblemished, immortal memory. Thus, inspiration becomes one of the currencies of legitimacy in poetic performance and, by creating a text that retains the gods' stamp on the story, the poet reinforces the genuineness of his work.³² Furthermore, the truest tale is the one remembered by the gods in their absolute superiority.³³ It, therefore, stands to reason that the gods' perspective on events is the closest to the "real" story. Consequently, poets are encouraged by the cultural role of their art to ensure that their version retains the authenticity and accuracy imparted by the gods' purer, wiser knowledge.³⁴

The poet's song is meant to give his audience a tale that they would not hear otherwise, meaning a tale from the Muses. From this predisposition, the narrative of epic is generally characterized by exposition that exhibits 'epic objectivity,' by which the singer impersonally delivers the events without embellishment or rhetoric, and under the effect of the conventional influence of the Muses.³⁵ In other words, the action is delivered from an omniscient source preserving all the necessary details on all the levels of participation. This is narrative not from the mortal perspective, but instead, from the divine perspective translated through a mortal's,

³¹ Martin 1989 and 2005; Nagy 1995.

³² Heiden 1997 provides a different perspective on the significance of the gods' role in epic, one which stems specifically from worship. Naturally, above cited sources for Inspiration Theory are also here pertinent.

³³ Memory is an important concept in epic performance (e.g. Notopoulos 1938 "Mnemosyne in Oral Literature"). Ford goes so far as to assert that the Muses do not remember but make the performance of epic "a presentation of deeds as they happened and still happen under their divine purview" (1992, 6).

³⁴ Nagy 1996.

³⁵ Ford 1992, 23; 39.

resulting in a narrative skewed from the start towards the divine viewpoint, one with a divine perspective-bias. The gods' influence and responsibility for epic events would, then, be a priority for the poet to preserve in his narration. And, as a consequence, the mortal poet's interference and human characters' agency in the poem normally would be deprioritized and edged into the background.³⁶

Even for the most ambitious and innovative poet, epic poetry almost demands that there be a divine perspective-bias enabling its progression. As a narrative tool, the omniscience it bestows is the most expedient channel for exposition, which is only circumvented with enormous finagling and potentially at the cost of clarity.³⁷ Essentially, due to the inspiration provided by the Muses, the poet has a sliver of expert, complete knowledge of the events set before him to articulate and, should the progression of the narrative demand it, the poet may reveal any amount of detail on those events to motivate, prepare, or explain the plot.³⁸ His narrative omniscience is a vehicle he may opt to employ and, in doing so, may utilize to its fullest potential in order to provide to his audience a clear, unimpeded, and logical *ekphrasis* of the story that the Muses have breathed into him. The resulting narration creates an audience that is instilled, likewise, with a sliver of divine knowledge of events.³⁹ Moreover, the epic so regularly provides a privileged window into divine actions and motivations, that the audience is allowed to become complacent about their understanding of the divine influence upon events.⁴⁰ It is not incredible that we see the gods' participation in the unfolding of epic events; this is expected.

³⁶ Pedrick 1992, 41 notes the narrator's normally "unobtrusive voice" and goes on to provide a discussion on poetic innovation and the *Odyssey* by means of analyzing its proem.

³⁷ See Chapter 1.3.

³⁸ de Jong 1987, 41-53 and 61-99.

³⁹ For the effect of 'presence' and *enargeia* on the Homeric audience see Bakker 1993, esp. 16-17 and 24-25 and 2009, 127-128. For the alignment of the mortal audience's reception with the gods' perspective on events, see Myers 2011.

⁴⁰ E.g. Divine assemblies, narration of divine thought processes (e.g. 6.13-4), and disclosure of divine identity when in disguise (e.g. 13.221 ff.).

In fact, such divine manipulation becomes a narrative necessity. Penelope's dream gives us readers pause on our first read because we are uncertain about the gods' machinations, as they are not explained. This effect is caused by our sudden abandonment by the medium and interpreter, our narrator, who has always held our hand and guided us through murky paths. In the same way, Theoklumenos' prophecy leaves readers confounded about the doubling and apparent discrepancies between the seer's and the narrator's accounts of the moment. I will argue that the poet, driven by the urge to innovate in the face of suffocating expectations to maintain tradition, manipulates the narrative's depiction of these two scenes and so creates a metanarrative on the process of communicating with gods and men.

The performance's agonistic nature would create a situation in which the poet strives to elaborate further on his role as it interacts with the divine, to ensure it is not lost in the bias towards the divine perspective. What better venue to do so than in moments when the internal narrative process is mimetic of the external narrative process?⁴¹ Scenes like Penelope's and Theoklumenos' become moments of self-reflection about the dynamic between the gods and their mediums when they interact in order to communicate with a human audience. The poet can explore the conventional divine perspective-bias, both its strengths and its shortcomings for narrative, and what effect this predilection in epic story-telling has on the public perception of the story-tellers in terms of their importance and contribution to the art. This *metapoesis* is possible not only because the poet experiments with the narrator's contributions in Penelope's and Theoklumenos' scenes, but also because these scenes preserve moments of divination that are functionally analogous to *poesis*.

⁴¹ This is especially the case if the performance occurs in circumstances that change the stakes at play, if the poet is no longer simply one in a line of traveling specialists but rather one among many performing at a large festival, at which point his individual role's significance is at its most vulnerable. For postulations on performance circumstances, see Seaford 1994, 149-52; 183.

I.4 Methodology: Studies in the Inspiration of Poets and Prophets, and Narratology

In order to analyze the metacommentary of Penelope's dream and Theoklumenos' prophecy, I will depend on two formal areas of scholarly discourse, one about "inspiration" and the other about "narratology". In fact, inspiration is the principal prerequisite for the epic to be brought into existence and motivates the entire representation of story-telling in and through the epic. I will, therefore, use several key concepts from well-established studies on inspiration in order to explicate narrative choices throughout this thesis. On the other hand, narratology provides a structural approach that considers the intricacies of depiction through perspective and voice, which aligns neatly with the genre's reliance upon the ideology of inspiration. Because narratology focuses upon not just the patterns of the story but the various avenues and depictions that the story-teller employs to tell the story, it expedites how readers can unpack the ways poetic inspiration is featured within the story. Consequently, narratology will serve as the principal, and therefore more important, interpretational method for this thesis.

Archaic Greek inspiration was a process with multiple steps. Inspired singers, like the Homeric poet, are not simply a channel for the content that the Muses breathe into them; they process the information and compose it into the song that their audience consumes. According to modern theory, the content of inspiration is information conveyed by the Muses via their capacity for memory and the unforgotten truth, which is far superior to that available to mortals.⁴² Once the gods' information, whether by memory or vision or direct speech, is conveyed to him, the poet then becomes responsible for molding it to his performance. This requires a great deal of skill, through many traditional techniques to be mastered in the pattern of

⁴² Murray 1981, 94.

specialized artisans, and thus constitutes a craft.⁴³ Thus, for mortal poets, composition and performance are acts of communion with the divine but not possession. The poets' contribution to the inspired *poesis* is essential—*poesis* is an inspired performance and the poet is an inspired medium.

Inspiration is necessary for *poesis* because of ancient notions of the nature of divine power. First and foremost is the degree of separation that the ancients understood to exist between mortal and divine operation, in physical power, longevity, and, predominantly, cognition. In this construction, inspiration translates across, or negotiates, the cognitive gap between divine and mortal planes of knowledge and comprehension.⁴⁴ In Homeric depictions, it is clear that the gods are superior to humans in every facet of cognition, though not absolutely so, nor are they truly omniscient.⁴⁵ The gods can hear more, see more, know more, and remember more than humans on a vast scale but their range of knowing is too vast; it requires focalizing. Things may still pass unobserved by them if their attention is elsewhere, but in compensation for this it seems that their attention can recover more than humans ever could—the unforgotten past, geographically distant present, and the future.⁴⁶ Moreover, the gods' access to information is not only far superior, but their processing of it, their comprehension, understanding is of such a superior degree that their cognitive matrix is not even compatible with men's.⁴⁷ For instance, the

⁴³ Ibid. 99. The ability to do so represents a particular and additional gift in Greek thought, a poet's charisma or presence, awarded to him along with the grace of information.

⁴⁴ Cognitive gap: this term, culled from psychology, most succinctly describes the difference between gods and man in observation, comprehension, and application of information, which creates the 'lost in translation' effect that the Greeks seem to have envisioned between their own and their gods' spheres of knowledge.

⁴⁵ Clay 1983, 136-70 provides a discussion of this, helpfully focusing on the differences in divine and mortal knowledge on pages 149-54.

⁴⁶ E.g. the *Dios apate*, *Iliad* 14.153 ff.

⁴⁷ Cognitive matrix: another borrowed term from psychology, this describes the internal, rational faculty responsible for processing reality and creating a latticework of referential points from experience to further compute experience. As it is constructed from that very observed reality the system of cognition is limited, a Mobias strip of mental constructs, in its natural, or untampered with state. On the differences in mental processes: bT-scholia on *Iliad* 4.4; cited by Myers 2011, 4 specifically discussing the differences in divine and mortal perspectives on events, with divine judgment being completely distinct from men's.

gods have their own unique names for things, even for things in the mortal world and, unfiltered, their appearance and language is incomprehensible to men.⁴⁸

But thanks to divine inspiration, a medium can bridge the gap. Of course, that moment of negotiating the gap remains a moment of compromise and the information imperfect, with something always lost in translation, but only so that the rest might be comprehensible for its intended recipients. It is mediated, but it is the best source of information mortals could hope for short of a visitation from a god. How each medium mediates the information communicated by the gods varies according to the nature and training of the medium—for some, their capacity may be an innate gift, for others, a learned skill, for others still, a combination. The variability that this creates between inspired mediums creates the space for *metapoesis* within epic. Hence comes the import of the portrayal of Penelope and Theoklumenos in acts of divination. Narratology will facilitate the parsing out of how the poet represents the various steps of inspiration in these scenes.

The most basic premises of narratology are, more or less, already present within the ancient concepts of epic story-telling. De Jong's structuralist model of narrativization | fabula – focalization→ story –narration→ text | helpfully unpacks the abstract processes that inspiration and poetic performance entails.⁴⁹ The mythic events, otherwise unavailable to the historical

⁴⁸ Divine vs. human names for the Scamander River, the specifically divine name for moly (Ody. 10.305). In later times this is stylized with, notably, hexametrical verse, or garbled speech, or even highly ambiguous metaphorical speech in prophets (See Maurizio. 1995. “Anthropology and Spirit Possession,” *JHS* 115, 69-86.); Homeric epic appears to maintain a more cooperative model in itself without giving up the agency (and lucidity) of its vessels. When the gods move between forms their visual shape can falter in human eyes, as they depart from disguised epiphanies, giving them a distinctive, abnormal appearance to mortals (e.g. Poseidon in *Iliad* 13.70-3). Later myth stylizes the true shape of gods as so beyond mortal comprehension and reception that it is deadly. See the case of Zeus and Semele in Euripides' *Bacchae* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Clay 1983, 16 cites *Iliad* 5.127-8 as the prime example of this difference. Athena lifts the mist from Diomedes' eyes, allowing him to recognize gods and men.

⁴⁹ De Jong 1987: According to this theory, the original timeline of mythical events is only available to external audiences—the primary narratees—through the focalization and narration of internal personae (pgs. 32-3). Focalization, the experience, perception, and interpretation of events, precedes narration—the expression of events— and must do so.

audience are made available through a process of communication that processes and packages the events in such a way as to reveal something in particular. This maps conveniently onto the model of inspiration discussed above, with the fabula acting as the information conveyed by the gods and the text as the result of a poet's performance.

More specifically, in de Jong's schema, a narrative is constructed via a process of filtering, as such, that packages the whole of the otherwise inaccessible fictional reality into a consumable, linear narrative. The fabula is the events of the fictional reality in their self-constituted chronology.⁵⁰ The story is a perspective (or coalesced perspectives) on the fabula, and the text is the story enunciated for historical reality into a set form.⁵¹ Thus, for an inspired performance, the gods' knowledge of the human reality—past, present, future, near and far, externalized and internalized—is the fabula.

To access the fabula the poet must receive from the gods a perspective on the events, or a focalization of their unfolding, which creates the story. The focalization granted by the gods to the poet provides the content he will narrate, but only by one specific series of points of view, directing the gaze and dictating the track by which the plot will appear to progress through the act of inspiration.⁵² It instills "the paths of the song," as it were. Once the conceptual entity exists as a series of focalized plot points, i.e. the 'story', it falls to the poet, as the inspired narrator, to realize the plot for his audience in the format that he thinks will be best received. Narration, thus, shapes the enunciated form of the story into a comestible auditory/literary shape, complete with style and technical art in verbalized text. The 'text' preserves not only the particular focalization

⁵⁰ De Jong 2001, xiv; cites Bal 1985, 11-47.

⁵¹ De Jong 1987, xviii.

⁵² From here derives the above-mentioned concept of divine perspective-bias.

of the gods but also the ‘story’ of the narrator-medium and is a specific, unique manifestation of the ‘fabula’.

Narration and focalization can be done by any internal persona but the final narration, the primary narration to the external audience, will always be filtered and determined by the primary narrator, the 'I' invoking the Muses, the poet.⁵³ Furthermore, how this primary narrator chooses to preserve certain events through varieties of focalization and narration is significant and is always communicating something to the final audience, or primary narratees.⁵⁴ Whom the narrator chooses to act as focalizer, the agent of focalization, affects the version of the events by their biases and reactions just as much as, if not more than, whose voice he chooses to impersonate in delivering character speeches.⁵⁵ Thus, the poet can exercise internal focalization and embedded narration in order to package the story he is telling in particular and specific ways, as I will show he does in the case of Penelope’s and Theoklumenos’ scenes. For this reason, narratology’s approach to analyzing internal narration and the perspective of the expositive text will be instrumental to evaluating the effect of these two individual representations of divination in the *Odyssey*.

I.5 Chapter Summaries

Chapter One: The Problem with Penelope’s Dream

In my first chapter, I will address the context and content of the episode that contains Penelope’s infamous dream of the eagle and the geese in Book 19, before I broach the topic of its curious narrative presentation. Penelope’s dream is preserved within a span of lines that are unusually lacking in narrator-text and, instead, is communicated to the external audience entirely

⁵³ De Jong 1987, 35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 97-99.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 146-8.

in Penelope's own voice. I will explain this oddness, along with the seemingly 'symbolic' character of the dream itself, not as an aberration on the part of the poet, but as a purposeful depiction of an internal narrator who is not fit to execute on the role of inspired performer.

I will open by providing an interpretation of Penelope's dream, which synthesizes de Jong's narratological analysis and Pratt's culturally sensitive interpretation of the omens within the dream. This interpretation will compensate for the internal reaction of Penelope, which has generally garnered a psychoanalytical reading of her dream-scene, by explaining that her tears are the result of the queen, within the dream itself, understanding her own divinatory interpretation of its symbolism. I will demonstrate that the dream, like Greek omen divination in general, allows for more than one interpretation and that the more correct interpretation is the result of a diviner's skill. I will, then, argue that by depicting Penelope unsuccessfully interpreting her own dream, as well as by rendering her as the sole narrative source for the dream, the poet purposefully stylizes the episode in order to obfuscate the event of divine-human communication that is normally elucidated by the narrator's omniscience.

Next, I will demonstrate that the poet has implicitly framed Penelope as a puppet of Athena and that it is the goddess' behind-the-scenes involvement that has been so purposefully elided in the episode. In arguing for Athena's implied involvement, I will address how Penelope's dream-scene fits into the thematic pattern of Odysseus' *nostos*, as well as how it aligns with the way that Athena has manipulated Penelope. I will assert, ultimately, that Athena is responsible for Penelope's dream and the queen's incognizance, transitioning into the importance of the poet's obfuscation of Athena's involvement in the episode.

In addressing the narratological presentation of the episode, I will point out how the poet has meticulously removed the divine and the narrator from Penelope's dream-scene and argue

that this representation is metacommentary. I will stress Penelope's absolute responsibility as the narrator of the dream and will conclude that Penelope is depicted as an inspired medium, who performs the role imperfectly. Moreover, I will insist that she is rendered through careful structuring of the scene to underperform for the external audience to the effect of eliciting a more attentive reception response from that audience.

Chapter Two: Penelope the Prophetess?

In my second chapter, I will broaden the scope of my investigation to examine the inter- and intra-textuality of Penelope's Book 19 dream-scene. The first third of the chapter will introduce the *Iliad's* infamous Dream from Zeus to Agamemnon, which so explicitly manipulates the king to the gods' will and so expressly illustrates the Homeric conceptualization of how dreams work as communications between the gods and men. I will outline the traditional stylistic qualities of the dream and demonstrate, in comparison, how the *Odyssey's* poet inverts each of those norms in the narrative presentation of Penelope's scene. I will elaborate on the representation of the divine perspective-bias epitomized by the *Iliad* dream and then establish how the inversions in Penelope's dream-scene are used to execute a mortal perspective-bias.

Next, I will analyze the bird omen-scene that preceded Penelope's dream, Helen's prophecy of Book 15, and juxtapose the narratological presentation of each woman's performance, as well as their characterizations. I will focus first on establishing the clear thematic and structural parallels between the two scenes, which I will suggest places them in a comparative dialogue, before turning to the contrasts. I will assert that Helen's bird omen and her prophetic performance is set by the poet as a prefiguration for Penelope's *oionomanteic* dream and her pronouncement and attempted divination of it. I will show that both women have been framed by the poet to perform certain components of the medium's role, but not all of them and

not perfectly. I will do so by focusing primarily upon the difference in control and authority demonstrated in Helen's performance next to Penelope's virtual lack thereof.

Finally, I will assert that, like many other episodes in the *Odyssey*, both Helen's and Penelope's scenes of divination have been shifted from the usual divine perspective-bias of epic, in direct contrast to figurations like that found in the *Iliad*. I will suggest that the poet, by utilizing these metanarrative choices, forces the audience to reflect upon the impact that an individual medium has upon the execution of the divination moment, in contrast to the depiction of Theoklumenos that will follow.

Chapter Three: Theoklumenos and His Mantic Speech

In my third chapter, I will introduce and provide context both for the macabre prophecy in Book 20 and for the *mantis* himself, Theoklumenos. After devoting some time to establishing Theoklumenos' role and character, I will provide a structural analysis of the entire scene. Next, I will posit that the scene twice depicts depiction and then interprets a verbalized omen: the first addressing the narrator-text's representation of the omen and the second addressing the character-text's representation, or Theoklumenos' version, of the omen. I will aim to demonstrate that both the narrator and the character's *manteia* are definitively effective examples of an omen pronouncement, unlike Penelope's and Helen's, and, rather than representing a whimsical oversight of the poet's, the allegedly redundant scene is purposefully doubled.

To begin, I will push back against the assertion that Theoklumenos is a haphazard addition to the poem at this moment by proving his thematic incorporation into the epic, as well as by pointing towards the characterization that the poet has provided, which establishes Theoklumenos not only as a character but as a proficient *mantis*. Moreover, after analyzing the divinatory structure of his two preceding performances, I will compare his final prophecy of

Book 20 with his other appearances to demonstrate that, despite its unusual depiction, Theoklumenos' performance is formatted so as to align with his other divinations. I will insist that, in its very essence, Theoklumenos' divination in Book 20 is a standard divination-type—the omen-scene—but it has become irregular because of the nature of the divine involvement in the scene.

Next, I will undertake a close-reading of the first half of the divination episode, comprised of the narrator's and Theoklumenos' separate but similar versions of the omen. I will argue that the poet uses the narrator-text to stylize the full potential of an inspired medium when describing the messages of the gods that appear before them. In doing so, I will underline the divine perspective-bias of the narrator-text's version of the omen and will highlight how the narrator takes special pains to depict how the possession of the suitors is turned into an omen by Athena. Afterwards, I will compare Theoklumenos' performance of the *manteia*, outlining specifically how the poet has made the *mantis*'s performance echo the narrator's in structure and style. I will, then, point out how each of these *manteia* emphasizes their own focalization as a medium—a divinely biased perspective for the omniscient narrator and a mortally biased perspective for the horrified mortal seer.

Finally, I will detail the specific performative differences between each medium's version of the omen event, pointing out how the narrator renders the exposition in a particularly mantic manner, while the *mantis* exposts on the events before his eyes in a particularly poetic way. I will assert that, together, they are meant to execute a complete enactment of the medium's role, but that their differences also create a point of contrast. Specifically, I will focus on the types of specialized mental states that each medium exhibits, elaborating on the differences between an inspired medium (the poet) and an affected medium (Theoklumenos).

Chapter Four: Interpretation, Reception, and Exempla in Book 20

In my fourth and final chapter, I will address the second half of the omen-scene, its interpretations, as well as the reception of the divination by the suitors. I will reinforce the parallel structures of the narrator- and character-text and assert that, again, the poet is portraying Theoklumenos as the best of his type, the affected medium. I will undertake a close-reading of the dialogue of interpretation that the suitor, Eurumachos, and Theoklumenos engage in together, highlighting the excellence of Theoklumenos' interpretation and finesse in performance next to Eurumachos' failings. Furthermore, I will compare and contrast the interpretative performances of Theoklumenos and the narrator, underlining the structural and stylistic echoes of both. In the end, I will suggest that the depiction of consummate professionalism and excellence alongside an act of reception that is so disgraceful, such as the suitors, serves as an exemplum against such behavior for the external audience.

The chapter begins with the analysis of the entire divination scene and after which I will turn to the paired interpretative speeches. As in the previous chapter, I will attend closely to the qualities that the poet has placed in parallel between the seer and narrator, as well as those that he has placed in contrast. Specifically, I will discuss the stylization of an affected and inspired state between Theoklumenos' and the narrator's prophecies. In doing so, I will emphasize again how Theoklumenos and the narrator execute their acts of interpretation in a more professional and coherent fashion than their precedents, Helen or Penelope. Again, I will assert that the poet has rendered the narrator and character versions as similar, but not identical, to the effect that the poet's version of the medium is the superior one.

Next, I will show the repercussions that these depictions have on the representations of the suitors as the quintessential bad example of behavior. I will insist that the poet's careful

portrayal of Theoklumenos as superior to other speaking mediums in the poem and objectively faultless in his performance speaks to the absolute folly of the suitors when they disparage both his *manteia* and his interpretation. I will compare their demeanor and diction to the other responses that Theoklumenos receives upon performing a divination, as well as those that Helen receives, to emphasize the social taboo that the suitors violate in so treating the *mantis*. I will suggest a metapoetic strand behind this representation, in which the poet is equating himself with Theoklumenos and daring the audience to conform to the suitors. Thus, I will reiterate the metacommentative bent of all of the poet's depictions of mediums who facilitate divine-human communication.

Finally, I will ruminate again on the combined effect of viewing the performances of Helen, Penelope, and Theoklumenos side-by-side and assert again that the comparisons implicitly suggest that the medium's contribution is far more important than its usual obfuscation behind the gods' role would indicate. I will conclude by summarizing the tools at the poet's disposal, all of which he has manipulated and capitalized to construct a set of depictions that catch the audience's attention. I will insist again that all of the poet's portrayals are purposeful and, combined, illustrate a metapoetic message that the epic's performer should not be undervalued or scorned, but appreciated for his supreme skill. Finally, I will suggest that these arrayed depictions work alongside the other innovative narrative approaches that the *Odyssey* exhibits and that, with the penchant for innovation in mind, modern scholars can potentially mine scenes like Penelope's and Theoklumenos' for evidence of a culture of performance that was adapting to particular social and performance pressures which resulted in an atmosphere of undervaluing the medium.

I.6 Glossary

Affected State: a concept articulated specifically for this project, I will refer to an *altered mental state* that does not instill information in the human, but rather redirects or enhances his capacity for perception, as an “affected state.” In Homeric poetry, the gods are represented as altering the mental state of humans without directly inspiring them with information. In such cases, they are pictured removing the mist from their eyes, redirecting their attention, or in some other way ‘touching’ the human to change their perception.⁵⁶ From this tactile component that changes the human’s mental situation, I will use the term affected, like Latin’s *affectus*, to indicate an influenced state of being particularly pertaining to the human’s ability to perceive and comprehend reality.

Altered Mental State: as a part of the performance of interacting with the divine, a medium enters a special mental state or altered consciousness, which will also be variously referred to as an enhanced or influenced state throughout this thesis.⁵⁷ In such a state, the medium’s mental processes are changed by an external force to affect their understanding of their reality.

Character-text: the dialogue of characters presented in direct speech.⁵⁸

Divination: a standardized process by which mortals gain insight or information from the gods. Ancient and modern scholars have categorized types of divination depending upon the quality of the process undertaken to discern and interpret messages from the gods. Traditionally, divination has been divided into a duality of empirical or technical approaches, which use signs observable within nature as a coded matrix that can be deciphered for meaning via traditional methods of

⁵⁶ E.g. wiping the mist from their eyes, *Il.* 5.127-128; turning their attention away, *Od.* 19. 478-479; knocking aside their thoughts, *Od.* 20.345-346; physically changing their mind, *Il.* 1.196-206.

⁵⁷ Maurizio 95 uses the phraseology ‘one who is in a special state’ and ‘one who speaks from an altered state’ as part of the explanation of the etymology behind μάντις, referring to the thesis that the root *men informs the meaning of the Greek term, provided by Nagy 1990.

⁵⁸ De Jong 1987.

deduction, and natural or inspired approaches, which include messages delivered via dreams and prophecies when the gods place them into men.⁵⁹ More recently, scholars have suggested that divination was not so divided in practice, but rather existed on a sliding scale with individual practitioners employing some combination of the empirical and inspired approaches at different degrees according to their training, ability, and the situation.⁶⁰

Divine-human Communication: the transfer of information from the divine sphere to the human sphere, usually by conveying that information via a medium who can translate it into a language that other humans can understand.

Embedded focalization: “the representation by the narrator in the narrator-text of a character’s focalization, i.e., perceptions, thoughts, emotions, or words (indirect speech). Embedded focalization can be *explicit* (when there is a shifter in the form of a verb of seeing or thinking, or a subordinator followed by subjunctive or optative, etc.) or *implicit* (when such a shifter is lacking).”⁶¹

Focalization: the perspective employed by the agent who composes and presents the narrative, which includes a selection or restriction of information depending upon that agent’s capacity for experiencing and understanding.⁶²

Inspiration: will here refer to the process of entering an *altered mental state* wherein the gods ‘breathe into’ a human some information, or place some information into their minds.⁶³ An *inspired state* is the end result of this influence of the gods upon the human’s mind and allows

⁵⁹ Flower 2009, 84-91.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 90.

⁶¹ De Jong 2001, xiii; cites Bal 1985, 100-118 and de Jong 1987 101-48.

⁶² Genette 1972.

⁶³ Archaic representation tends towards the idea of placing or granting, as in the case of Helen, who claims that the gods place the content of her prophecy into her mind (*Od.* 15.172-173) with the verb βάλλω, or Calchas, who is provided the skill of divination (*Il.* 1.72-73), or Phemios who claims he has been instilled with the paths of song (*Od.* 22.347-348).

for cooperative approach to communication, with the gods providing information and the human translator, or medium, providing the format for the communication.⁶⁴

Interpretation-act: the process that a diviner or experienced layperson undertakes in order to make sense of, translate, or decode the divine symbols or enigmas of an omen.⁶⁵ An omen may be visual or auditory, but the interpretation is formatted to be clear language for the human audience.

Lens: a metaphor for the medium derived from optics that creates an image of focalizing information that is prismatic. A lens filters light and refracts the same content into a different format. In this way, a medium filters information, whether available from an inspired or affected state, in his own unique format, according to his focalization. When an *inspired* medium, like the poet, portrays another type of medium, like *affected* Theoklumenos, the portrayal is not a reflection of his own role through metapoetry, but rather a *refraction* of his role.

Manteia: the process of acting as a *mantis*, or of operating under an altered mental state to interact with the divine. When oracles deliver their pronouncements, they perform *manteia*, and when an inspired or altered medium delivers a prophecy that serves as a message from the gods, they perform *manteia*.⁶⁶

Mantis: the Greek term for diviner, or seer, that emphasizes contact with the divine. A *mantis*, presumably, employs an *altered mental state* to perform his *divination*.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Murray 1981, 94 defines inspiration in the production of poetry as a cooperative process.

⁶⁵ Maurizio 1995, 86 discusses the difference in the role of interpreting that may have been undertaken by the attendants of the Pythia from the role that the mantic Pythia undertakes.

⁶⁶ Nagy 1990, 56-57 addresses the root of the various $\mu\alpha\nu\tau$ - words in Greek usage. *Manteia* is the catch-all term for prophecy, but will here refer specifically to affected or inspired prophecy. Maurizio 95 note 14 greatly informs the importance of this term, which emphasizes that the *mantis* is the function of the diviner that relies upon the contact with the divine, and so *manteia* becomes the process that a diviner undertakes while in contact with the divine.

⁶⁷ Maurizio 1995, 70 and Nagy 1990, 56-64.

Narrator: “the representative of the author in the text.”⁶⁸ More than just the voice of the poet, however, I will refer to the narrator as the pseudo-character role that the poet assumes in order to perform his inspired *poesis*. The narrator is the persona who is inspired and can relay the poem’s events through an omniscient perspective while cooperating with the Muses.⁶⁹

Narrator-text: the exposition undertaken by the *narrator* that describes the characters, events, and setting of the story.⁷⁰

Perspective-bias: the narrative conceit that predisposes the focalization of the epic events to come from one or another source. Epic poetry is conventionally delivered from a divine *perspective-bias* because of the Muse-source omniscience of the narrative, for example.

Prophetes: the Greek term for diviner, or prophet, that emphasizes the act of pronouncing the divine message.⁷¹ In this thesis, I will use the term to mean specifically the diviner who undertakes the act of interpretation and then publicly proclaims the translated message.

Refraction: another metaphor borrowed from optics for this thesis, used to describe the metapoetic portrayal of internal mediums that imagines the representation of the internal medium as similar but distinctly different from the external medium or poet. In *refraction*, the portrayal is self-reflective through analogy but not identicalness and especially capitalizes on the differences that are highlighted through the refraction, as opposed to the identicalness found in metapoetic representations that use mirroring and direct reflection.

⁶⁸ De Jong 2001, xv; cites Bal 1985, 119-127, de Jong 1987, 29-40, and Richardson 1990.

⁶⁹ Murray 1981, 94-99; Pedrick 1992.

⁷⁰ De Jong 1987.

⁷¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM WITH PENELOPE'S DREAM

1.1 The Dream of the Eagle and the Geese

χῆνες μοι κατὰ οἶκον εἴκοσι πυρὸν ἔδουσιν
ἐξ ὕδατος, καί τέ σφιν ἰαίνομαι εἰσορώσα·
ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξ ὄρεος μέγας αἰετὸς ἀγκυλοχείλης
πᾶσι κατ' αὐχένας ἦξε καὶ ἔκτανεν· οἱ δ'
ἐκέχυντο
ἀθρόοι ἐν μεγάροις, ὁ δ' ἐς αἰθέρα διὰν ἀέρθη.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κλαῖον καὶ ἐκώκυον ἐν περ ὄνειρῳ,
ἀμφὶ δ' ἔμ' ἠγερέθοντο ἐϋπλοκαμίδες Ἀχαιοί,
οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένην ὃ μοι αἰετὸς ἔκτανε
χῆνας.
ἄψ δ' ἐλθὼν κατ' ἄρ' ἔζετ' ἐπὶ προὔχοντι
μελάθρῳ,
φωνῆ δὲ βροτέῃ κατερήτυε φώνησέν τε·
θάρσει, Ἰκαρίου κόρη τηλεκλειτοῖο·
οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ' ὕπαρ ἐσθλόν, ὃ τοι
τετελεσμένον ἔσται.
χῆνες μὲν μνηστῆρες, ἐγὼ δέ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις
ἦα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε τεὸς πόσις εἰλήλουθα,
ὃς πᾶσι μνηστῆρσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσω.

Twenty geese of mine feed on wheat throughout
the house/ From water, and I take delight in
watching them/ But a great hook-beaked eagle,
having come from the mountain/ broke all their
necks and killed them and they were heaped up
together in the halls, while he was carried up
into the divine sky/ But then I was crying and
lamenting, though in a dream and the fair-haired
Achaian women gathered around me/as I wailed
pitifully because an eagle killed my geese./But
now, having come back down again, here he sat
upon the jutting roof beam/and with human
voice he checked that and uttered: Have
confidence, daughter of far-famed Ikarios/in
this, no dream, but a blessed vision which, you
should know, will be brought to pass/ The geese
are the suitors and I was to you an eagle, bird of
omen/ just then, now I am come again, your
husband/who will set upon all the suitors their
wretched doom.

(*Odyssey* 19.535-553)

“Have confidence... in this, no dream, but a blessed vision, which... will be brought to pass,” the eagle proclaims to Penelope, instructing her to accept the story that her dream professes to be telling. However, there may be more to this dream than meets the eye (and ear). As we have seen from the Introduction, the structure of a narrative signifies as much about the process of communication that it represents as it does about the content that it provides. The dream-narrative is extraordinarily significant because has been presented solely by Penelope in the form of an anecdote and because it deviates from the normative structure and style of Homeric dreams. These singular qualities have made the dream more complex to analyze and problematic to categorize. The dream's unique format, most significantly, complicates the audience's ability to identify the motives behind its presentation, both character- and narrator-driven. As a result, the legitimacy of the dream is questioned by Penelope herself, and also by

modern readers of the text. Is the dream truly a message sent by the gods portending Odysseus' revenge, or is it a clever ruse by which Penelope secretly communicates with Odysseus? I will argue that the dream is not only divinely sent, but that it is sent by Athena and that the poet purposefully obfuscates her role in its creation. I will demonstrate how the poet's particular depiction of the dream, as well as the epic's thematic patterns and cultural assumptions, imply Athena's role and highlight the interaction between Athena and Penelope's contributions to the dream's narration. Furthermore, I will show that the dream and its scene are carefully structured in order to manipulate both its internal and external audiences in a way that problematizes how the gods communicate with men. In particular, we will see that, with this depiction of Penelope's dream, the poet upsets the audience's expectations for the narration of divine-human communication, thereby inviting them to consider the problems created when Penelope is used as the medium for Athena's message.

First things first: what does Penelope's dream mean? At first glance, the meaning of the dream appears to be provided by the dream itself, inasmuch as the eagle claims that it represents Odysseus and his imminent revenge against the suitors. However, while the straightforward interpretation is tempting, we know from other similar moments both how precarious it can be to take divinatory moments at face value and what the standard reaction to such a dream is, i.e. not the ardent denial it receives from Penelope. As a modern audience, we tend to overlook the contradiction in dream norms and to prefer analyzing Penelope's persona or possible ulterior motives because, in the end, the dream turns out to be right and Penelope wrong.¹ However, if it

¹ Psychoanalytical approaches have dominated the discussion surrounding Penelope's scene. See Dodds 1951, Russo 1982 for the usual treatments. Alternatively, other scholars have attempted to identify in Penelope's dream a coded conversation between husband and wife, i.e. evidence for 'early-recognition' and Penelope's involvement in Odysseus' return. See Vlahos 2011 for a summary of this theory. Other approaches exist as well—Penelope's subconscious recognition: Harsh 1950, Amory 1963, Austin 1975, 205-238, van Nortwick 1979, Russo 1982, and Winkler 1990, 142-143; the scene as a combination of traditions: de Jong 2001, 458-460 with attending citations; and the scene as a culmination of thematic patterns (against the early-recognition reading): Loudon 2011.

is so simple and obvious, why would she *not* interpret the dream as it does itself? In order to explain Penelope's reaction to the dream, we need not seek out anachronistic rationalizations of Penelope's psyche nor undermine the delicate, thematic foundation for Book 23's *anagnorisis* between husband and wife. A far simpler explanation is available. Upon closer inspection of the first half of the dream, her response can be justified by the fact that the dream is ambiguously symbolic. That is, like many symbol-oriented moments of divination, more than one interpretation is presentable in its reading, but one is determined to be the more accurate option.² Penelope's dream, unlike many waking bird-omens, does not present an easy binary of right-side auspicious, left-side inauspicious.³ It instead presents a series of coded signs that, like a text in another language, must be translated into a reading or interpretation, which, in turn, then must be decoded in order to determine if it communicates good or bad news. Notwithstanding how Odysseus himself reacts, there is more than one way to spin those signs into a text according to Homeric precedents for divination. Consequently, the sign's story requires an insightful and experienced medium to select between these options.

The devil is in the details, as they say, and the symbolic portion of the dream contains some important details that the message portion in the second half of the dream does not address. For instance, when it reappears in the second half of the dream, not as the symbol but as the conveyor of a verbal message, the eagle interprets itself as Odysseus and the geese as the suitors.⁴ Everything else is purportedly straightforward: Odysseus will kill all the suitors.⁵ The eagle-messenger does not, however, address any of the seemingly inconsequential details, for example, why Penelope's geese are twenty in number. Twenty is itself a significant number in

² See Dillon 1996 for a concise discussion of the conventions of *oiniomanteia*, esp. pgs. 108-109.

³ Dillon 1996, 104-107.

⁴ 19.548-549: χῆνες μὲν μνηστῆρες, ἐγὼ δέ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις / ἧα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε τεὸς πόσις εἰλήλουθα.

⁵ 19.550. cont. from identification of eagle with Odysseus: ὃς πᾶσι μνηστῆρσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσω.

the *Odyssey*, but it is not meaningfully tied to the number of suitors.⁶ There are over one hundred (110 by Telemachos' count at 16.245) suitors and not in a denominator of twenty, meaning that these numbers do not correlate.⁷ According to the presentation of the eagle-interpreter, having twenty geese is arbitrary, perhaps simply a duplication of the real number of Penelope's pet geese.

Numbers in divination, however, are hardly ever arbitrary. This holds true across ancient Mediterranean culture. Number-sensitive dreams regularly appear to foretell the future in the *Old Testament*, particularly in the biblical tales of Joseph.⁸ Often times, numerical entities correlate one to one with individuals or years, as in the case of the Pharaoh's dreams of seven cows and seven ears of wheat, each representing the years of famine and abundance.⁹ A direct correlation is provided in the *Iliad* in the shape of a waking sign, the nest of birds devoured by a snake, that predicted the span of time that the Trojan War would last and was interpreted by Odysseus.¹⁰ In this sign, each bird devoured—ten in total—signified a year spent, eaten up, consumed in war on the plains of Troy. Though it has no relation to the number of suitors, twenty has significance to the *Odyssey* because it is the number of years that Odysseus has been absent: ten at war and ten wandering, missing. If the destruction of the birds in the *Iliad* sign signifies years spent, then there is available an open, Homericly supported interpretation of the geese in Penelope's dream as representative of the years Odysseus has been absent. The fact that they are killed but not eaten may hold further meaning correspondingly. The snake ate the nest of birds, the years at war were spent and met a goal—Troy was conquered. However, the eagle swoops in and snaps the

⁶ Pratt 1994, 150.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Oppenheim 1966, 349.

⁹ *Genesis* 41.

¹⁰ *Iliad* 2.303-330; Calchas is reported as interpreting the sign but it is, curiously, Odysseus whom the narrator entrusts to narrate the sign.

geese's necks, killing them but not consuming them. They lie in heaps, dead, taking up space in the halls.¹¹ They, potentially, are the years of Odysseus' absence lost and wasted, following the numerically significant model of interpretation, one which Penelope may abide by since she specifically mentions the number.¹² Thus, the geese may represent the years of Odysseus' absence in number, but what about in their avian shape?

Geese align with the eagle-interpreter's assignment as suitors because they are idle creatures fed in the house, like the suitors, while the eagle matches Odysseus' wandering, heroic nature.¹³ For the alternative interpretation, the type of bird and their locales would have to signify something else. One such reading would have to rely upon other associations with the birds, such as the goose's domesticity and personal connection with Penelope. They are her geese, she tends to them in the house. Perhaps they represent not just the twenty years Odysseus' of absence, but rather, from her perspective, the twenty years of Penelope's diligent maintenance of their home.¹⁴ The eagle, on the other hand, flies in from the mountain and returns to the heavenly air.¹⁵ The eagle is associated with Zeus of Olympus and the Heavens and is regularly his messenger in bird omens. The eagle's actions, thus, could very easily be construed as representing Zeus—the deity generally blamed by Homeric mortals for fate or chance occurrences—laying waste to Penelope's faithful tending to Odysseus' home for twenty years. That is, the dream could be hinting that Odysseus might be dead and Penelope has futilely spent these years waiting for him to return. Penelope weeps in her dream over her dead geese, an

¹¹ 19.538-540: ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξ ὄρεος μέγας αἰετὸς ἀγκυλοχείλης / πᾶσι κατ' αὐχένας ἦξε καὶ ἔκτανεν· οἱ δ' ἐκέχυντο / ἀθρόοι ἐν μεγάροις, ὃ δ' ἐς αἰθέρα διὰν ἄερθη.

¹² *Odyssey* 19.535.

¹³ Pratt 1994, 151. Moreover, the language of Penelope's preface itself associates the eating of the geese with the eating of the suitors.

¹⁴ Pratt 1994, 151.

¹⁵ 19.540.

action for which her virtue has been called into question as a sign of her mourning the suitors.¹⁶ She laments, however, this event before the eagle gives his interpretation.¹⁷ It could simply be the case that she mourns the loss of her pets, or, already within the dream, Penelope could be aware of the numerical and *oionomanteic* implications of the geese-slaughter and, thus, bewails Odysseus' death.¹⁸

Enter the eagle, in the second half of the dream, this time giving consolation for this very possibility and the assurance that a waking, pessimistically skeptical Penelope would believe is too good to be true: you thought you'd wasted these years and I am dead, but lo! I am really Odysseus and I'm going to make your wishes come true, killing the suitors and returning home unscathed.¹⁹ The eagle appears to clarify the intended meaning, but by Penelope's waking reaction, it does not remove from the table the possibility of the other reading. In fact, it appears as though Penelope accepts, or at least acknowledges as appropriate to her situation, the first half of her dream experience, the bird-sign open to interpretation, while rejecting its latter half that narrows down its meaning to an explicit message.²⁰ Odysseus, on the other hand, claims to accept it as a united whole just as the eagle reads it.²¹ Clearly, there are multiple, internally acknowledged, and justifiable approaches to analyzing the dream. Odysseus deciphers which

¹⁶ Pratt 1994, 149.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ There may also be a subtle reference to the root of Penelope's name in her extreme sympathy for her geese. Eustathius of Thessalonika notes that Penelope's name derives from the waterfowl, πηνέλοψ, a multi-colored duck. Therefore, among other wordplay associated with her name in epic (πήνη 'woof' and λώπη 'covering'), her affection for these geese may reflect this possible etymology by the poet. See Hitchman, R. "Names, personal." In M. Finkelberg (Ed.), *The Homer encyclopedia*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011.

¹⁹ 19.546-550: θάρσει, Ἰκαρίου κούρη τηλεκλειτοῖο· οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ' ὕπαρ ἐσθλόν, ὃ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται. / χῆνες μὲν μνηστῆρες, ἐγὼ δέ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις / ἦα πάρος, νῦν αὐτε τεὸς πόσις εἰλήλουθα, / ὅς πᾶσι μνηστῆρσιν ἀϊκέα πότμιον ἐφήσω.

²⁰ 19.560-569; Penelope feels inclined to discuss the dream, indicating that it has had an effect on her and one that somehow results in her declaring the contest of the bow (to be discussed below). However, in her axiom of the dream gates, she specifically points out that words prove fruitless in the dreams from the ivory gate, the gate from which she believes her dream originated. We could say that the dream carries weight but its words do not; the symbolic portion is significant, the message portion empty.

²¹ 19.555-558.

reading is correct and Penelope apparently simply fails to do so. There is, likely, something more complex occurring behind the scenes of this dream, however. Considering the fact that the epic logic of economy limits superfluous inclusions—which the symbolic portion of the dream could be considered to be because the message of the eagle could have sufficed perfectly on its own to fool Penelope and encourage Odysseus—then, the symbolic portion must serve some purpose besides being the omen interpreted by eagle-Odysseus.²² The dream presents itself, thus, almost as if it were engineered to be misleading for Penelope, or perhaps to call attention to itself on an external, narrative level, or perhaps to accomplish both things. But, what would purposeful disingenuity or a purposeful structural anomaly mean? I will argue that such acts of obfuscation are employed by the poet in this dream-scene in order to, like other narrative innovations of the *Odyssey* about *poesis*, enlighten its audience about poetic conventions but to do so via contrast.

1.2 Keeping Penelope in the Dark

ἦ καὶ Πηνελόπειαν ἐσέδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
 πεφραδέειν ἐθέλουσα φίλον πόσιν ἔνδον ἐόντα.
 ἦ δ' οὔτ' ἀθρήσαι δύνατ' ἀντίη οὔτε νοῆσαι·
 τῇ γὰρ Ἀθηναίη νόον ἔτραπεν...

She spoke and looked with her eyes toward Penelope,
 wishing to point out that her dear husband was inside.
 But Penelope was not able to meet her gaze nor to perceive [what was happening];
 for Athena turned away her attention... (19.476-479)

As a narrative tool, Penelope's dream is perfect. In an expanse of action-less dialogue that must somehow keep the plot from stagnating, the dream is a tidy and effective catalyst for otherwise impeded plot progression that does not anticipate or spoil future denouements. Consequently, for the characters it affects, Penelope's dream acts as an impetus to action. Like a

²² Parry 1971.

precision tool, the dream exactly modifies the circumstances influencing Odysseus and Penelope, each halted at their own impasse, so that both are incited to continue along their paths of god-willed fate and, coincidentally, along their story-lines. The difference between the two arises from how the dream affects their understanding of these fates, from the effect of its obfuscation. As we will see, the dream does not cloud Odysseus' understanding of his future at all; instead it enlightens his path. For Penelope, however, the dream maintains the dim smokescreen through which she has blindly fumbled forward and forces her to rely solely upon the leads left by Athena, which have and will continue to conduct her just where the goddess desires.

Ever since his arrival upon Ithaka, Odysseus has known where his path will lead—to his revenge and return—but, because of a number of variables, he cannot make his own way and return openly, not yet. Athena, instead, must guide his way step by step and lead him covertly to the other components needed to complete his journey.²³ At the moment of his interview with Penelope, Odysseus has followed Athena's path to its next crossroads and is awaiting her assistance to choose the correct direction. As instructed, Odysseus has set the stage, having prepared his halls for ambush, removing the weapons from the walls, and observed the habits and villainy of the suitors.²⁴ The players are ready. Telemachos has been made aware of his father's return and is aiding him in preparing for his revenge.²⁵ Trusty servants have been secured in Eumaios, who though still postponed in his recognition of Odysseus, has proved himself loyal, and Eurukleia, tried and tested just lines before Penelope tells Odysseus her dream.²⁶ As he sits in his interview, Odysseus assesses the remaining variables, the serving woman, silent audience

²³ For Athena and Odysseus' scenes of plotting, see 13.366 ff. and 16.162-171. Odysseus also mentions his reliance upon Athena's guidance when he is detailing the plan to Telemachos at 16.281 ff.

²⁴ Several scenes across several books lead up to this point in particular. For the scene preparing the halls for ambush, see 19.1-52. For the examples of the suitors' reckless folly nearest Penelope's dream-scene, see 17. 412-488 and 18.346-404.

²⁵ Odysseus and Telemachos' recognition-scene and their plotting occur in close succession at 16.155-320.

²⁶ Eumaios at 15.304 ff. and Eurukleia at 19.357-507.

to this conversation, as well as Penelope and her disposition.²⁷ By Athena's logic, Penelope must be tested before Odysseus can reveal his identity safely. Indeed, as the goddess describes it, Penelope's intentions appear conflicted, and furthermore, Odysseus' experiences during his long homecoming have fostered an anxiety that Penelope will prove more akin to Klytemnestra than a faithful wife.²⁸

Beyond the uncertainty that Penelope and her retinue present, however, all Odysseus requires is a sign to indicate his next step, for his next milestone to be illuminated. He needs to know when he can strike down the suitors in the halls he has already prepared. While he is in the midst of his enemies, however, Odysseus cannot plot with Athena directly to pinpoint this opportunity.²⁹ His interview with Penelope, therefore, may be a moment of multi-tasking: ascertaining her disposition and waiting for his opportunity to arise. Odysseus is biding his time, is waiting right on the cusp of precipitating events for the proper catalyst. Perhaps he hopes for some favor from Penelope bestowed in return for news of her husband, or some insight that would give him an upper hand among the suitors. More likely, however, if Odysseus sits in his halls and suffers through his wife's grief for any other reason than to test her, he does so for a sure form of assistance. He is waiting for a sign from Athena, an alternative to her epiphany, that might reveal his opportunity through some chance omen in their conversation. And indeed, such an expectation is not unwarranted. He has received guarantees of her assistance directly from Athena herself, but he has also received miraculous aid in similar situations. Although Odysseus

²⁷ His intentions are explained by Odysseus himself at 19.44-46.

²⁸ Athena notes Penelope needs to be tested at 13.335-338 and describes her situation further at 13.375-381; de Jong discusses the reiterated anxiety that Penelope will fall into the Klytemnestra story-type and somehow derail Odysseus' return, either by exposing him before he can execute it successfully—out of surprise and lack of control over emotions—or, spitefully, having forsaken her loyalty to Odysseus already, see de Jong 2001, 451.

²⁹ Athena explains the precautions they must take in securing his return and revenge in the scene of his return to Ithaka: 13.291 ff. She only appears to Odysseus directly when he is alone to speak with him—she will not speak with him again directly until 20.30 when he is alone at night—or appears so that only he knows her, as in the case of holding her lamp at 19.33-43.

was not himself explicitly aware that it was Athena who provided this assistance, the poet makes it clear that this is a habit of hers.

In fact, a cycle has emerged during Odysseus' return after his escape from the domain of Poseidon.³⁰ Back within Athena's jurisdiction, as it were, Odysseus has been advanced homeward—at times, in the face of impossible odds—thanks to Athena's foresight and meddling undertaken in a particular pattern of steps. Starting in Scheria with Nausikaa, she manipulates human players into a situation that benefits Odysseus.³¹ He is incorporated into a social dynamic that enables him to get a step closer to home. This usually involves a direct intervention by Athena to prime the machine: i.e. Odysseus is made up to look majestic, or allowed an epiphany via mist escort.³² At this point, when Odysseus has been placed in precisely the situation Athena wants and that will best advance his return, Odysseus has an interview, some extended verbal interaction with the mortal(s) in a position to help him.³³ Their acceptance of him is easily attributed to the miraculous influence Athena provides and Odysseus' eloquence, a combination of divine and mortal contributions. As a result, Odysseus garners some kind of favor from his interlocutors, a promise of conveyance or a good word from the queen, itself usually followed by another divine intervention, perpetuating the cycle that aids Odysseus' return and executes the plot.³⁴ After her appearance as the young escort in Scheria, Odysseus recognizes Athena's hand

³⁰ Louden 2011, 77 would call this a thematic pattern. The schema I promote is an adjustment of the one Louden summarizes; see 94. See also, Louden 1999.

³¹ See two notes below for examples. In addition, see Odysseus' interactions with Eumaios esp. in Book 14, and his interactions with Arete and Alkinoos, as cited below and throughout Books 7-13.

³² Odysseus receives a make-over and reverse make-over for Nausikaa and Eumaios respectively (6.232-235; 13.429-438). Athena provides the mist at 7.37 and it conceals Odysseus until he supplicates Arete in a miraculous epiphany at 7.142-145.

³³ For Nausikaa: 6.139 ff. For Eumaios: 14.2 ff. For Arete and Alkinoos: 7.146 ff. and esp. 7.299-315 and 11.333 ff.

³⁴ Help from Nausikaa, as discussed above; conveyance and extravagant guest gifts (which replenish his wealth) from Arete and Alkinoos, as listed one note above, and all manner of assistance on Ithaka from Eumaios from Book 14-24.

in his return.³⁵ Because he has extended conversations with her, he knows to expect Athena's assistance. As a result, during his foray into his homestead, Odysseus is no doubt awaiting that assistance in the form of some omen, which is precisely what he receives, a dream foretelling his success.³⁶ Therefore, when Penelope confesses the dream, it seems that Athena answers Odysseus' expectations. Enabling Odysseus' return is not, however, the only pattern that Athena here follows. Although not explicitly indicated, Athena's responsibility for the dream would align with her other indirect interventions in the surrounding text and her habits for interventions overall, as she tugs strings and nudges pieces into place. This dream is not the first crafted and sent by the goddess to further her plans, nor even the first delivered to Penelope. By this point in the epic it has become an identifiable pattern in Athena's actions to manipulate minds—and the mind of Penelope and her stand-in on Scheria, Nausikaa, in particular—to effect events and prime circumstances to her liking.³⁷ Dreams recur as her tool for doing so.

Starting early, before the poem officially introduces Odysseus, Athena is subtly manipulating Penelope to ensure the carefully crafted balance of the household's atmosphere is maintained. In Book 4, we are introduced to a household teetering upon dissolution and a social pact nearly disrupted.³⁸ The suitors have plotted their assassination of Telemachos and are awaiting his return to carry it out.³⁹ The suitors believe Penelope still to be happily deciding between them for her marriage, clueless of their villainy. However, Penelope has discovered their plans and fallen into a state of grief and panic.⁴⁰ Athena works to prevent the suitors from

³⁵ 13.320-323.

³⁶ For a discussion of the dream as an omen-scene doing precisely this, see de Jong 2001, 480.

³⁷ It could be argued that Nausikaa is simply an epic replacement for Penelope on Scheria—parallels are drawn between the two royal women, from both entertaining suitors and the idea of marriage to shared imagery depicting them before a pillar and flanked by maidservants (6.15-19 & 8.457-8; 18.206-211), and thus Nausikaa is a stand-in on Scheria for the type that Penelope represents on Ithaka.

³⁸ 4.675 ff.

³⁹ 4.766-786.

⁴⁰ 4.787-794.

discovering this in turn through the device of a dream image. Following a desperate prayer to Athena, beseeching that Telemachos be kept safe, and a scene of disconsolate lamentation, Penelope is sent a dream-image of her sister, Iphthime, by Athena.⁴¹ This dream-image is explicitly sent to end Penelope's grieving, and this it achieves, consoling Penelope and deterring her worry by guaranteeing Telemachos' safety under Athena's guardianship.⁴² After a fruitless inquiry about her husband, Penelope nonetheless awakens suddenly, calmed and comforted.⁴³ She will not continue her display of lamentation, ruining her looks and exposing to the suitors that their plots are not secret, that her favor is not so soundly theirs as they believe. The illusion of the untroubled dynamic in Ithaka has been maintained and the situation has been cemented, which is opportune for Telemachos' return and Odysseus' eventual arrival in secret. Marriage plans are still on track and the suitors harbor no suspicions that they are anything but in control of the circumstances.

Two books later, Athena secures a similarly favorable set of circumstances for Odysseus' arrival among the Phaiakians. At the beginning of Book 6, after Odysseus has safely washed up on the shores of Scheria, Athena travels to the house of Alkinoos explicitly plotting the homecoming of Odysseus.⁴⁴ She orchestrates this step of his *nostos* by appearing as a dream to the Phaiakian princess, Nausikaa.⁴⁵ In the shape of an age-mate, Athena urges the princess to travel to the coast to wash her clothing, insinuating with this act that Nausikaa should expect to be courted for marriage soon.⁴⁶ As a result, when Nausikaa encounters Odysseus, she is predisposed to helping a potential suitor and is an individual uniquely empowered to help him.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 4.787 ff.

⁴² 4.801; 4.824-829.

⁴³ 4.830-841.

⁴⁴ 6.13-14.

⁴⁵ 6.15 ff.

⁴⁶ 6.20-40.

⁴⁷ 6.57-70; 6.110-140; 6.186-246.

As daughter of the king and queen, she has resources at her disposal that will be essential to securing his passage home; namely, clothing, information on Phaiakia and how to approach it, as well as the ability to curry him favor with her mother and father.⁴⁸ Indeed, because of his encounter with Nausikaa and the tactfulness with which he discusses her and their encounter, Odysseus so endears himself to the royal couple that Alkinoos wishes him to become his son-in-law, but settles on making him a guest-friend and supplying him hospitality and passage to Ithaka.⁴⁹

Just as in Penelope's case in Book 4, Athena's dream-crafting has ramifications in Books 6 and 7 that precisely construct the exact environment necessary for her plans to progress. Penelope is able to maintain the status quo on Ithaka, priming the atmosphere for Odysseus to return and to take revenge before the situation boils over on its own, while Nausikaa creates a set of circumstances that perfectly allow Odysseus to smooth-talk himself into a ride home. Everything is on track because of Athena's meddling. This continues more intensely with Penelope as the situation in Ithaka becomes more precarious and nears its resolution. Athena must move from such mild manipulations of Penelope with a dream to more aggressive interventions inspiring and possessing her mind and body on several occasions, interventions which not only influence her mental processes to guide decisions but even force inaction or action on Penelope, changes in her behavior which prevent Penelope from accidentally derailing the course of events, or alternatively, use her to steer certain circumstances in Odysseus' favor.⁵⁰

Because Odysseus' success ostensibly relies upon his wife being kept in the metaphorical dark, Penelope is virtually clueless throughout their interview. Her obliviousness is a

⁴⁸ 6.248-315.

⁴⁹ 7.233 ff., 7.299-315.

⁵⁰ E.g. 18. 158 ff.; see below for further examples and discussion.

precautionary measure for assuaging Odysseus and Athena's anxieties about the possible adverse effects she might have on their plots. Additionally, as seen above, the obfuscation of reality from Penelope has allowed Athena to utilize Penelope as a pawn. In fact, Penelope has been the principle tool for effecting Athena's desired reality because, in her ignorance, Penelope is a powerful agent of stasis. At the moment of their conversation, Penelope has been manipulated to maintain that stasis, but also has been positioned to dissolve it when Athena's plans require. Consequently, Penelope finds herself dwelling on her situation and her plans, but not yet embarking upon her own life-changing journey.

After months of being kept in the dark about Telemachos' immediate future and well-being, and after decades of uncertainty about her husband and the fate of her marriage, Penelope believes that she is incapable of waiting any longer and delaying the next stage of her life, re-marriage.⁵¹ She is out of tactics to postpone this apparent inevitability. Her trick of the shroud of Laertes was discovered and, as a result, further *doloi* have been foiled by a traitorous and yet unidentified maid servant, who has been informing on her to the suitors.⁵² Moreover, as she has delayed leaving, her son's property and well-being have become endangered. The suitors, beyond eating and drinking their way through the household, have recently failed in an attempt to murder Telemachos and usurp his hold on the kingship.⁵³ The situation in her home is at a critical point and Penelope herself is left in a tight spot. Either she remarries, or she waits and risks Telemachos' life. By refusing to make this decision thus far, Penelope has placed herself in a sort of stasis, which is maintained by her strength of will alone. Her life neither ends nor moves forward but remains in a sort of limbo, in which she holds off what she believes to be her destiny

⁵¹ *Odyssey* 19.130-161; see also de Jong 2001, 458-460 and 467.

⁵² See Antinoos' incensed speech on Penelope's trick: 2.85-110, as well as Penelope's own account: 19.138-161.

⁵³ Athena advises Telemachos about the ambush: 15.10-27-42; Telemachos follows her instructions: 15.495 ff.; the suitors react to their initial failure: 16.356-408; Penelope reacts: 16.409 ff.

and tenuously maintains peace in Ithaka. This stasis is in danger of breaking, however, because Penelope's will is wavering. Her emotional state is at an all-time low. Years of fruitless hoping have worn Penelope down to skepticism and pessimism by the time we witness this interview.⁵⁴ Over the course of the earlier books of the epic, she has become progressively so jaded that she has no confidence in rumor or report, and if she does harbor some hope, she gives no indication of it. Moreover, divine signs now carry no weight for her. Penelope gives them no credence. Just like all the other reports of Odysseus, they merely rub salt in the wound. By all appearances, Penelope is utterly hopeless and routinely turns a blind eye to circumstances that indicate her husband's return is imminent.

These intersecting factors are, of course, no coincidence. The power of the stasis, originally fostered by Athena's efforts, has evolved to plunge Penelope into deepening pessimism. And for good reason: as Odysseus' return becomes more immanent, the stasis is no longer necessary, but rather becomes an obstacle for Athena's plan for his righteous return. As a result, Athena decides to undermine the agent of its existence, Penelope. Such manipulations offer an additional perk, Penelope has become an easy puppet of Athena's. The goddess has worked her will on her without suspicion on several occasions, ranging from manipulating her to solicit gifts from the suitors, to blinding her mind to Odysseus' presence despite Eurukleia's recognition.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ In Book 4, Penelope still accepts divine messages and takes comfort from them (4.838-841). As the epic progresses, she ceases to explicitly take comfort from news of Odysseus or divine signs. E.g. Theoklumenos' prediction receives a wish that it would be true from Penelope, but no other emotional reaction (17.162-165). By the time she and Odysseus speak, she asks after news of her husband but any news only results in her hopeless tears (19.249-260 and 19.308-316).

⁵⁵ 19.476-479. Additionally, in Book 16, after an outburst rebuking Antinoos and accusing him of all his villainies, begging him and the suitors to cease, Penelope retreats to her room to mourn Odysseus until Athena casts sleep on her. With Penelope asleep, any further disruptions are avoided and nothing is fractured. Odysseus and Telemachos can continue their plotting without fearing Penelope's emotional state might cause some setback; 16.449-51.

Most notably, in Book 18, Penelope is manipulated in order to seal further the suitors' fate as foolish usurpers of Odysseus' property, as men who have earned their deaths by his hand.⁵⁶ Athena has been manufacturing situations for their reckless folly to be clearly exhibited and they have been consistently taking the bait.⁵⁷ Finally, Penelope is inspired or, one could argue, possessed to add the crowning touch. Athena puts it in Penelope's heart to show herself to the suitors, in order to fluster their spirits more and to garner honor for Odysseus and Telemachos.⁵⁸ This elicits an uncanny, unnatural laugh from Penelope, which has generally been interpreted to demonstrate the tension between Penelope's desires and the impulse instilled in her by Athena.⁵⁹ Penelope announces her new intention to Eurukleia, even voicing the disjunction, and Eurukleia approves, suggesting a refreshing bath before showing herself.⁶⁰ Penelope, at first, outright refuses.⁶¹ She has no wish to make herself presentable for these men with Odysseus dead and gone. But Athena has other plans. She puts Penelope to sleep and gives her a full, divine makeover, the result of which fills all the suitors with lust, exacerbating their determination in winning her and beguiling them into giving gifts that will restock Odysseus' household.⁶² So bewitched are they that Telemachos can insult them outright and they merely dwell on Penelope's beauty.⁶³ Thus, the noose is gently tightened around their necks and Odysseus' return is further enabled. Penelope is Athena's most convenient proxy for eliciting desired effects, her tool in the house when she will not herself manifest. Accordingly, no great stretch of logic would be required to explain Athena's use of Penelope once more to

⁵⁶ 18.158-245.

⁵⁷ For example, see 20.284-302 and 20.345-349.

⁵⁸ 18.158-162.

⁵⁹ 18.163: ἀχρεῖϊον δ' ἐγέλασσεν; Rutherford 1992, 30; de Jong 2001, 445.

⁶⁰ 18.164: Penelope notes she has a desire to show herself to the suitors, *although* she never has wanted to before: οὐ τι πάρος γε.

⁶¹ 18.178-181.

⁶² 18.187-213.

⁶³ 18.226-249.

communicate this omen to Odysseus; such behavior has precedents. Yet this is not all; Athena participates in a number of events surrounding this scene, events which establish her presence at the interview and further imply her responsibility.

In the preceding lines, Athena has personally intervened in order to set the stage, lighting Odysseus and Telemachos' way to remove the arms in the hall, and inciting the suitors to folly, riling Odysseus further.⁶⁴ Soon, following the end of their interview, the goddess again will maneuver to assure Odysseus of the success of their venture in person, spur the suitors to a fever pitch of audacity, and inspire Penelope to officially announce and begin the contest of the bow.⁶⁵ Nor is she absent from the interview itself. It is her direct intervention that prevents Penelope from witnessing Eurukleia's recognition of Odysseus.⁶⁶ She is explicitly described as turning away Penelope's mind not one hundred lines before Penelope's dream is brought up. Athena is present and she is active throughout these moments, but she is unseen and largely unknown to all, save Odysseus. Nonetheless, her agency is felt and, as such, is presented as the most logical source for Penelope's dream. By sending this dream to Penelope, Athena would be following the patterns of behavior she has already exhibited and would be abiding by a motivation of her own—to keep Penelope in the dark about Odysseus' return—all while allowing her to fulfill a goal: to provide Odysseus with confirmation of the next step in their plan. All paths lead back to Athena, so to speak, even though the narrator does not mention it explicitly. That is to say, the poet implies that Athena is responsible for the dream but never explicitly attributes it to her. Just as the dream uses ambiguous symbolism to manipulate an emotionally vulnerable Penelope in

⁶⁴ 19.33-43 and 18.346-404 respectively.

⁶⁵ 20.30-55, 20.284-302/20.345-349, and 21.1 ff. respectively.

⁶⁶ At 19.476-479 the narrator explicitly describes this to his audience.

order to obfuscate the truth and purpose of its message, the poet manipulates the presentation of the dream to the external audience in such a way as to obscure its origin and motivations.

1.3 Athena's Disappearing Act

ξεῖνε, τὸ μὲν σ' ἔτι τυτθὸν ἐγὼν εἰρήσομαι αὐτή·
καὶ γὰρ δὴ κοίτοιο τάχ' ἔσσειται ἠδέος ὄρη,
ὄν τινά γ' ὕπνος ἔλοι γλυκερός, καὶ κηδόμενόν περ.

Stranger, I myself will ask you this one thing more;
for indeed it will soon be time for pleasant sleep
at least for someone whom sweet sleep could take, even one burdened with care. (19.509-511)

Initially, Penelope's dream appears to have been motivated by character-driven needs. Actorial motivations, such as a desire to keep Penelope unaware of Odysseus' return, clearly can explain some aspects of its structure, but they are not the only forces shaping the dream.⁶⁷ The depiction of scenes can be influenced by narratorial motivations, e.g. plot progression, dramatic irony, or suspense, which can, in turn, affect what information is communicated to the external audience of the poem and what is simply alluded to, implied, or excluded.⁶⁸ The narrator can, thus, structure and format any one scene to determine how the audience experiences its action and significance, particularly in the use of the perspectives through which the story is focalized. At the start of Penelope and Odysseus' interview, for example, the audience is basically positioned to witness the conversation through the same perspective as Odysseus. The action has followed Odysseus' actions, discussions, and thoughts on and off since Book 5 and exclusively since the start of Book 19. Moreover, the audience has been equipped to inhabit virtually the same headspace, so to speak, as Odysseus. They regularly have been given insight by the

⁶⁷ de Jong 2001, xi and xvi respectively define actorial motivation as "the analysis of the 'why' of the story in terms of the aims and intentions of a character. An actorial motivation is usually explicit..." and narratorial motivation as "the analysis of the 'why' of the story in terms of the aims and intentions of the narrator. In Homer the narratorial motivation always remains implicit."

⁶⁸ Ibid., 459 provides a discussion of actorial and narratorial motivations for the interview-scene.

narrator into Athena's workings and her divine plan—that Odysseus will find a way to corner the suitors and slaughter them all eventually—and, as a result, they have been able, like Odysseus, to observe and comprehend her interventions, as well as to intuit her motives.⁶⁹ While Odysseus knows her personally, interacts with her regularly, and thus has a close relationship to the goddess, the audience knows of her habits and traditional characteristics from epic narrators' descriptions. Following the patterns asserted by the poet so far, the audience may use the same inductive reasoning as Odysseus and assume how and why Athena is participating in events. Unlike Odysseus, the audience usually has more certainty in their foreknowledge. While he must trust in Athena to execute his return in the future, the audience, looking back into the past, knows he will succeed, since they draw their conclusions from insight given by the narrator and the mythological canon.⁷⁰

By this logic, thematic patterns and cycles are created by the narrator as a form of communication with his audience, a way to ensure that the contents of the epic are experienced via a particular, informed perspective. The narrator begins the interview of Odysseus and Penelope by setting the expectation that Athena will miraculously intervene once again.⁷¹ After intervening with Eumaios, Athena has rendered Odysseus unidentifiable with a reverse makeover and sent him to his home to scope out the situation.⁷² Following the interview, Odysseus receives assistance from Penelope in the shape of the opportunity for revenge and Athena intervenes again then to restart the cycle of assistance.⁷³ As noted above, all that is missing from the current

⁶⁹ Thanks to our eavesdropping on their plotting in Book 13 circa lines 291.

⁷⁰ Louden 2011, 98.

⁷¹ See above in section 1.2.

⁷² For Eumaios's cycle, see 14.2 ff.

⁷³ The contest of the bow is 'decided upon' by Penelope at 19.570 ff. (and instigated by Athena at 21.1 ff.) and provides Odysseus with his opportunity for revenge; Athena's interventions pick up in frequency almost immediately at 20.30 and following until the climax when she physically intervenes in battle at 22.256. de Jong 2001, 481 points out that Penelope's surrender to the inevitability of remarriage takes such a shape that it provides Odysseus with the weapon for his revenge (the bow).

iteration of the schema with Penelope is the explicit catalyst by Athena. The audience may intuit that Penelope's dream is this catalyst, the thing that prompted Penelope to have the conversation with this traveler, but the text does not clarify this. In fact, by the end of the interview between them, the narrator has ceased to clarify or comment upon almost anything. Instead, the text here alternates between Penelope and Odysseus' dialogue almost exclusively.⁷⁴ By forcing the audience to rely solely upon the internal dialogue of the characters for the action of the poem, the epic has left the external audience to receive its events from a restricted, and thus diminished, perspective.

Instead of making obvious the narrative path for the audience, the narrator has suddenly disappeared, and with him the key component of Athena's assistance, the insight into the divine role. As a result, the audience knows only what standard mortal observation can provide: Penelope says she had this dream, its effect was provocative, but it is unclear to what end or with what intent it exists, beyond that its final result will find fulfillment in an archery competition.⁷⁵ The audience does not even know explicitly what Penelope and Odysseus actually believe about the dream. The audience can only take their word for it at face value and without the narrator's confirmation. Penelope expresses belief that dreams are tricky things, and her belief is left unevaluated.⁷⁶ Odysseus accepts the dream whole-heartedly, presumably viewing it as a divine sign, though this can only be presumed.⁷⁷ The audience seems to be abandoned to eavesdropping, a second-hand involvement in a conversation with the insight of none of the contributors at their disposal. The audience can only relish the dramatic irony prepared already

⁷⁴ 19.508; 554; 559; 582; 588, ending with normal narration resuming at 19.600 for the last five lines.

⁷⁵ 19.560 ff.; the commentaries are largely devoid of information on the significance of this, simply identifying Book 19 as one of the great 'conversation' books: de Jong 2001, 460.

⁷⁶ 19.560-561.

⁷⁷ 19.555-558.

by the narrator in earlier scenes, conjecture at the players' next moves, and wait to see how they will play out in the grander scheme they expect.

Beyond abandoning the pattern of Athena's interventions, the narrator has left the audience to this liminality by a more explicit manipulation of their perspective; the bulk of the exposition, the progression of the scene relies almost entirely on direct speech, on character-text. As such, the dream is presented to the audience in a manner that is oblique, particularly as concerns motivations both actorial and narratorial. Beyond the multiple layers of character motivation, the majority of Book 19 is devoted to accomplishing two seemingly contrary narrative tasks. Occurring at night and mostly through dialogue and digressions, it constitutes a delay in the literal action of the epic.⁷⁸ As a book spent almost entirely in talking about the 'past' and story-telling in general, nothing actually 'happens' in its lines. And yet, like so much of epic's story-telling, the event of narrating (and speaking, more broadly) effects the events to come in its own way. While the conversation about Penelope's dream jostles Odysseus and Penelope out of their impasses, the interview scene surrounding the dream primes the storyline to transition from planning to action. First, the dialogues figuratively foretell the action to come, which they delay literally, and second, through one speech act in particular, they performatively progress the plot.⁷⁹ Overall, through these conversations, the epic readies itself; it builds and alludes to its culmination while retaining anticipation and suspense.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ de Jong 2001, 458-460.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 463-465; 474; 476-477; 480-481.

⁸⁰ Ibid. The possibility of recognition is hinted at, enticed by moments of irony, and delayed by character and narrator interruptions, only to be postponed and redirected into Eurukleia's recognition, itself delayed by a digression about the token that instigated it. Penelope and Odysseus' interview, moreover, suffers logistically several instances of postponement. It is riddled with emotional interludes, characters avoiding topics, and large narrative speed bumps to the effect that, though stop-start to begin with, it is eventually interrupted completely and divided into two sessions. Furthermore, before the literal interruption of Eurukleia's recognition and Athena's intervention, the topic of conversation had figuratively delayed the plot-progression by largely being about the past. Penelope interviews beggar-Odysseus about her husband and about himself and accepted his news and tale as truthful, all focused on retrospection. She then rewards him with hospitality, a foot-bath which entirely interrupts

Beginning with his fabricated autobiography and news of himself, Odysseus has figuratively realized his return home through speech.⁸¹ As de Jong notes, his lying tales are interspersed with truths and bring Odysseus, through narration, closer to home with each installment.⁸² The actual accomplishment of his return to his house is narrated finally in Penelope's dream where the dream-character, bird-Odysseus, announces he is in the palace.⁸³ As this prediction is narrated, the announcement is technically accurate. Odysseus is actually in the palace, but only a select few know of his presence. He will be fully 'present' when he makes his return known to all. Thus, the dream's internal prediction from the past is on the cusp of being fulfilled; in fact, it is in the process of fulfilling itself and creating this future by giving Odysseus the 'go-ahead' he needs.⁸⁴ In addition, the bird omen of Penelope's dream ties in with and culminates the other, earlier bird omens that dot the narrative and prefigure Odysseus' *nostos*.⁸⁵ It becomes the final and most conclusive of the hunting and killing symbols that prefigure Odysseus' return and revenge.⁸⁶ Aided by the omens and prophecies of his return, the audience has been oriented by these figurative predictions in character-text to anticipate Odysseus' accomplishment of his *nostos*. However, to do so the audience must parse out a great number of motivations behind the dream narrative, without a great deal of insight into them.

The narrator has packed Penelope and Odysseus' conversation with figurative import, but has provided no literal import, no explicit consequences or implication of their words. As a result, the audience must interpret the conversation as they hear it, and decide what import it has

their dialogue and the advancement of the narrative forward and also spurs Eurukleia's similarly disruptive and retrospective digression. See de Jong 2001 463-482.

⁸¹ 19.262-307 sees the culmination.

⁸² De Jong 2001, 468.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ See Chapter Three 3.3 for more on self-fulfilling prophecies.

⁸⁵ De Jong 2001, 480.

⁸⁶ Ibid., names this as a 'prolepsis.'

for the characters and the narrative overall. Along the way, the narrator provides some assistance by picking up these strands of figurative significance laid down earlier in the story. However, just as with Athena's cycle of intervention, the narrator upends any security in the information by introducing a component entirely without any connections, a piece of information without any clear origin—Penelope's announcement of the contest of the bow. As she blurts out this plan to Odysseus, Penelope determines the ensuing course of events with a single announcement, one which the narrative has not prefigured or predicted in the least.⁸⁷ Consequently, it is Penelope exclusively who indicates the path the action will take and becomes the voice that makes it so. That is, as de Jong calls it, an emancipation of speech, in that it is only Penelope's voice that carries this message and, as a speech act, makes it a reality in the epic.⁸⁸ The audience is left unsure of events to come when the epic poet disrupts the finality of these other neatly completed figurative patterns with this emancipated speech act. As a result, the audience must anticipate the resolution of the contest of the bow and wonder about the unusual introduction of this next plot point. Why was it not mentioned by the narrator? Why leave Penelope as, seemingly, the sole determiner of this event? Where has Athena gone? The suspense fostered by the narrator no longer results from uncertainty about how Odysseus' revenge will occur, as it has up until this conversation, but about how his story-line will resolve in this manner. The audience does not know why Penelope decided upon the contest of the bow or why she is confiding this decision to her audience.

Twice now the narrator has obfuscated the source of an important piece of information; twice now such obfuscation has centered on Penelope as a channel for information. The narrator is creating a new pattern centered on obfuscation and on Penelope, which becomes a new

⁸⁷ De Jong 2001, 481.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*.

communication with his audience. If Penelope's dream communicated more than just its surface-level content, then, logically, Penelope's second unprecedented revelation of information might be similarly multivalent, not just in regards to its content but also its format and presentation. More specifically, the audience's attention is diverted away from any agency Athena initially had and entirely onto Penelope herself.

After Penelope has been kept from witnessing Eurukleia's discovery of the scar and she resumes her conversation with Odysseus, there seems to be some dissonance between her words and her behavior.⁸⁹ As she again begins their dialogue, it appears that she is rambling, jumping from one loosely associated thought to another, leading up to what she seems compelled to discuss.⁹⁰ She opens by talking about it being near the time for sleep, the time when her sufferings torment her worst.⁹¹ She is miserable, lamenting and full of sorrow⁹² —over her lost husband and her hopeless situation, no doubt, considering the vein of the first half of their interview. She then compares herself to Pandareos's daughter, transfigured into the nightingale, mourning as she sings her song.⁹³ This comparison she equates with her current state of indecision. "Even so," she says, "my heart is pulled in two ways; here and there..." and continues on to enumerate her options and their benefits and consequences.⁹⁴ Generally, this is taken to

⁸⁹ Starting at 19.508.

⁹⁰ de Jong 2001, 479 terms her progression through the topics to her dream 'gradual and associative': "[I]t is almost time to sleep, sleep which takes hold even of a worried person, but not of me, who keeps on pondering whether or not to remarry. Now that my son is adult, he is pressing me to remarry, but please explain this dream to me (which seems to suggest that I should hold out a little longer)."

⁹¹ 19.510-517.

⁹² πένθος ἀμέτρητον (ln. 512), τέρπομ' ὄδυρομένη γοόωσα (513), πικιναὶ δέ μοι ἄμφ' ἄδινὸν κῆρ/ ὄξεϊται μελεδῶνες ὄδυρομένην ἐρέθουσιν (516-17).

⁹³ 19.518-523. The nightingale was once a woman and unwittingly killed her son. The phrase used is δι' ἀφραδίας, 'through thoughtlessness'; whether the meaning here connotes more 'senselessness' or 'recklessness' is unclear. Russo 1988, 100 (Oxford Commentary, vol. 3), argues that the phrase indicates recklessness, though he does so admittedly against the scholia, and as such the meaning has not been definitively decided. Certainly, an idea of not being sensible, of being clueless, would be an apt comparison for Penelope in this situation on several levels, especially considering the way Penelope's knowledge has been manipulated up to this point.

⁹⁴ 19.524-529.

mean that Penelope is unsure of her course of action concerning the suitor situation.⁹⁵ From what Penelope actually says, however, it seems rather that she made her choice and her heart is torn over the decision; that is, Penelope already knows she will remarry, but she is sorrowful over that choice, just as the nightingale made her decision and then lamented it.⁹⁶ Her decision is made, but it is not a happy one. Like Pandareos's daughter, she will lose her son, not by killing him in folly, but by leaving him for the home of another man, who is not his father. Nonetheless, she still then presents her options as options, as if she had not already made up her mind: either she stays or she marries.⁹⁷ As it progresses, her dialogue is fraught with internal tension. The rationalizations that follow pull back in the other direction. They explain why she has chosen to stay up until this point and why she must adjust that choice now: she remained to honor her marriage and to take care of Telemachos, but now Telemachos is grown and needs her to leave, because her suitors are eating him out of house and home.⁹⁸ By the end of her speech, her choice is clear, the suitors' appetites have made it for her. On the heels of reflecting on those appetites, Penelope transitions into this dream of hers that just so happens to be about another flock feeding in her house.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ De Jong 2001, 479. A full discussion of scholastic history on the simile and analysis of the simile's meaning can be found in Anhalt, Emily Katz. 2001. "A Matter of Perspective: Penelope and the Nightingale in "Odyssey" 19.512-534". *The Classical Journal* 97 (2). The Classical Association of the Middle West and South: 145-159. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3298391>.

⁹⁶ The nightingale is described already transformed, singing her lament for her son whom she had killed. The use of the aorist, κτεῖνε (523), makes it clear that its action is anterior to that of the singing: ἦ τε θαμὰ τροπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν (521), where χέει is in the present tense. Just as Pandareos' daughter is mourning her action in the past, so Penelope is troubled by her decision. In specific, it is her θυμός (524), the seat of passion and emotion (*LSJ*), that is tormenting her not her νόος, the mind, or even φρήν (often similarly used for the seat emotions or thoughts). It is the vacillations of emotion, not logic, described by the simile.

⁹⁷ 19.525-529. Both φυλάσσω and ἔπωμαι are subjective and, in combination with the indirect interrogative conjunction ἤε, suggest a deliberative statement (Rijksbaron 2002, 40).

⁹⁸ 19.530-534.

⁹⁹ 19.534-536: κατέδουσιν → ἔδουσιν.

When Penelope brings up the dream, she instructs its reception with two imperatives: *ὑπόκριναι* and *ἄκουσον*, "interpret" and "listen," in that order.¹⁰⁰ These imperatives imply: interpret the first half of the dream, the omen, and then listen to the second half, the message. She does not ask for Odysseus' opinion on its meaning. Rather, she prefaces the dream with these instructions in order to share it, apparently with a clear interpretation of her own already in mind— that it has two parts and that she somehow associates it with the dilemma currently facing her concerning Telemachos, with which she has just introduced the dream. Penelope gives us the text of the dream and then tells us she awoke to see her geese still in her home, as previously.¹⁰¹ At this point, Odysseus gives his reaction.¹⁰² He believes that the dream cannot be interpreted any other way than as it does itself, to which Penelope, without hesitation, responds that dreams are inconceivable nonsense.¹⁰³ This assertion is supported by the axiom of the two gates of dreams.¹⁰⁴ Penelope knew already what she believed: her dream had come from the false gate, the gate of ivory.¹⁰⁵ And then again, without pause, she admits another thing, that her waiting will end the next day.¹⁰⁶ Her choice is made and she will remarry whomever of the suitors wins the contest of the bow.

In quick succession (just over 80 lines, only 6 of which were not spoken by her), Penelope turns the audience's understanding of her disposition on its head.¹⁰⁷ She begins her

¹⁰⁰ 19.535.

¹⁰¹ 19.536-553.

¹⁰² 19.555-558: ὦ γύναι, οὗ πως ἔστιν ὑποκρίνασθαι ὄνειρον / ἄλλη ἀποκλίναντ', ἐπεὶ ἦ ῥά τοι αὐτὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς / πέφραδ' ὅπως τελέει: μνηστῆρσι δὲ φαίνεται ὄλεθρος / πᾶσι μάλ', οὐδέ κέ τις θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξει.

¹⁰³ 19.560-561: she specifically calls them ἀμήχανοι ἀκριτόμοθοι, inexplicable and indiscernible.

¹⁰⁴ 19.562-567; for one discussion on the axiom, see Haller, Benjamin. "The Gates of Horn and Ivory in Odyssey 19: Penelope's Call for Deeds, Not Words." *Classical Philology* 104 no.4 (2009): 397-417. See especially pages 398-399, for a summary of the lines' academic history. Anne Amory 1963 provides the other seminal discussion and later Russo et al. 1988.

¹⁰⁵ 19.568-569.

¹⁰⁶ 19.570-581.

¹⁰⁷ 19.509-581; in 19.555-558 Odysseus responds and at 19.554 and 19.559 the narrator describes the transition between speakers.

speech apparently inclined to an option but not decided upon it, and, not 100 lines later, the choice is discussed as though it has been made and fully rationalized. Her dream sits “associatively” wedged in the middle of this progression.¹⁰⁸ I believe this depiction serves as a stylized demonstration of one otherwise unmentioned factor in this scene: the divine agent. Penelope confesses this unsavory choice and the factors behind it to this stranger, with whom she feels inexplicably comfortable, clearly motivated by nothing other than impulse. Penelope is not a character of impulse, however. She is legendarily circumspect, except when under Athena’s influence.¹⁰⁹ In her commentary on this scene, de Jong points out that, upon reengaging in their conversation, Penelope is working towards bringing up the dream.¹¹⁰ She “gradually” and “associatively” leads into discussing it. The goal of resuming their discussion was calculated (evidently by someone other than Penelope) to ensure that the dream was mentioned. A logical causality between Penelope’s home situation and her decision to hold the contest of the bow was determined prior to their interview and is now revealed in the way that Penelope so readily transitions between these otherwise unrelated topics with careful and subtle, figurative and empirical connections. These are all things her mind seems to have associated with one another somehow before they were brought up in her conversation with Odysseus. There is no hesitation or wavering of her mind, as her allusion to the nightingale might suggest, when it comes to her

¹⁰⁸ De Jong 2001, 479.

¹⁰⁹ περίφρων, circumspect or very careful, is a preferred (if not *the* preferred) epithet for Penelope in Homer. In the *Odyssey* Penelope is described with this particular modifier around 50 times (Dunbar 1880, *Concordance*, 303-304). She shares it only three times with Eurukleia. Like other stock epithets, περίφρων is most likely originally descriptive, an important characteristic traditionally associated with the character, and then later, through formula-formation and the stylization of Homeric composition and performance, becomes a metrical tool to complete lines, especially set formulae (like any description of Penelope beginning dialogue: τὸν δ’ αὐτὲ προσέειπε περίφρων Πηνελόπεια). This dual capacity of epithets explains why it can be used to describe Penelope’s most inherent characteristic, as well as to describe her when she is not inherently herself, i.e. when she’s uncircumspect under Athena’s control; e.g. just after her mind was turned aside by Athena from 19.478 to 19.508. Oral theory espouses this understanding in particular; e.g. Lord 1960, “The Formula,” esp. 65-67.

¹¹⁰ De Jong 2001, 479. For the narratological analysis of character motivations and internal mental processes beyond what they explicitly express through direct speech, see de Jong 1987 on implicit embedded focalization pgs. 118-123.

opinion about the dream. When Odysseus offers his interpretation, Penelope's reaction is immediate and precise, and that interpretation that the dream is false is supported by the backing reasoning of the dream gates.

Her instant rejection of Odysseus' reaction to the dream and her further assertion of its falseness may indicate her pessimism, but it also makes clear to the audience that this is not the first time this line of reasoning has crossed her mind.¹¹¹ Circumspect, wily Penelope surely would think things over before developing an opinion about them.¹¹² Furthermore, as prudent as she legendarily is, she would hardly confess such a sensitive topic on a whim to a complete stranger under normal circumstances. Unless, of course, thinking was not something she was able to do at full capacity when she had the dream, or considered the dream, or brought up the dream. Penelope gives no context for when it appeared to her, or how she reacted the night she dreamt it, besides still seeing her geese when she awoke.¹¹³ The event of the dream is not the point of her telling it, nor is how it affected her when she had it, as one might expect when a person discusses a dream, but rather that she confesses it and how.¹¹⁴ Penelope is made to advance in a seemingly uncharacteristic manner, haphazardly and associatively, through the thoughts in her mind to the dream and its consequences to demonstrate that the impetus behind it is not entirely her own. The random confession from Penelope, fraught with strange internal tension, and convenient relevance to Odysseus' needs smacks of meddling. This depiction

¹¹¹ As de Jong 2001 suggests as a parallel to a reaction of Priam, 479.

¹¹² Beyond *περίφρων*, Penelope's characterization throughout the epic (except when her mind is compromised) endorses this assumption. See especially her crowning scene of *μητις*, when it is she who tests Odysseus during their recognition-scene instead of vice versa, a type-scene reversal only otherwise permitted to Athena (Louden 2011, 80): 23.173-232.

¹¹³ de Jong 2001, 480.

¹¹⁴ It is consequential that she is telling someone about it now, as it becomes an auspicious omen for Odysseus (de Jong, 480), and betrays its influence in her decision to remarry.

elliptically suggests, thus, that it is not Penelope who decides to confess her concerns, her dream, and her decision, but rather Athena.

In fact, this moment may be considered a continuation of the possession that turned Penelope's attention away from Eurukleia. As stakes have been raised, Athena's manipulation of Penelope has intensified. As discussed above, no longer has the goddess operated behind passive tools like dreams, but has instead been personally coopting Penelope's mind and body to ensure events progress according to plan.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, in Book 19, Athena assumes possession of Penelope's mind not only to preserve Odysseus' secret but also to signal to him his opportunity for the revenge. Therefore, the second portion of the interview-scene occurs by inspiration/possession as a continuation of that intervention thirty lines before and aligns with the increasingly aggressive and direct progression of manipulations of Penelope, which the goddess has undertaken in order to craft the proper circumstances for Odysseus' revenge.¹¹⁶ By this logic, Penelope is a tool of Athena's manipulation in voicing her mind at this very moment. Furthermore, the dream itself, the circumstances of its appearance, and its contents are depicted as the result of the goddess's machinations. Epic habit assures the audience that Athena is present and active in this scene, but epic habit is also being upset in this scene by the narrative's failure to explicitly identify the goddess's role in events. Despite her absolute agency in the scene, Athena disappears again and the significance of her influence is diverted to Penelope's contribution.

The format of Penelope's dream similarly obfuscates the divine role in favor of the mortal channel. Not only the sole Homeric example of a symbolic dream, Penelope's dream successfully preserves multiple formats in one dream and creates a structure for prophecy that

¹¹⁵ See above in 1.2.

¹¹⁶ Lines 19.509 and 478, respectively.

eliminates the need for the divine agent behind the dream to be explicitly noted. In most cases, a dream found in Homer takes the shape of the oracular, or message, dream, which is highly stylized and adheres to a strict structure.¹¹⁷ Such a dream traditionally consists of a small but vital visual component. A god or a messenger of a god appears before the dreamer, in the guise of an important person in their life, or openly as a divine dream-messenger, and then verbally delivers a piece of information, usually a warning or instructions.¹¹⁸ The dreamer generally recognizes the dream to be urgent and important, and awakes immediately upon its departure to pursue its bidding. Additionally, these sorts of dreams usually appear at a time of crisis to a person in power; that is, they are sent to people who can resolve pressing issues and are, thus, a culturally acknowledged trope for inciting a resolution to events. Penelope's dream represents a variation on this type, distinguished importantly by two features: the lack of narrator-text identifying the god sending the dream and, of course, the addition tacked onto the front of this message dream, the bird symbolism.

From this initial bird omen imagery, Penelope's dream earns its classification as the sole Homeric representative of the symbolic dream. Generally, the symbolic dream is much vaguer and, in a way, on the opposite end of the spectrum from the message dream. It is, predictably, a visual communication made up of some array of signs that must be interpreted or translated to acquire any meaning. These signs are often too riddling to be interpreted by the dreamer and a specialist may be consulted.¹¹⁹ Such interpretations, following the usual pattern of archaic Greek

¹¹⁷ What follows is a synthesized summary of the dream typologies offered in Dodds 1951 and Oppenheim 1956 and 1966.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Agamemnon's of *Iliad* 2.20 ff., Nausikaa's at *Odyssey* 6.15 ff., as well as Penelope's earlier dream at 4.787 ff. Messer 1918, 1-52 provides a summary of dream types in Homer that essentially creates a typology of them according to this basic conception.

¹¹⁹ Dodds 1951, 106 suggests that the symbolic dream is the most relatable type to modern's experience. Thus, this partially explains the allure of interpreting Penelope's dream psychoanalytically, as an expression of her subconscious.

dreaming experience, were, at least in literature, focused on the external, the future.¹²⁰ More importantly, dreams were, more often than not, a channel for the supernatural to discretely access the mortal realm.¹²¹ Even Penelope's axiom disregarding the verity of her dream acknowledges that it was sent from beyond the human plane.¹²² Because of their particularly extra-mortal source, dreams in any shape could be generally accepted as portents.¹²³ Homeric audiences were, in a way, conditioned to think of dreams in this way because the conventional dream followed the message-type and, therefore, included a description of the divine agent. Just the event of having a dream in Homer can be regarded as divine meddling and thus taken as an omen. As a result, Penelope's dream initially seems to Odysseus, as de Jong points out, to be an auspicious portent, merely from the happenstance of Penelope bringing it up in his presence, regardless of the symbolism it conveys.¹²⁴ However, its symbolism and its message convey multiple narratives and, because of the symbolic portion, the dream uniquely avoids the otherwise obligatory ascription of those narratives to a divine source.

The poet can remove Athena's agency without fatally deviating from the traditional structure of message dreams, because in this case the symbolic portion and the message portion coordinate. The first half could stand alone as a symbolic dream; it is certainly a visually-oriented dream, made up of bird-omen imagery and Penelope's own reactions to it. The second half, however, less easily conforms to that type. It continues the visual theme of the first half by featuring the eagle, but focuses primarily on the eagle's spoken message. That eagle, a divine messenger normally, but here identified as someone vitally important to Penelope, Odysseus,

¹²⁰ Pratt 1994, 149.

¹²¹ See the above examples of dreams used by Athena on Nausikaa and Penelope. Chapter 3 will address another (in)famous example, that of Zeus' dream to Agamemnon in *Iliad* 2.20 ff.

¹²² 19.562-567. Curiously, the word she uses to modify *ὄνειρον*, *ἀμενηνῶν*, is usually a modifier of the dead (*LSJ*).

¹²³ For the Homeric audience. As seen in Penelope's dream here, the dreamers themselves do not always take them as portents (though Penelope does accept her earlier dream, 4.830-841).

¹²⁴ De Jong 2001, 480.

relates an oracle. That oracle delivers Penelope a piece of information, a type of warning: Odysseus is coming to kill the suitors, be ready. Once the eagle has stopped speaking, Penelope tells us that she awoke and checked for her geese. This conveys a sense of urgency that she is left with upon the dream's departure. She is, arguably, at a time of a crisis and is in a place of power to resolve it.¹²⁵ Therefore, because she does receive a spoken message under these very circumstances, the second half of Penelope's dream presents as the other, more standard Homeric dream type, the oracular message dream.

However, it is not simply one or the other. Although arguably both portions of the dream could have each stood independently and still fulfilled their apparent narrative functions, the two halves tie together and intertwine with the surrounding text as if they were an integrated whole. The visual portion reflects the familial habit of bird association between Odysseus, Telemachos and Penelope (and Laertes), echoing the nightingale simile preceding it, as well as acting as the finale of progressively more deadly bird signs appearing to the family and acting as prolepses of Odysseus' return.¹²⁶ On the other hand, the oracular half echoes the epiphanies that have been manifesting for other characters integral to the plot, such as those received by Odysseus directly from Athena and those indirectly received by Telemachos.¹²⁷ Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, this half arguably figures as the manipulative intervention of Athena to instigate action, one of the central qualities of message dreams. The poet fits this dream into his narrative, both as something he has prefigured and as something that fulfills patterns left incomplete before. Additionally, the dream functions as an integrated unit thematically: the eagle returns seamlessly

¹²⁵ A political and personal crisis that she related just before narrating this dream: 19.525-534.

¹²⁶ De Jong 2001, 480.

¹²⁷ Athena has appeared to Odysseus on several occasions, as mentioned above, starting in Book 6 and again in Book 13. 19.33 represents her non-manifest epiphany to Telemachos when she guides the removal of the armor from the halls with a magical lamp.

from his omen-making to explain itself to Penelope. Most significantly, each half relies on the other to fully qualify the whole as a non-standard dream that conforms to traditional structural standards.

The initial symbolism seems entirely extraneous and, as a message-dream, it lacks the assurance of its divine origin. That said, Penelope experiences the bird's appearance and action in the same way as all other bird signs occur in Homer, except for the fact that she happens to be asleep. In other words, a god sends a messenger to Penelope as she is sleeping, just as in a message dream. However, because it is framed as a bird omen for the external audience, which, again, is conventionally a god-sent sign but one without necessary explicit provenance, the narrator need not state outright that Athena sent it. Homeric divinatory conventions allow for the divine role in *oionomanteia* to be assumed and thus circumvented in narration. Symbolic dreams are not the usual type for Homeric poetry, and as a result, the first half, which has generally been the characterizing aspect of Penelope's dream, I assert, is an innovation used to bypass Athena's role while still successfully depicting the second half as a message dream. Consequently, Penelope's complete dream is distinctive in its chimera-like form but not actually aberrant. Interestingly, Penelope seems to be aware of the dream's unorthodox halving as she introduces it to Odysseus with two separate and type-appropriate imperatives: 'interpret,' for the symbolic half and then 'listen' for the message half. And therein lies the first hurdle for understanding the role of Penelope's dream: why it needed to fulfill its function as a two-part hybrid that creatively obfuscates Athena's authorship.

One possible motivation is that, in its eccentricity, the dream appears crafted to draw attention to itself. Penelope's "chance" mentioning to Odysseus of a dream about Odysseus' return is a favorable portent for him, and within this portent is a two-part portent comprised of a

bird-omen and an oracle. They are thematically connected by the presence of the eagle in both halves, who also seems self-aware and metacommentative. The eagle explains "just then I was an eagle, but now I am your husband come home." It, in short, knows of the other half of the dream and builds off of it. We do not usually witness symbols explaining themselves so explicitly. Such a thing does not occur in archaic literature and would have, no doubt, stood out to the audience.¹²⁸ Moreover, it is important to note that bird-forms are an epiphany-type of the gods.¹²⁹ Although the gods might change shape into men to perform message-dreams or other epiphanies, being in bird shape and announcing oneself a man, Odysseus in particular, seems overwrought, contrived. It combines too many types of divine signaling/manipulating to pass unnoticed. This may explain why to Odysseus it is so clearly a divine sign as it intensifies in re-iteration, but to Penelope it seems overblown, too good to be true.¹³⁰ The dream, therefore, appears to be carefully crafted to conceal the divine agency behind it, but not to obviate it entirely from the audience's mind.

Athena's role is repeatedly implied and not at all unprecedented, so why must her agency be so deeply buried within the text? Athena could have sent the dream to Penelope and then pushed it from her mind to a later moment when her 'decision' to remarry would be more convenient, or she might have even just then instilled it in Penelope's thoughts as Odysseus had his feet washed. The audience, however, cannot know if these or any other possible explanations are the case. Nonetheless, I assert again that it smacks of Athena's meddling: its perfect timing,

¹²⁸ As Dodds and Oppenheim's studies of dreams suggest, there was a hard line between message and symbolic dreams primarily in their medium. Message dreams' revelations are auditory, while symbolic dreams are visual. The same sensory divide persists in waking divination: prophecies are spoken, omens seen and interpreted. Even auditory omens (like the Zeus' thunder) must be interpreted to have a 'meaning'; they do not verbally explain themselves.

¹²⁹ E.g. *Iliad* 7.61 and *Odyssey* 5.337 and Athena at 22.239-240.

¹³⁰ Omens in Homer can occur in concentrated successions of twos, often to reinforce the first's meaning, such as the doubled thunder and chance speech omens that occur at 20.102-121.

the dissonance in Penelope's self-expression, and the fact that it completes the narrative progression of Odysseus' *nostos*. The engine driving the characters does its job for an interview-scene, progressing the plot while delaying its disclosure. Again, however, without providing an explanation of the delay, the narrative moves on and the audience is left behind in terms of motivations behind the scene, both character and narrator. This deprivation of information more than delays the action. It creates purposeful obfuscation which, in turn, also delays the reception of the text by the audience. The audience is encouraged to inspect the scene more closely and to notice patterns of obfuscation, particularly surrounding missing motivations and obscured divine participation. Why does Penelope have this particular dream and react in this particular way? And why is this dream left unexplained by our narrator, unlike every other dream? Moreover, why is this whole scene bare of narrator-text, why has the poet so zeroed in on what the characters are saying that we are deprived of why they are saying it?

All of the gaps in the audience's understanding here stem from this scene's lack of explicative narrator-text. Our expositional handicap is not immediately identified by the audience because the poem's narrator has gradually fallen into silence up until this point. The text leading to this section of the interview has included other conversations that are only marginally explicated by narrator's comments.¹³¹ Even the long digression on Odysseus' scar is focalized so that, though in narrator-text, it feels like it is Eurukleia's story that she is telling in her head.¹³² The narrator is whispering helpful, enlightening comments in our ears as we listen in. And then, he is not. He is merely transitioning between giving voice to the two characters in dialogue.

¹³¹ Once Odysseus and Penelope's interview begins, the narrator provides information outside the basic 'he said and then she said' only on four occasions (204 ff., 249 ff., 361 ff., 386 ff.). The first three interruptions provide a description of Penelope's emotional reactions and Odysseus' reaction (if any) and the final interruption is Eurukleia's scar digression.

¹³² De Jong 2001, 477.

In terms of the mechanics of the narrative, this means that the primary narrator-focalizer, our poet and window into the epic world, is embedding all the action, all the narrative progression into character-text.¹³³ As a result, those two secondary narrator-focalizers—Penelope and Odysseus—impose the effects of their individual perspectives onto narration and focalization of the primary narrative and its narratees.¹³⁴ That is, we must rely only on the dialogue to know what is going on and must judge its value according to the preexisting characterization of each speaker. Thus, the audience is left in the same receptive situation as any internal (mortal) audience of the conversation, interpreting meaning and extrapolating implication simply through our own independent faculty for reasoning, through inference. For an audience of the performed poem, this also means that the poet is speaking Penelope and Odysseus' words directly, almost seamlessly, as if to the audience with nearly no interruption in the illusion by expositional verses.¹³⁵ Thus, the exposition in the second half of the interview, Penelope's dream and announcement of remarriage and their external plot resonances, presents key bits of information through Penelope's character-text in such a way as to position Penelope as substitute narrator. Moreover, they are left as independent descriptions in her character-text with no narrator-text devoted to repeating or fleshing them out later, only referring to them. They are 'emancipated,' free-standing moments of speaking that are laden with implied significance but given no explicit meaning by the poet other than their own semiotic value.¹³⁶ And finally, the dialogues are entirely mortal, every word and action attributed to a human while any divine influence is mere speculation.

¹³³ de Jong 1987, 87, 192-194; 1997, 309-310.

¹³⁴ de Jong 1997, 316.

¹³⁵ Compare, for example, another dialogue-heavy scene: Achilles' conversation with Odysseus et al. in the *Iliad* (9.192 ff.), which gives normal actorial motivations—Phoenix cries because he fears for the Greeks, according to the narrator (9.432-433).

¹³⁶ de Jong 2001, 481.

Penelope has become the ultimate tool of obfuscation, allowing the poet to forego any mention of Athena's role and the narrator to completely subsume himself in a character. But why Penelope? Why make her dream-scene so singular? Why draw so much attention to it and not explain it? What is the pattern of obfuscation actually highlighting? What is the poet attempting to communicate through so much contrast?

1.4 A Spotlight in the Dark

ὦ γύναι, οὗ πως ἔστιν ὑποκρίνασθαι ὄνειρον
ἄλλη ἀποκλίναντ', ἐπεὶ ἦ ρά τοι αὐτὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς
πέφραδ' ὅπως τελέει· μνηστῆρσι δὲ φαίνεται ὄλεθρος
πᾶσι μάλ', οὐδέ κέ τις θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξει.

My lady, it is not at all possible to interpret the dream
by twisting it a different way, since, you know, Odysseus right there himself
pointed out how it will come to pass; doom is quite manifest for all
the suitors, nor could any of them evade death and their doom. (19.555-558)

To summarize before I conclude, we know that on an internal plot level the dream uses selective obfuscation to help execute the narrative line in two distinct ways. First, it delays the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope while allowing their roles as plot-intrinsic characters to continue on unimpeded. For an audience, this signals that their reunion proper will be emotionally rewarding after so many delays.¹³⁷ Second, the dream functionally expedites Odysseus' revenge. It provides the missing piece to Odysseus' evolving plan, but moreover, it signposts to the audience an assurance (at least from Odysseus' perspective) of the direction the story will take, towards the slaughter of the suitors, probably at an archery contest. This ties up the loose ends of Odysseus' and Penelope's storylines. The suitors will die, but better yet for Penelope, she will not be forced to remarry or be responsible for ruining her son's property any

¹³⁷ Ibid., 458-459.

further. Additionally, she will not have to fret over that resolution, because she is being kept uninformed. Finally, Odysseus' fear of Penelope's potential treachery is mostly assuaged, and if any doubt is left, its danger is postponed to their reunion proper by maintaining Penelope's ignorance of his return. Thus, as a scene within the epic storyline, Penelope's dream is vital.

Moreover, it carries additional subtext—initially implicit but made explicit by the poet as he intentionally forces, through obfuscation, the audience to listen actively rather than complacently—about epic *poesis* and the cultural conventions surrounding the poet and divine-human communication. On top of the extensive doubling in the scene indicating that it merits attention, now explicit attention is drawn to the questionable nature of dreams by the predominant narrator of the scene, which suspends the audience's instant and certain knowledge. By means of its composition—the whole sequence of the interview, dream, and discussion—Penelope's dream-scene is being flagged for reconsideration, marked to be mined for an additional message. Since Penelope's rationalization of the gates of dreams is more than an explanation for her doubt, but an expansion of her opinion on the dream, it may be an indication to consider her opinion more closely.

On a second examination of the scene, her comment appears well thought out and extremely appropriate, perhaps one that is leading the audience to consider her opinion in the external context of the poem, to reflect upon the fact that divine-human communication without a narrator or other influenced medium is essentially a coin toss.¹³⁸ Two interrelated qualities of epic and general divine-human communication are made points of contention by Penelope's comments. The reliability of the gods is explicitly questioned, especially when they

¹³⁸ For a fuller explanation of the phrase “influenced medium” as used here, see the Introduction. In brief, this catch-all term can refer to an inspired medium or any other individual with an enhanced or augmented perspective or understanding of a particular situation, who can provide a cipher for comprehending the divine message for other mortals.

communicate with men.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the importance of a qualified, insightful, and thus, probably inspired medium to divine the meaning 'behind the scenes' is implicitly indicated as the unmentioned solution to the problem Penelope describes. Appropriately, these two concerns apply to Penelope's own scene. It fosters ambiguity concerning both qualities because of the silence of the epic medium, the narrator. Because of his absence, the machine behind the dream is a mystery; the audience cannot confirm suspicions about the divine involvement in sending and bringing up the dream. Despite habit and thematic allusions suggesting in the narrative that it is Athena's machinations behind the dream, the audience does not know for sure, just as Penelope does not.

Penelope suddenly appears, to a circumspect audience, to be simultaneously correct and incorrect in her interpretation of the dream. The poet features her (and thus the epic's internal) critical commentary on divine-human communication in the midst of an uncharacteristic lack thereof (as compared to the rest of epic) and, in doing so, supports her trepidation. By all accounts, she is right to be wary of the dream's intentions and veracity. All the same, she has no special sight to see its origin and appears to choose incorrectly when deciding that the dream itself is false. At no point does Penelope claim that false dreams are any less divine than the true dreams. Convention maintains that all dreams in Homer are sent by the gods; the distinction determines whether they are true to the mortals or not. In all cases they are effective. The purpose for which they are sent is fulfilled even if the mortal is deceived in the process. This the audience usually knows because the narrator makes it known. In Penelope's dream's case, uncharacteristically, the audience does not know and instead must rely on patterns to assume.

¹³⁹ The very existence of the gate of ivory calls attention to the intentions behind false dreams.

The oddity of the dream's structure and delivery is made more outstanding by the fact that the fulfillment of its role— of delaying Penelope and Odysseus' reunion while expediting Odysseus' return— could have been easily accomplished without the narrative complications this exact dream creates. Penelope's confession of concern about Telemachos could have naturally led into her confiding about the contest of the bow for instance or, more natural yet, the narrator could have simply provided exposition for the scene. Other possibilities could easily be imagined.¹⁴⁰ Homeric habit of economy and narratological propensities lead me to believe that this purposeful reversal or abstention from norms is an authorial decision. This conscientious nonconformity suggests that the scene is created as a contrast to the pattern of divine machination that elicits plot-progressive acts, which are regularly illuminated by an informed mediating source. As a contrast, however, here the divine contributions are hidden by a purposefully uninformed mediating source. Again, despite indications implying her presence, Athena's involvement in Penelope's dream-scene and in the dream itself is left notably unclarified. Such a choice highlights Penelope's dream as an exception to the rule of presentation of divine machination in epic, which explicitly indicates the divine involvement to the audience via the narrator. Moreover, it zeroes in on the medium as the deciding factor in clarifying divine interaction— the narrator's absence creates the initial difficulty and the conflicting responses of Odysseus and Penelope point back to the issue.

Because at this point in the story the epic relies upon Penelope as the primary information source, the uncertainty of the scene is exacerbated. We, as an audience who knows the larger mythic pattern, expect that Odysseus is correct and the dream is, at least, retrospectively

¹⁴⁰ E.g. previewing the dream in narrator-text when it first occurs in the epic timeline, presenting it as Odysseus' dream with his characteristic narratorial attention at some point around Penelope's interview, using a different dream that is either formally more standard and simpler with narrative explanation or more simply, using one of Penelope's other proleptic moments for Odysseus' return (like Telemachos' sneeze).

accurate—the suitors will be slaughtered by Odysseus’ hand. But we must ask: why is Penelope wrong? She is right to be wary and her initial response is historically and symbolically well founded.¹⁴¹ She is wrong because her circumstances do not allow her to divine the machine behind the dream. So, we must then ask: why is she the chosen medium for the dream and why does it appear only to her? And further, why does it go out of its way to appear to her in the way it does, essentially doing its interpreter's job itself? The latter first, as it seems the most obvious: the dream interprets itself because it is purposefully sent to an unversed skeptic who would not arrive at the interpretation on her own. Furthermore, the delivery of the dream appears to have been engineered to actualize a specific effect—the contest of the bow. The dream was, thus, a moment of inspiration for plot advancement. And why Penelope? By stepping out of the scene, the narrator essentially appoints Penelope, who has already been a victim of obfuscation by Athena, as his stand-in and then proceeds to obfuscate every other perspective but Penelope’s. Forced to sludge through Penelope’s confused account of the dream, the audience now carefully attends to the medium of divine-human communication, and thereby, the poet may both highlight and problematize how gods and men communicate in epic and in the creation of epic. As we will see in the next chapter, the poet expands upon the crafted problematics of Penelope’s dream-scene with inter- and intra-textual connections in order to demonstrate that the medium’s role in bridging divine and mortal spheres of knowledge is far more influential and essential to epic than conventionally depicted.

¹⁴¹ As to be discussed in Ch. 2 through a comparison of Agamemnon’s Dream, *Iliad* 2.1-40 and Helen’s oinoiomanteia *Odyssey* 15.155-178.

CHAPTER TWO: PENELOPE THE PROPHETESS?

2.1 Dreams, Intertextuality, and Intratextuality

τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε περίφρων Πηνελόπεια·
ξεῖν', ἧ̃ τοι μὲν ὄνειροι ἀμήχανοι ἀκριτόμυθοι
γίγνοντ', οὐδέ τι πάντα τελείεται ἀνθρώποισι.
δοιαὶ γάρ τε πύλαι ἀμενηνῶν εἰσὶν ὀνείρων·
αἱ μὲν γὰρ κεράεσσι τετεύχεται, αἱ δ' ἐλέφαντι·
τῶν οἱ μὲν κ' ἔλθωσι διὰ πριστοῦ ἐλέφαντος,
οἳ ῥ' ἐλεφαίρονται, ἔπε' ἀκράαντα φέροντες·
οἱ δὲ διὰ ξεστῶν κεράων ἔλθωσι θύραζε,
οἳ ῥ' ἔτυμα κραίνουσι, βροτῶν ὅτε κέν τις
ἴδῃται.
ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν ὄϊομαι αἰνὸν ὄνειρον
ἐλθέμεν· ἧ̃ κ' ἀσπαστὸν ἐμοὶ καὶ παιδὶ γένοιτο.

And, in turn, thoughtful Penelope spoke to him:/ Stranger, truly, you know, dreams are inexplicable,/ indiscernible, and they do not really come to pass in all things for men./ For there are two gates of fleeting dreams: /those made from horns and those from ivory;/ those dreams that should pass through the gate of carved ivory,/ see, they are deceptive, bearing futile words;/ but those that should come out through the gates of polished horn,/ they do have sway over true things, whenever a mortal sees them./ But I do not think the grim dream came to me from there; truly, it would have been welcome for me and my son.

(*Odyssey* 19.559-569)

I have already asserted that, in the character of Penelope, the poet preserves an alternative vehicle for the mediation of the divine for mortals, and one that is expressly insufficient. In this chapter, I will argue that the stylistic inversions that are used in the performance of Penelope's dream are contrasted starkly by the insufficiency demonstrated in her scene, especially when compared to the normative styles of divine-human communication epitomized by the *Iliad's* elaborate Dream-scene in Book 2. Those inversions, in turn, refocus the events of the story through a mortal perspective. Furthermore, I will assert that Penelope's scene is directly juxtaposed to Helen's omen-based prophecy-scene in Book 15, in order to highlight the particular qualities that Penelope either lacks or fails to enact as she takes on the role of prophetess in the *Odyssey* poet's human-focalized version of events. Finally, I will demonstrate how the poet uses these inter- and intra-textual juxtapositions in Penelope's dream-scene to outline a narrative of inversion, in which the convention of the medium is being redefined by the poet for epic audiences through a demonstration of imperfect exempla. With Penelope, I believe,

the poet is trying to reshape the conceptions and conventions of the role of “The Poet” as an essential creative participant in proper epic *poesis*.

From the analysis of Chapter One, we know that the divine is excised, at least on the surface, from the story-level of Penelope's dream-scene. Athena almost vanishes and Penelope is made the epicenter of the scene. The absence of the divine extends beyond the character level, however. The narrator's absence from her dream-scene also deepens this sense of a vacuum and extends its effects to a performative level. *Poesis*, and indeed, any kind of divine-human communication that effects information transfer, is characterized stylistically, in and through Homeric epic, chiefly through a divine perspective-bias, with the agency of its human contributor largely subsumed and deemphasized.¹ Therefore, by channeling the action almost exclusively through the speech of the characters, the poet has circumvented the normative, traditional style for narrating the communication between gods and men in favor of innovating another.² In place of epic knowledge flowing from the Muses and along their predetermined channels of plot-progression, the poet has subverted this flow of information and opened its source much further down the line, in the mortal stage of narration. As a result, the audience hears first and foremost the mortal perspective on the message and experiences with intense immediacy the importance of the contribution of that mortal medium.

When the poet inverts these two conventions of divine-human communication to de-emphasize the divine role and foreground the human contribution, I assert he does so in direct dialogue with tradition and his own text. Indeed, I propose that the *Odyssey* as we have it is a

¹ See Ford 1992 for his analysis of Homeric *poesis*. Concerning the priorities of the contributors to the performance referred to here, see in particular pg. 6, and then, for more detail pgs. 91-92.

² See Chapter One for the full discussion of the scene's circumvention of divine-human communication norms. For the impetus behind innovation in *poesis*, see Ford 1992 93 ff.; Martin 1989 xiv ff., 65-69, and 77-82; Nagy 1999, 27-8.

concretized version of a performance constructed in response to the pressures of cultural and social convention, wherein the performer answers the demands for tradition and innovation by questioning tradition and prioritizing innovation.³ In my reading, the poet, by adapting a traditional tale of fantasy and wonder to the innovative realism of a human domestic drama, has reimagined the story of Odysseus' *nostos* through a mortal perspective-bias.⁴ As a result, modern audiences read a version that relies not only on narrative omniscience to celebrate its contributors, but also on the ingenuity and unique point of view of the individual mortals who frame and embody the story, characters and creators alike. I assert that the poet of our *Odyssey* was innovative with his text in a number of ways, among them creating a place to demand that his role in the epic performance be acknowledged and honored as well.

Unlike the *Odyssey*'s more obvious and celebrated innovations to epic narrative style, the changes the poet makes in Book 19 do not result in a capable, idealized—one might even say 'heroic'—character-representative of the narrator of the likes of Odysseus, the story-teller, from Books 8-12.⁵ How, then, does the lack of the narrator's presence in Penelope's dream-scene translate to a performer re-insinuating himself into his art? Admittedly, it is difficult to see the poet's innovative effect within a scene that is fashioned to systematically remove his most explicit role. However, traditional Homeric conventions of poetic performance do not limit the

³ Pedrick 1992 "The Muse Corrects: The Opening of the *Odyssey*" begins this discussion of innovation and traditional constraints and has guided, through the reflection on the poem's proem, much of my approach to the poet as a creator in socially constrained performance context.

⁴ Redfield, James M. 2009. "The Economic Man." In *Homer's Odyssey*, edited by Lillian E. Doherty, 265-287. New York: Oxford University Press. Here, Redfield demonstrates the post-heroic qualities of the *Odyssey* and, in doing so, begins by creating a contrast—pertinent for my discussion—between the two Homeric epics, one contrast of which points out the differences in the presence of the gods: pgs. 266-268. Clay 1983, 184 shares this observation. See also Hansen, William. 1997. "Homer and the Folktale." In *A New Companion to Homer*, edited by Ian Morris and Barry B. Powell, 442-462. New York: Brill, which provides an alternative analysis for the distancing of the "fabulous" from the epic's prevailing "realism and natural causation."

⁵ Martin 1989; Segal 1994 also comprehensively treats the dynamic between the figure of the hero and the poet/bard. See in particular pgs. 158-162. Beck, Deborah. 2005. "Odysseus: Narrator, Storyteller, Poet?" *Classical Philology* 100, no. 3: 213-227 also specifically treats the concept of Odysseus in relation to the poet, with a supporting narratological bibliography.

poet's influence to the role of the narrator's voice and, in exploitation of this often-under-emphasized fact, the poet is able to construct a subversive commentary on his role by manipulating these other, less explicit avenues of poetic influence at his disposal. Indeed, the poet's influence is not limited to the role of performing the character of narrator, but rather, is actuated in the conceptual process of crafting the poem's narrative.⁶ Thanks to the conventional logic of epic inspiration, the poet is conceived of as receiving the story, already focalized into a linear series of plot points, from the Muses and as being then entrusted with the task of narrating these plot points into a cohesive and demonstrative text for his audience.⁷ This task of the poet's, of giving the immortal information a mortal voice, is most often and obviously articulated in the performance of the demi-character of the narrator.⁸ The poet is performing a role in providing an omniscient, expository voice throughout the narrator-text and, in this actualization of the story through diegesis (as opposed to mimesis), he is most frequently and customarily conceived of as operating with his particular brand of creative agency.⁹ The narrator's objective contributions, by and large, represent the poet's role in *poesis*.

The poet, however, has at his disposal a subtler method for crafting the text of his tale in his own, individual manner and this method is oftentimes overlooked because it is apparent principally through observations of negative space or absence, as it were, of normative motifs, tropes and perspectives that are meticulously suppressed in particular scenes.¹⁰ By creating a text

⁶ See Ford 1994, esp. pgs. 70-71 for the selective process the poet undertakes in singing; Scodel 2004, "The Story-teller and His Audience" treats broadly the poet's role as a story-teller with an audience and provides a good starting bibliography.

⁷ For my treatment on inspired mediation, see the Introduction; for the adapted methodologies there used see de Jong 1987, 31 ff. and Murray 1981.

⁸ De Jong, 45 ff.; Richardson 1990.

⁹ Classical theories on story-telling preserve this binary of diegesis and mimesis: Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics*. De Jong has undertaken the critical work of summarizing and evaluating their theories in *N&F* 1987, 1-8. See also Nagy 1996.

¹⁰ Saïd 2011, 95-131 provides an additional treatment to the tools at the narrator's disposal. Or, again: Ford 1992; Scodel 2004.

that excludes and obfuscates typical epic mechanisms of narrative, the poet may craft a set piece that forces the audience to reassess not only the story and its characters from a different angle, but also the underlying operating principle of that story and its medium for expression. In this way, his role expands from bridging the cognitive spaces of men and the gods to inviting a reconsideration of the interactions traditionally conceived of as happening between both parties and of the contributions both provide in the process of divine-human communication. The journey towards successfully constructing this subversive commentary is a long one, however, and involves negotiating a number of hurdles in the shape of culturally enforced conventions and preconceptions, not to mention the restrictions of a public performance and of an officially sanctioned art form.¹¹

Nevertheless, the text of the *Odyssey* as we have it contains the breadcrumb trail of a reworking of its narrative paths that implicitly, allusively, and associatively directs the audience towards reconsidering the contribution of human mediums of the divine, not by telling them in so many words but by deictic depictions, parallels, and foils of traditional, inspired divinatory moments. Chapter One has already dissected the diligent re-working of Penelope's dream-scene that was undertaken to ensure that it is the queen's perspective that the audience must employ and through which they experience the divine foreshadowing. The task was an intensive one, however; the poet's adjustments and allusions stretch out further than the immediate context of Book 19. Indeed, the consequences of Penelope's dream-scene result from a larger set of conventions and epic moments, which include a specifically crafted, paired scene within the *Odyssey*, as well as the precedent for Homeric *poesis*, the *Iliad*. By systematically removing Athena from Penelope's dream-scene, the poet has not simply focused on the human medium but

¹¹ See in particular Bakker 1993, Ford 1992, Martin 1989 and 2005, Nagy 1996, and Seaford 1994 for the Homeric performance.

rather has subverted a systemic and defining preconception of the operating principle of inspired *poesis*—the ubiquitous preference for the divine narrative-bias over the mortal in Homeric epic.¹² From the very start, due to the sequential hierarchy of information-flow that inspiration involves, Homeric story-telling—as well as Homeric prophecy—is predisposed by its focalization to develop naturally a perspective on events that is inherently biased towards the divine point of view.¹³ That is, Homeric epic's neutral, basic state communicates its tale as it is witnessed and conceptualized by the gods. Homeric narrative is actualized dominantly through a divine perspective-bias, a convention that is subverted wholesale in Penelope's dream-scene.¹⁴

While divine revelation—a moment when the gods share information otherwise unavailable to men—is by no means 'common' in Homeric epic, the gods do communicate with humans enough to demonstrate a pattern structuring these scenes.¹⁵ Habitually, the poet narrates the full spectrum of the event via the divine focalization, particularly in the *Iliad*. Audiences presumably have been exposed to the full range of effects of the divine perspective-bias through the performance of what is possibly the most extensive and demonstrative Homeric dream-scene still extant—the Dream sent to Agamemnon in Book 2 of the *Iliad*. It is well established that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* co-existed as performance traditions, and also communicated through a

¹² Clay 1983, Ford 1992, Lovatt 2013, Myers 2011 all include treatments of the primacy of the gods in the epic and in epic story-telling. See also Feeney 1991 50 ff. for a critical reflection on the gods in epic.

¹³ For scholarly contributions to epic inspiration theories see: Sperduti 1950, Barmeyer 1968, Vernant 1985, Murray 1981, and Detienne 1994. Ford 1992 also summarizes the Muses' role concisely in his Introduction pgs. 6 and 7. Additionally, de Jong provides a commentary on the Muses and focalization in 1987, 45-53.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the epic genre's predisposition towards the divine perspective-bias, please see the Introduction I.3.

¹⁵ Duffy 1937 provides a catalogue of the gods and their deeds in both Homeric epics and Tsagarakis 1977 expands upon this effort. Kearns 2004 condenses these studies into a summary of the gods (see esp. pages 63-69). See also Saïd 2011, 319-344.

language of imitation and exclusion; indeed, when set beside the *Iliad*'s (in)famous set piece of *oneiromancy*, the narrative decisions executed in Penelope's dream-scene are set in high-relief.¹⁶

2.2 Divine Perspective-Bias Exemplified in *Iliad* 2

ὦς ἄρα φωνήσας ἀπεβήσετο, τὸν δὲ λίπ' αὐτοῦ
τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἅ ρ' οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον·
φῆ γὰρ ὅ γ' αἰρήσειν Πριάμου πόλιν ἤματι κείνῳ
νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὰ ἤδη ἅ ρα Ζεὺς μήδετο ἔργα·
θήσειν γὰρ ἔτ' ἔμελλεν ἐπ' ἄλγεά τε στοναχάς τε
Τρωσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι διὰ κρατερὰς ὑσμίνας.

Then, having spoken, Dream departed and left Agamemnon there,
mulling over in his mind things that were not destined to come to pass;
for he supposed that he would sack the city of Priam that day,
dupe, he had no idea the things that Zeus really had in mind;
for he still intended to set upon both the Trojans and the Greeks
griefs and groans through mighty battles.

(*Iliad* 2.35-40)

The Dream that is visited upon Agamemnon near the start of the second book of the *Iliad* represents concisely and definitively the power dynamic inherent to scenes of divine-human communication. In the manner that Dream is shown to expertly dupe the king, the audience is bluntly reminded of the disparate and subordinated capacities for control that are available to each party, a hierarchical relationship which hinges upon the cognitive divide between gods and men.¹⁷ This imparity between the divine and the mortal is a familiar and genre-endorsed tenet of inspired *poesis*, which is enhanced and almost institutionalized in the medium by the epic preference for a divine perspective-bias in the presentation and realization of the narrative.¹⁸

¹⁶ For the interaction of the two Homeric epics, see Pucci 1987; Bakker 2001, Danek 2002, Foley 1991, and Nagy 1979, also Burkert 2001, 40; Ford 1992, 92 and 128-129;

¹⁷ Clay 1983, 16 cites *Iliad* 5.127-8 as the prime example of this difference. Athena lifts the mist from Diomedes' eyes, allowing him to recognize gods and men. See further pgs. 148 ff. On the differences in mental processes: bT-scholia on *Iliad* 4.4; cited by Myers 2011, 4 specifically discussing the differences in divine and mortal perspectives on events, with divine judgment being completely distinct from men's. The difference extends even to language; see Ford 1992, 174 ff. for a discussion of the poetic stylization of this concept.

¹⁸ See Maurizio 1995, 69-86; Ford, *ibid.* again for the performative effect this has in epic. Also, see Nagy 1996, 61.

Through the process of detailing to its fullest extent Zeus's expert manipulation of Agamemnon, the dream-scene of Book 2 systematically makes the hierarchy of knowledge and power among gods and men a reality for the text and exercises this hierarchy upon its audience in its very performance. As a result, by enacting the divinely focalized steps of cause and effect behind Book 2's Dream sequence, the poet illustrates all the insights available to a tale told through a divine perspective-bias. In other words, by purposefully expositing the gods' power over mankind, Agamemnon's dream-scene exhibits clearly and explicatively all the circumstances and components involved traditionally in the gods' interventions on the mortal plane, including the motivations, maneuvers, and outcomes involved with such a god-sent Dream.¹⁹

In Zeus's Baneful Dream for Agamemnon, moreover, the systemic principle that superior divine knowledge holds sway over the lives of men is not only demonstratively illustrated, but it is exploited to further the narrative's varied goals. As a cog in the narrative machine, Agamemnon's Dream-scene epitomizes the epic agenda and definitively indicates who actualizes that agenda; that is, the scene, like the epic, is first and foremost a divine production.²⁰ The gods write the script, as it were, and they act as the directors of each scene on the textual and the story level, whereas the men are mere actors following directions and realizing a role to the best of their ability. And, as in a stage production, not every actor knows or understands the motivations contributing to their scene; they simply act according to the insight provided them from the production team, from the writers and directors. It is the foremost narratological goal, therefore, in this *ekphrasis* of divine 'directorial' influence, to demonstrate that Zeus is the character in

¹⁹ De Jong 1987, 101 ff.

²⁰ See Clay 1983, 135-136 for reflection on the divine machinery; again, see de Jong 1987, 45 ff. concerning "the fiction" of the narrator's reliance on the Muses characterizing the performance of the poet.

control who orchestrates events, while Agamemnon is a hapless puppet.²¹ This representation, then, mirrors the operational reality of epic wherein the gods direct the epic down its story path and the men narrating the tale simply conduct the text along those paths set out for them.²² As we will soon see, it is precisely the framing and expositional options, which are made available because of the divine perspective-bias and which are so extensively exercised and exemplified in Agamemnon's dream-scene, that Penelope's dream-scene inverts or circumvents in the process of narrativizing her dream.

The poet lays the groundwork for the pervasiveness of divine influence most simply by attributing causality to the gods early and often, most notably in the presentation of the story; in the particular consecutive depiction of events that the *Iliad* performs, the gods are positioned as the subjects and agents of the events from the beginning.²³ Consequently, the effects of the gods' role continue to resonate throughout the plot in the chain of cause and effect between actions and reactions of other characters. In the linear narration of Agamemnon's dream-scene, Zeus is presented first as the subject of the scene and the poet introduces the audience to the next story development through Zeus' perspective on the situation.

ἄλλοι μὲν ῥά θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες ἵπποκορυσταὶ
 εὖδον παννύχιοι, Δία δ' οὐκ ἔχε νήδυμος ὕπνος,
 ἀλλ' ὄγε μερμήριζε κατὰ φρένα ὡς Ἀχιλλῆα
τιμήση, ὀλέση δὲ πολέας ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
 ἦδε δὲ **οἱ** κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη **φαίνετο βουλή,**
 πέμψαι ἐπ' Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι οὖλον ὄνειρον.

So, the other gods and chariot-driving men
 Were sleeping the whole night through, but sweet sleeps **was not holding Zeus,**
 But **he,** though, **was mulling it over** in his mind how he **might honor**

²¹ On narratorial motivation, see de Jong 2001, xvi; on this moment as explicit embedded focalization, see de Jong 1987, 113-114 n. 38. See Clay 1999 "The Whip and Will of Zeus" for more on the poem-wide orchestration by Zeus.

²² Pedrick 1992, esp. 43.

²³ E.g. Apollo's influence over the start of the epic at 1.9 ff. and later Athena's intervention at 1.197 ff. Todorov 1971; Sternberg 1992; also, de Jong 1987, 81-90.

Achilles, and **destroy** many beside the ships of the Achaians.
And this following plan **seemed** best to him in his mind,
To send to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a baneful dream.²⁴ (*Iliad* 2.1-6)

By beginning with Zeus's participation in the event, the poet orients his audience to see the logical origination for the plot point in Zeus's participation and, furthermore, to conceptualize the developments according to their purpose for the divine sphere and not the mortal. What comes first is felt as the most significance and, with this simple narrative starting point dependent upon the divine perspective, Zeus is made the originator and responsible party for the dream and all the repercussions it will have throughout time.²⁵ Moreover, the pervasive influence of the divine parties in the dream-scene is reinforced through the unabridged, step-by-step exposition of Dream's creation, deployment, and consequences.

The narrative follows Zeus as he conceives of Dream's task and then commands Dream to his task. The narrative focus then shifts to divine Dream; and, only upon Dream's absolute completion of his task, does the camera, so to speak, shift onto the mortal sphere and Agamemnon.²⁶ If narrative sequence illustrates the chain of agency, then the epic has effectively depicted the gods as agents in charge and the humans under their sway as secondary agents, or

²⁴ Mentioned first as the sole object among gods and men not held by sleep, in the third line, Zeus is redirected to be the subject of the three verbs that follow, and then, is represented by a dative of reference as the subjective agent for the passive action that the nominative takes φαίνετο, which represents the plan's formation. Notably, the βουλή seems best to Zeus, is framed by the poet to be depicted first literally through Zeus's explicit perspective. Again, see de Jong 1987, 112-115 and accompanying note 38 (pg. 269).

²⁵ As seen above, Zeus is the first character named in the scene and the first given active agency. Kirk 1985 115-116 notes the presentation of Zeus's action as authoritative, but does not address the subject-object chain in this scene that only enforces Zeus's "tactics" as "a supreme god."

²⁶ In line 2.6, the narrator first marks Dream as the object of Zeus's action and he remains an object in line 7 when Zeus addresses him. Following Zeus's character-text speech in lines 8-15, the narrator then changes their subject-object dynamic creating two clauses where Zeus and Dream can both occupy the nominative, subject position: "ὡς φάτο, βῆ δ' ἄρ' ὄνειρος ἐπεὶ τὸν μῦθον ἄκουσε" thus transferring the focus of the narration and the focalization from Zeus onto Dream. From 2.16-36, Dream is either the subject of the narrator-text and, thus, the focus of the diegesis, or he is the internal narrator-focalizer, providing the character-text of the reported speech from Zeus. Lines 35-36, "ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας ἀπεβήσεται, τὸν δὲ λίπ' αὐτοῦ/ τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνά θυμὸν ἅ ρ' οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον" leaves Dream as the subject while allowing Agamemnon some verbal action through an accusative participle. He is not yet, however, a proper subject, particularly in the way the narrator describes him performing a futile action: considering things that were not destined to come to pass.

even objects of the gods' actions according to, or perhaps capitalizing upon, the tendency of a divine perspective-bias. The poet does not demonstrate causality solely through the scene's focal sequence, but also through the syntax of the lines describing Zeus's authorship of the episode. The poet is particularly careful, in this episode, about creating a successive chain of nominative subjects who act upon non-nominative objects, of agents and recipients of actions.²⁷ Those recipients, then, become the agents themselves and act upon other objects, but still effect the initial action of the first subject. Moreover, the rest of the sequence is framed by the phrasing of the lines, in which Zeus conceives of his plan, to align to the fulfillment of that plan. By using a purpose clause in the lines causally linked by linear sequencing to the conception of Zeus's plan, every plot point that follows is designed to elicit the two effects named as intentions in that purpose clause—"that he honor Achilles and bring ruin upon many besides the ships of the Achaeans."²⁸ Due to the poem's divine perspective-bias and its influence on depictions of causality, the audience is immediately and explicitly predisposed to view the story, from here on out, principally as an enactment of Zeus's decision, the causation of which is dependent upon his will.

Furthermore, due to the divine perspective-bias's insight into Zeus's unspoken thought-processes, in a moment of prophetic description, the epic indirectly reveals the primary and defining quality with which Zeus initially conceives of Dream and his task—Dream is baneful, destructive, οὔλον, from the same root as the verb of the purpose clause two lines before,

²⁷ Lines 37-38: φῆ γὰρ ὃ γ' αἰρήσειν Πριάμου πόλιν ἤματι κείνῳ/ νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὰ ἤδη ἄρα Ζεὺς μήδετο ἔργα. Again, Agamemnon's subjectivity is employed to describe futile action or negated action. The narrator then reverts to Zeus as subject for the prolepsis. See de Jong 1987, 61 ff. on the presentation through negation, including the note on this line, as well as 86-87 on νήπιος and this internal prolepsis.

²⁸ Lines 3-4, ...ὡς Ἀχιλῆα/ τιμήσει, ὀλέσει δὲ πολέας ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν. This could also be read as an object clause of effort. See de Jong 1987, 111-114 for final clause narratological effects.

ὀλέση.²⁹ Dream will incite destruction and has been employed by Zeus to implement Achilles' wrath. Thus, by embedding the perspectivization of events through Zeus's mindset, the poet is able to demonstrate a correlation between Zeus's goal and action simply and efficiently, all thanks to the narrative expediency of the divine perspective-bias. This descriptive immediacy is preserved along the chain of agents in the dream-scene, allowing the audience a window into the motives and reasoning behind Dream's individual actions, as well as Agamemnon's internal processes upon having this dream.³⁰

Thus, the exposition of the enactment of Zeus's will continues along its line of agents and objects uninterrupted. In fact, the realization of Zeus's will is so detailed throughout its contributing stages that the poet is able to juxtapose directly the formative thought, Zeus's initial decision, and resulting reality, Dream's role and Agamemnon's reaction.³¹ Rather than demonstrating how Zeus's commands were undermined in the process of enactment, as such a juxtaposition might otherwise highlight, this contrast actually reveals more about the gods' attitude toward dreams in the effectiveness through which Dream carries out Zeus's command despite going slightly 'off-script'. The fact that the poet shows Dream's communication of Zeus's command is a narrative choice, and not merely a decision to reiterate the message that Zeus wished to be communicated.³² The extended scene allows Zeus's words to be brought into reality, to be manifestly made a speech-act, as well as allowing the poet to illustrate certain implicit qualities of a god-sent dream that Zeus did not verbalize. Not even through the use of

²⁹ Line 6; LSJ and Autenrieth cite the alternative uncontracted form ὀλοός which reflects ὀλλυμι; see also *The Greek Etymological Dictionary* entry on οἶλος. See also de Jong 1987, 136-148 for the inclusion evaluative words like 'destructive' in the narrator-text.

³⁰ Line 37's φῆ marks the beginning of explicit embedded focalization of the thoughts/emotion variety (de Jong 1987, 110). His embedded focalization resumes in line 41 according to de Jong's (ibid., 212) interpretation of the scene.

³¹ The whole dream sequence proceeds from 2.1-41 and precipitates directly its purpose. The next lines, 42-51, details Agamemnon instigating the meeting of the Greek leaders that will put them back into battle.

³² On repeated messenger-speeches, see de Jong 1987, 180-185 and 282 n. 79.

Zeus's embedded focalization on Dream's task does the audience hear that Dream is meant to manipulate Agamemnon, and to manipulate him in a detrimental manner, nor does Zeus command Dream as such. He delivers a command that, in its capacity as divine decree, will result in the manipulation of Agamemnon, which is implicitly understood simply because he addresses Dream as Baneful and because of the false future that the message promises.³³ When the narrator preserves Dream's role with his embedded focalization, in its apparent entirety, the poet then further demonstrates, again implicitly, the understanding between these gods that this dream-message is meant to be misleading and manipulative.³⁴

Baneful Dream exercises this assumption, in direct opposition to Zeus's command that he pronounce his message exactly as he spoke it, by extemporaneously adding onto his role.³⁵ This improvisation does not undermine the intention behind Zeus's will, however, as demonstrated by additional information provided by the narrator through Dream's embedded focalization and character-text.³⁶ Instead, Baneful Dream is presented point by point to the audience as perfectly performing the criteria of an oracle dream, as later Greeks would come to conceive of the dream-type, the message dream, the dream format most endowed with legitimacy as a true revelation from the gods.³⁷ Embedded focalization reveals that Dream took the shape of Nestor for this dream-message because he was, as a trusted advisor, the optimal choice for Agamemnon to

³³ Line 8: οὐλε ὄνειρε; lines 12-15: ... νῦν γάρ κεν ἔλοι πόλιν εὐρυάγυιαν/ Τρώων· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἀμφὶς Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες/ ἀθάνατοι φράζονται· ἐπέγναμψεν γὰρ ἅπαντας/ Ἥρη λισσομένη, Τρώεσσι δὲ κήδε' ἐφήπται.

³⁴ 2.17-22: καρπαλίμως δ' ἴκανε θοᾶς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,/ βῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα· τὸν δὲ κίχανεν/ εὔδοντ' ἐν κλισίῃ, περὶ δ' ἀμβρόσιος κέχυθ' ὕπνος./ **στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς Νηληϊΐφ υἱὸς εὐκόως/ Νέστορι, τὸν ῥα μάλιστα γερόντων τῷ Ἀγαμέμνων·** τῷ μιν εἰσιάμενος προσεφώνεε θεῖος ὄνειρος.

³⁵ Zeus's command: πάντα μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορευέμεν ὡς ἐπιτέλλω (line 10); Dream's additions: εὔδεις Ἀτρέος υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἵπποδάμοιο·/ οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εὔδειν βουλευφόρον ἄνδρα/ 25ῶ λαοὶ τ' ἐπιτετράφαται καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε·/ νῦν δ' ἐμέθεν ξύνες ὄκα· Διὸς δέ τοι ἄγγελός εἰμι,/ ὃς σεῦ ἀνευθεν ἐὼν μέγα κήδετα ἦδ' ἐλαίρει (23-27) and ἐκ Διός· ἀλλὰ σὺ σῆσιν ἔχε φρεσί, μηδέ σε λήθη/ αἰρείτω εὗτ' ἂν σε μελίφρων ὕπνος ἀνήη (33-34).

³⁶ De Jong 1987, 211: "Narrating implies focalizing and it will be seen how the reporting characters select, interpret and evaluate the events presented by the NF₁." Further, "[t]he function of the relative clause is to explain to the NeFe₁ [the external audience] why the Dream chose this particular mask [Nestor]."

³⁷ Dodds 1951, 104-106 and Oppenheim 1956, 186-206 and 1966, 347-348.

receive this message. The additional pieces of Dream's messenger-speech dialogue contribute the following criteria of an oracle dream: that such a message appear to a person of power in a crisis, that it identify itself as a divine messenger, and that it impel the dreamer with a sense of urgency.³⁸ Thus, the poet has communicated to his audience that Zeus's Dream for Agamemnon is an explicitly exploitative tool that operates by manipulating the human actors precisely through a perversion of human conceptions of *oneiromancy*.

Furthermore, in case the audience did not pick up on the divinatory tropes abused in Dream's portion of the episode, the narrator, when he turns the focus onto Agamemnon and his reaction to the dream, maintains the divinely focalized perspective on the moment in order to reveal Agamemnon's internal thoughts. In fact, the poet explicitly declares the effectiveness of the abuse, his authorial voice ringing in with an inarguably divine bias as he mocks Agamemnon for falling for Zeus's trick.³⁹ Despite the fact that, from this moment on, it will be Agamemnon who actualizes events, the narrator takes one final moment to frame the occurrence as a divine creation, as a result of the gods' will and actions, and as a piece of the divine agenda, all of which are aspects of the epic that illustrate the narrative preference for a divine perspective-bias.

Embedded focalizations do not indicate to the audience how to understand events; they are not used here to declare that Zeus sends Dream to manipulate Agamemnon into executing the god's will. Rather, they explicitly spell out the events and all their attendant circumstances, which weaves a tapestry of causality and agency, as in this scene's case when the poem details why and how Zeus decided to impel the Greeks back into battle.⁴⁰ By proceeding from internal

³⁸ Line 21 for the dream-messenger's personal connection to the dreamer, lines 24-25 for the dreamer's position of power and community in crisis, line 26 for the messenger's identity and sense of urgency. Lines 33-34 also add urgency and import to the message.

³⁹ Lines 35-40.

⁴⁰ De Jong 1987, 146-148.

indirect focalization into external direct focalization, concept into reality, diegesis into mimesis, the poet is able to translate, before the audience's 'eyes,' the characters' internal realities and conceptions of events into the enactment of that event. This transformation in turn reveals the contrasts, conflicts, and gaps between motive and action, and it thereby encompasses all of reality, simply because the narrator-text is framed with a divine perspective-bias. The Baneful Dream sequence of *Iliad* 2 is the entire event, or is engineered to seem like the event in its entirety that is explicitly a divine creation, as opposed to the sliver, a single facet of the event that Penelope's dream-scene encapsulates. This can be seen in the contrast between the breadth of narrator expression in Agamemnon's dream-scene—which can include an apostrophe to Agamemnon that, in reality, is speaking directly to the audience and revealing the truth of the moment—versus Penelope's dream-scene, which is so bone-bare of exposition that the audience is made to overlook that the narrator is even involved in the scene as he blends into the background, consumed primarily by the mimetic performance of his dramatic characters, whose character-text assumes the role of focalization and narration.

A divinely biased narrative can see all, know all, and tell all. It allows for a smooth and seamless progression through its plot, while also allowing that narrative to be as extensive and inclusive as the poet should wish it to be. The concession that the poet must make when using the divine perspective-bias is the demonstration of their own creative participation in the act of *poesis*.⁴¹ Their tale is thorough and legitimate because it is told through the lens of a divine eye-witness, but the authorship, and therefore glory, for that story-craft is awarded primarily to the

⁴¹ Moments of exceptionalness require an additional invocation of the Muses; the proem of the *Odyssey* explicitly creates a contrast between poet and narrator. It is inherent to the epic performance, it seems, that the poet *performs* his inferiority through conceding his voice. I am diverging, here, from de Jong when she asserts the human factor is not overshadowed by the divine (1987, 52) and aligning instead with Pedrick's view of the poet's performance of his relationship with the Muses (1992).

gods, while the mortal role is obfuscated both in story events and in the narrative process.⁴² This is shown to be true in the utter dominance of Zeus and Baneful Dream over Agamemnon to the extent that any autonomous human contribution to the beginning of *Iliad 2* feels mostly absent. In fact, even when the narrator speaks in his own voice, the interjection is delivered in a voice that is so clearly biased to the gods' point of view that it sounds not like the human poet's 'authorial voice' but rather a derisive comment by a divine spectator.⁴³ All of these qualities of the divine perspective-bias are inverted in Penelope's scene and, as a result, the compromises of that narrative direction are the exact inverse as well. In light of *Iliad 2*'s explicit and uncomplicated representation of the process of gods communicating with men, I assert that the poet of our *Odyssey* is responding to this scene's paradigm, if not the scene itself, when he inverts the standard narrative representation of a dream-message in Book 19.

Penelope is not the last component of her dream-scene like Agamemnon, nor is she relegated to the end of a chain of action and reaction as the object of a god's plotting, at least not according to *Odyssey 19*'s narrative. The audience does not understand her first as object; they must, instead, experience the events through her as subject.⁴⁴ By framing the dream's revelation through Penelope's presentation of it alone, the poet flips the perspective on the event and positions the audience to understand its existence, motivations, and effects from the point at which it begins to have its effect on the mortal plane, and to look 'backwards', as it were, conjecturing through inference alone on the formative components and steps taken to bring it into reality.⁴⁵ In contrast to the mortal contributions, the divine contributions to Penelope's dream

⁴² Ford 1992, 36-39.

⁴³ As found in the proems before the Muses intervene. Ford 1992, 25-28; Pedrick 1992, 40 ff.

⁴⁴ See Chapter One, Penelope as the primary narrator for her interview with beggar-Odysseus.

⁴⁵ The divine contribution is obfuscated, as seen in Chapter One, and what would have been discussed in embedded focalizations by the narrator-text can only be expressed implicitly through Penelope's focalization and narration in her character-text.

are sublimated and the divine perspective-bias, along with all its narrative advantages, is replaced by an exposition on the dream that is dictated by the dreamer, by Penelope.

Consequently, because the brunt of the narrative falls upon the character-text, the narrator appears to be largely absent from Penelope's dream-scene. This, however, is not the case; the narrator is just as influential in Penelope's dream-scene as in Agamemnon's dream-scene, but not as overtly. The narrator role has turned away from performing an explicatory text to crafting the text through a more passive technique of exclusion, of excising the divine role from the scene and reshaping the episode in order to highlight the mortal contributions, perceptions, and effects.⁴⁶

Consequently, the narrator-text for Penelope's dream-scene is employed principally as a vehicle of the fabula, the character speeches, which are stripped of the divine Muses' focalization on the events. Whatever causality lies behind the dream is relegated to the imperfect knowledge communicated in character-text, or merely is implied by the associative logical trail that Penelope follows as she broaches the topic of the dream.⁴⁷ The audience is entirely excluded from the omniscience of the narrator-text's explanation. Furthermore, character-text includes no embedded focalizations.⁴⁸ Any and all internal mental processes undertaken by the characters, which lead up to their decisions and actions, must be verbalized into character dialogue in order for the narrative to preserve them. Finally, the poem provides no reiterative or juxtapositional sequencing in Penelope's dream-scene of the likes that the *Iliad's* audience enjoys in Book 2's explicit dream-scene.⁴⁹ Instead, the re-telling of the revelatory dream is condensed into one

⁴⁶ De Jong 1987, 45.

⁴⁷ See Chapter One.

⁴⁸ De Jong 1987, 149.

⁴⁹ See Chapter One; Penelope's character-text stands alone without discursive narrator-text to contextualize it.

single narrative moment and the internal audiences' responses, preserved in character-text, to that dream's communication.

In place of a third person, all-knowing intermediary between characters and audience, the poet mimetically becomes the characters and allows Penelope and Odysseus to become the poet, bringing to life the poem with their voices, describing things that advance the plot, predicting things to come, and focalizing their reality for the audience, but all through the incomplete, restricted perspective of a mortal observer.⁵⁰ As a result, Penelope's dream, which ends up being—or we must assume to be—a moment of divine communication, is mediated imperfectly. In other words, Penelope's dream-scene somehow constitutes a moment of too pure revelation. Her fabula, the character-text, is left untranslated to a degree, un-decoded by an omniscient translator equipped to provide context and explanations, and thus, its significance is abandoned to chance.⁵¹ The epic norm, the divine perspective-bias, has been functionally abandoned in this scene and methodically replaced by a human perspective-bias, with everything framed in a kind of mortal realism, according to how any eyewitness to the drama would have understood the event to occur.

Had the *Odyssey* dream-sequence been made to retain the divine perspective-bias of Agamemnon's 'lucid' dream, it would have looked substantially different. This retention would have been a simple narrative option; Penelope's dream-scene performs a narrative function analogous to the purpose of Agamemnon's dream-scene—creating plot progression in the midst of character inertia by means of mortal manipulation. It could have easily imitated the *locus classicus* of deceptive dreams. However, as a result of the character-text domination, the formal

⁵⁰ See Nagy 1996, 4 and 39-58 for terminology and further repercussions of this depiction. See again de Jong 1987, 149 for restricted narration available in character-text.

⁵¹ Character-text as fabula: de Jong 1987, 192-194.

similarities between the two scenes are obfuscated behind the diametrically opposed receptive situations of the audience. If Penelope's dream-scene had been divinely focalized, focus would have been shifted away from the intimate conversation between husband and unknowing wife, and the narrative would have instead featured a complex serial of cause and effect leading up to Odysseus' arrival in the hall. The audience would have seen presumably Athena—though perhaps another god—make the decision to send the dream to Penelope, and then the many steps of enactment of that dream. Penelope's re-telling of it would, then, serve a purpose akin to what Agamemnon's does for the *Iliad's* audience—as evidence that the mortal was manipulated to enact the divine plans—and would not exist as the singular, mortal-focused narration of the dream found in the *Odyssey*. Penelope's scene essentially inverts the external execution of a Homeric dream sequence into a series of signs and patterns to be decoded in place of explicit focalization of the divine involvement, apparently, precisely to sidestep the divine involvement as a centerpiece of the narrative at this moment.

As noted in Chapter One, the sacrifice of the divine perspective-bias—and indeed the divine influence to any explicit and assured degree in this scene—is made at great cost to narrative simplicity and clarity. However, it also aligns with thematic and stylistic patterns exhibited throughout the *Odyssey*, conforming to a poem-wide preference for mortal participation in events that happen on Earth.⁵² Those few scenes do exist that occur on the divine plane, such as divine councils, and will foretell the future to a degree, as in the case of the first council of the epic.⁵³ However, the poet employs them more infrequently than their Iliadic counterparts and the embedded focalization that they utilize is less detailed.⁵⁴

⁵² Clay 1983, 184; Kearns 2004, 67-69; Olson 1995, 213 ff.

⁵³ *Odyssey* 1.26-95. From 81-95 Athena provides a “table of contents” of her own plans for the Ithakan royal family (de Jong 2001, 15). For a typology of the *Odyssey's* divine councils, see Marks 2008, “Appendix 2”.

⁵⁴ De Jong 2001, 10; Loudon 2006, 207-211.

It has often been said that the *Odyssey* is a more mortal epic, in which the gods are less important than in the *Iliad*.⁵⁵ While it certainly appears from these depictions that the gods are taking a back seat to the mortal characters, it is not that they are less important than the Iliadic gods. Rather, the poet of the *Odyssey* is crafting a story in the same world of gods and men, but a story that focalizes more prominently on and through the mortal characters. Intensely divine moments exist in the story; an entire quarter nearly of the epic is taken up by fantastical adventures in the liminal zones between the mortal and divine worlds, and Athena is almost ever-present in the main mortal characters' lives. The gods operate in and inform the *Odyssey*'s world as they do in the *Iliad*'s world but, more often than not, the audience receives account of them through a mortal perspective. Odysseus narrates his journey throughout Poseidon's realm, putting his transcendental adventure into mortal words through a mostly human understanding of the events.⁵⁶ Penelope relates Athena's dream-message as best as she knows how—exactly as she saw it and with no insight into who sent it or why. While the apparent absence of the gods in the intricate workings of the plot appears, at first glance, to be the biggest omission to making the epic a story of gods then men, it is rather how the *Odyssey*'s poet buries moments of divine-human communication in mortal speech that, I believe, most dominantly secures the epic's title as a human story.

Foundational, epic-sweeping prophecies—moments of telling the future that directly foreshadow the upcoming plot points of the poem—appear, like Penelope's dream, at one degree of separation along the narrative gradient away from the audience; that is, the audience usually is not allowed to be first-hand witnesses of the god's revelations of the future, nor even are they allowed to be first-hand witnesses of gods or god-like entities delivering prophecies. When the

⁵⁵ See above; also Rutherford 2009, 160 ff.

⁵⁶ Saïd 2011, 151-157.

audience's stand-in is a mortal character, it is by mortal frames of reference that those events are witnessed. Both Circe and Teiresias's superior brand of prophecy are only revealed to the audience through Odysseus' account and the portentous answers of Proteus are filtered first through Menelaos' focalization and narration.⁵⁷ In these cases, the narrator will disappear, as in Penelope's dream-scene, or restrict the amount and type of information he includes about the scene to match the character through which it is focalized and to fit the general perceptive situation of a mortal by-stander, as in the case of Helen's bird omen.⁵⁸ Those prophetic moments to which we are privileged direct access, therefore, regularly are filtered of the certain and explicit divine elements through their mortal focalizers and narrators.

The primary exception to this muting of the gods is the epic's portrayal of the relationship between Odysseus and Athena.⁵⁹ Surely not every scene in which they communicate is illustrated, but certainly the largest segment of divine involvement in the epic is populated by interactions between Athena and Odysseus.⁶⁰ When Odysseus is alone, the audience is allowed to 'see' the goddess and, when he is not, they may still often 'hear' the goddess's conversations with him.⁶¹ It is through Odysseus and his unique relationship with his divine patron that the poet of the *Odyssey* focalizes Athena into the narrative. Consequently, it appears that the poet is not attempting to elide the divine influence from his poetic events, but rather to preserve it according to the capacity for understanding that his mortal characters each have. Unlike the *Iliad*, the

⁵⁷ *Odyssey* 4.347ff. (narration of Menelaos's encounter with Proteus) and 10.487 ff. and 11.90 ff. (Circe and Teiresias's prophecies respectively). See also Saïd 2011, 116-125.

⁵⁸ Helen: 15.160 ff.; discussed below.

⁵⁹ Another will be discussed in Chapter Three: Theoklumenos: 20.345 ff.

⁶⁰ Slatkin 2011, "Athene". Clay 1985 awards the entire narrative motivation to Athena; it would only make sense that her involvement with the epic's protagonist is paramount. Kearns 1982, 2-8 reminisces on the density of interactions between Odysseus and Athena once he has returned to Ithaka.

⁶¹ E.g. *Odyssey* 13.287 ff. and 22.223 ff. respectively; in the latter, the narrator-text reveals that it is Athena speaking, although her appearance is that of Mentor and it is as Mentor that Odysseus addresses her. To any non-privileged audience, including Agelaos who addresses her as Mentor at 211, the two are simply two mortal men speaking.

divine perspective-bias does not determine how and why the audience witnesses the gods at work, but rather the mortal's perspective-bias on the divine. As a result, it appears that the mortal, whose perspective is used to focalize moments of divine-human communication, significantly affects—to the extent of determining clarity and content—the depiction the audience receives about that interaction. Just as the gods who channel information through the levels of reality determine the communication in the *Iliad*, the mortal who ends up acting as the channel for divine information in the *Odyssey* provides a unique filter of that information by determining its type and amount according to who they are and what relationship they have with the gods.

The import of the medium's contribution is demonstrated explicitly in Penelope's dream-scene because its medium is entirely unequipped to know the truth of her divination, and performs her divination accordingly, in an imperfect, unprofessional manner. Penelope, however, is also not Agamemnon. She is, in fact, specifically equipped in a number of ways to make her a far superior recipient of the divine word than her Iliadic dream-scene counterpart.⁶² She is circumspect and clever and, ultimately, the female hero of her epic, but, all the same, she is an unsuccessful medium of the dream for her external audience.⁶³ The poet's use of her as a 'failed' medium is not an expression of the poet's scorn for her or an insult, as Agamemnon's

⁶² Despite their parallel social positions, as the authority of their respective social structures and therefore the appropriate intermediary of a god's will—as will be discussed more below—Penelope contrasts significantly with Agamemnon in terms of her relationship to the protagonist of the epic plot. While the poet has repeatedly fostered anxiety about her as a threat to Odysseus' return (see *Odyssey* 11.409 ff., esp. 441-6, for the parallel drawn in the text of the poem; de Jong 2001, 288 discusses; see also Olson 1995, 24-42, esp. 35 for the narrative ramifications of drawing a general parallel between Penelope and the daughters of Leto, Odysseus and Agamemnon), Penelope is not structured as the antagonist of Odysseus that Agamemnon is for Achilles, who can be detrimentally manipulated to promote the protagonist's story.

⁶³ Characterization, distilled into Penelope's two most prominent epithets: *περίφρων* and *ἐχέφρων*, demonstrates that Penelope is circumspect and prudent, two qualities that Agamemnon lacks in the *Iliad*. He is instead *νήπιος* or identified by his social standing: *κρείων*, *ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*, or *Ἄτρεΐδης*. For Penelope's heroine status, see Winkler 1990 and Foley 1995. For more on the description of Penelope, see Saïd 2011, 276 ff.

manipulation is explicitly framed by the *Iliad*. Instead, the fact that she fails is a demonstration, through exceptional contrast to her usual depictions, of how extraordinary the figure of the medium must be in order to be successful. Penelope's dream-scene, I will argue, is the poet's finishing move to make this point and to color this particular message according to its messenger's qualities and predispositions. The poet begins this endeavor with Helen's omen-based prophecy from Book 15, which provides the same prediction of events according to a similar bird-sign in a narrative style that, like Penelope's dream-scene, relies on a mortal-type perspective.

2.3 Helen's Omen-based Prophecy and the Medium's Authorship

τὸν δ' Ἑλένη τανύπεπλος ὑποφθαμένη φάτο μῦθον·
κλυτέ μευ· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι, ὡς ἐνὶ θυμῷ
ἀθάνατοι βάλλουσι καὶ ὡς τελέεσθαι ὄϊω.
ὡς ὄδε χῆν' ἦρπαξ' ἀτιταλλομένην ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
ἐλθὼν ἐξ ὄρεος, ὅθι οἱ γενεή τε τόκος τε,
ὡς Ὀδυσσεὺς κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν καὶ πόλλ' ἐπαληθεῖς
οἴκαδε νοστήσει καὶ τίσεται· ἦε καὶ ἤδη
οἴκοι, ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει.

But long-robed Helen preempted him and said her piece:
hear me! But I will prophesy, as in my heart
the immortals have placed it and as I surmise it will come to pass.
As this one, having come from the mountain where are its kith and kin,
snatched a goose that was being tended to in the house,
so Odysseus having suffered many evils and wandered wide, will return home and take his
revenge;
or he is even already at home and is sowing evil for all the suitors. (Odyssey 15.171-178)

Here, as we move on to a more direct comparandum of Penelope's dream-scene, I will assert that, by toying with perspective-biases, the poet of the *Odyssey* is crafting more than a mortal-focused epic. Because the identity of the mortal focalizer of a divine-human communication appears to affect the quality and approach of the perspective-bias with which they are depicted, I assert that the narrative quirks and adjustments that the poet makes with each

human channel are a stylization of what the poet sees to be that medium's authorial contributions to divine-human communication. In 'normal' moments of divine-human communication, of the likes that we have seen in the *Iliad*, the audience experiences the information through a divine perspective-bias because the gods' role in the communication is foremost and preferred, while the medium's role is, by necessity, minimalized and marginalized. Agamemnon, as the ultimate dupe, is not only the last focalizer of the event and the least detailed, but his perspective on the communication is literally taunted by the narrator as erroneous. Not all mortal recipients of the god's messages are treated with such derision but, throughout the *Iliad*, the importance of their role is regularly downplayed.⁶⁴ In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the poet repeatedly styles such scenes with a human perspective-bias and crafts the framing of the communication with narrator-text according to the individual abilities of its mortal medium. In particular, the *Odyssey* preserves two variations on the same divine message in Helen's and Penelope's divinatory scenes and, in doing so, puts into direct contrast the poet's stylizations of each woman's proficiencies and talents in acting as a medium of divine information. More than just contrasting his own depictions of each woman, I assert that the poet is demonstrating explicitly how the backgrounds, circumstances, and qualifications of individual mortals affect the efficacy of a mediated divine message and that, consequently, he is challenging the traditional standards and conventions about the importance of a medium's contributions to divine-human communication.

Despite the fact that Helen's scene and Penelope's do not operate formally through the same divinatory vehicle, Helen's omen-based prophecy and Penelope's dream are brought to life

⁶⁴ Calchas is, naturally, the exception; he is presented in the *Iliad* as the seer *par excellence*, and his mediation of Apollo's will can be presented purely from his own focalization and narration (1.68 ff.). Other divine-human communication moments tend to be stylized with double motivation where the god has the agency within the world and the humans are depicted as made object of the god's actions in the shape of mental processes. E.g. Athena's epiphany to Achilles at 1.199 ff. or the stylization of Priam's decision to supplicate Achilles for Hektor's body at 24.142 ff.; even bird signs are focalized from their divine origin: 24.314 ff.

by the poet through a number of structural similarities that result in their scenes mirroring one another.⁶⁵ The two scenes resonate most profoundly with each other through the shared *oionomanteia* that prompts a prophetic announcement about Odysseus' *nostos*. Just as in Penelope's dream, Book 15 features a bird omen, which employs the symbolism of eagle and goose, that is interpreted to shed light on the future of Odysseus' return and revenge upon the suitors. In fact, the bird omen itself is nearly identical to the one preserved in Penelope's dream—a wild eagle swoops in, attacking the household's domestic flock of geese.⁶⁶ The difference between the two signs is that the eagle of Book 15 steals a single goose and flies off with it, presumably as prey, whereas Book 19's eagle will not consume a single goose of the twenty it kills. Furthermore, the bird sign itself prompts two stages of interpretation among its internal audience, as in the case of Penelope's dream.⁶⁷ First, Menelaos is consulted concerning the interpretation of the omen as it reflects on the present company—is it a good sign for the king or for Telemachos and his company?⁶⁸ The external audience will experience likewise, in less direct terms, the effects of a secondary available interpretation for Penelope's bird-sign in her weeping over her geese. Neither of these alternative interpretations are ever voiced, however.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Helen's omen-based prophecy-scene: *Odyssey* 15.160 ff.; Penelope's dream-scene 19.535 ff.

⁶⁶ Compare Book 15 and Book 19 presentations:

ὥς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις,
αιετὸς ἀργὴν **χῆνα** φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον,
 ἡμερον *ἐξ ἀλῆς*· οἱ δ' ἰύζοντες ἔποντο
 ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δὲ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθων
 δεξιὸς ἦῖξε πρόσθ' ἵππων· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
 γήθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη.

χῆνές μοι *κατὰ οἶκον* εἴκοσι πυρὸν ἔδουσι
 ἐξ ὕδατος, καὶ τέ σφιν ἰαίνομαι εἰσορόωσα·
 ἔλθων δ' ἐξ ὄρεος μέγας **αιετὸς** ἀγκυλοχείλης
 πᾶσι κατ' ἀρχένας ἦξε καὶ ἔκτανεν· οἱ δ' ἐκέχυντο
 ἄθροοι ἐν μεγάροις, ὁ δ' ἐς αἰθέρα δῖαν ἀέρθη.

De Jong 2001, 370 notes this as a prolepsis to Odysseus' return that mirrors Book 19's.

⁶⁷ Penelope's initial reception of the sign is encapsulated in her own account of the dream at 541-543. She cries out and weeps over; see Chapter One for an analysis of this reaction as a secondary, implicit option for the dream's interpretation, that her time waiting for Odysseus was wasted. The eagle then returns and provides the primary, explicit interpretation of the dream from 546-550. Penelope is, then, faced with the reception of this interpretation as well—her reception is clear in the axiom she delivers about the gates of dream (lines 560-569).

⁶⁸ 15.167-169, Peisistratos asks: φράζω δὴ, Μενέλαε διοτρεφέες, ὄρχαμε λαῶν, ἢ νῶϊν τόδ' ἔφηγε θεὸς **τέρας** ἦε σοὶ αὐτῶ.

⁶⁹ Penelope's account contains an implicit embedded focalization that must be inferred from her reaction, because she is the sole focalizer and narrator of the account. See Chapter One for her numerological tendencies embedded

Before the witnesses of each scene can weigh in on the omen's meaning in direct speech, another interpreter of the bird sign intervenes and usurps the episode entirely.⁷⁰ In direct correlation to the eagle's prophecy of Penelope's dream, Helen intercedes and insists that the eagle represents Odysseus and the goose the suitors, their bloody fate foreshadowed by the goose's destruction.⁷¹ Thus, in the very least, the external audience, upon hearing Penelope's description of her dream in Book 19, will notice symbolic and prophetic resonances between the dream and Helen's divination from Book 15.

Structurally, the divinatory moments correspond further because the poet has formatted each scene to be bifurcated between the symbolic portion of the bird sign and the prophetic interpretation. The *oionomanteia* is visually based and communicated through third-person expository narration, while the prophecy is encapsulated in the direct speech of a character who is a participant in the initial omen-moment. If Penelope can be considered 'the narrator' for the duration of her dream, then both scenes preserve the symbol in 'narrator-text' and the interpretation or prophecy in 'character-text', creating a divided but coordinated pair of divinatory moments that deliver the same message. Additionally, both scenes have parallel participants. When Telemachos receives this prophecy, he is at the culmination of his mini-odyssey and positioned at the same point in the story-line pattern as his father, to return home.⁷²

inside her narration. The secondary interpretation of the Book 15's internal audience is similarly embedded in the focalization of their participation in the scene by the narrator-text. More on this below.

⁷⁰ Penelope relates how the eagle from the sign returned and checked, *κατερήτυε*, her reaction, presumably her weeping and own interpretation (19.544-545). The eagle's prophecy then operates in the same mode, interrupting and providing an explicit narration, as Helen's prophecy at line 171 and following.

⁷¹ Compare Helen's prophecy (15.172-178) and the Eagle's (19.546-550):

κλυτέ μιν· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι, ὡς ἐνὶ θυμῷ
ἀθάνατοι βάλλουσι καὶ ὡς τελέεσθαι οἴω.
 ὡς ὄδε **χῆν'** ἦρπαξ' ἀτιταλλομένην ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
 ἔλθων ἐξ ὄρεος, ὅθι οἱ γενεή τε τόκος τε,
 ὡς Ὀδυσσεὺς κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν καὶ πόλλ' ἐπαληθεῖς
 οἴκαδε νοστήσει καὶ τίσεται· ἦε καὶ ἤδη
 οἴκοι, ἀτὰρ **μνηστῆρσι** κακὸν **πάντεσσι** φυτεύει.

θάρσει, Ἴκαρίου κούρη τηλεκλειτοῖο·
 οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ' ὑπάρ' ἐσθλόν, ὃ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται.
χῆνες μὲν **μνηστῆρες**, ἐγὼ δέ τοι *αἰετὸς* ὄρνις
 ἦα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε *τεὸς πόσις* εἰλήλουθα
 ὃς πᾶσι μνηστῆρσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσω.

⁷² Saïd 2011, 139-149.

The two men of the royal house of Ithaca are placed in parallel by the scene, as are the mediums who deliver the divine message to them. Helen and Penelope have been characterized throughout the poem to occupy the same character-type—a powerful, and thus potentially dangerous, female gate-keeper figure, who perform in front of a silent audience of their household.⁷³ As a result, Helen's scene in Book 15 and Penelope's in Book 19 appear, at least on the surface, to be two instantiations of the same paradigm, which have been adjusted to different topoi—in both the epic world and the story-line—by inserting the proper characters into their respective roles. I argue, however, that they are not simply type-scenes, but rather, scenes placed into a dialogue through these similarities and working in tandem as a coordinated pair, which are, therefore, differentiated in exactly specific and meaningful ways.

The coordination of these scenes highlights, in fact, the salient contrasts between each, which I will argue are manifested in the narratological configuration of each divinatory event. Penelope's dream, from this approach, becomes the second in a pair of repeated symbols, a reiteration that plays a particular function in signaling meaning to the audience.⁷⁴ On a story-level, the repeated symbol certainly drives home the message precipitated from it, that Odysseus' return and revenge will be successful. However, the counter-positioning of these two mediums, who would otherwise be temptingly comparable, creates a point of disparity for a critical audience once the epic cuts Penelope's scene off from any direct access in the narrator-text. That is, because the epic narrator has ceded his legitimizing voice to the direct speech of Penelope in

⁷³ Doherty 1995, esp. 85. For a discussion of the power given to 'weaving' and figures who weave in the *Odyssey*, see Clayton 2004. In Book 15, at 146, Peisistratos has driven the chariot just outside the household (out of the front door and veranda) and Menelaos address him and Telemachos there, where the bird-sign is elicited. Later, the narrator describes the entire audience of it as men and women alike (163: ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες) and therefore as collected household, or at least some portion of it, attending after the farewell feast. In Book 19, both Eurykleia and Melanthe have been marked as active in the scene (375 and 75 respectively) and Penelope will address her whole host of handmaidens repeatedly through the interview (121, 317, and 372). As de Jong notes (2001, 465) we can assume that they remain as a silent audience to the interview.

⁷⁴ Scodel 2004, 49, reference: Fenik 1974, 173-232.

the exposition of her dream, Penelope's scene becomes a weaker narrative echo of Helen's precedent for that same prophecy. In short, instead of crafting a moment that simply reinforces Helen's message as divine with a mirrored god-sent confirmation for the external audience, Penelope's scene sets up an opposition between the vehicles for delivering that message.

Although similarly designed to eliminate the divine-perspective bias that is completely obfuscated in Penelope's scene, Helen's scene distances the external audience from the divine point of view on the events without eliminating the narrator's explicatory role. Unlike Penelope's dream-scene, Helen's omen-based prophecy is preserved in a mixed-text, expositing jointly by the narrator and by the characters acting in the scene. Despite being triggered by character-text, the actual portent of the bird sign is described for the external audience by the narrator.⁷⁵

ὥς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις,
 αἰετὸς ἀργὴν χῆνα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον,
 ἥμερον ἐξ αὐλῆς· οἱ δ' ἰϋζόντες ἔποντο
 ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δὲ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν ἐλθὼν
 δεξιὸς ἤϊξε πρόσθ' ἵππων· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
 γήθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη.
τοῖσι δὲ Νεστορίδης Πεισίστρατος ἤρχετο μύθων·

Then, as he was speaking a bird flew past *on the right*
 An eagle, carrying a white goose in its talons, as a *portent*,
 A tame one from the courtyard; and they followed shouting
 Men and women; and coming near them it
 Darted by, *on the right*, in front of the horses; and seeing it
 They became glad and the heart in their chest was warmed.
And to them Peististratos, son of Nestor, began speaking: (15.160-166)⁷⁶

In place of exclusively using an internal actor's externalized focalizations of the event, i.e. direct speech, the bird omen in Book 15 is described as an objective reality occurring on the mortal plane and experienced through mortal observation. Nonetheless, the poet restricts the narrative

⁷⁵ Telemachos wishes, upon Menelaos's farewell and mention of a father-figure, that he himself may return home and find his father in Ithaka (15.155-159).

⁷⁶ The **bolded** portion shows the narrator-text marker, indicating this is a third-person description in relation to the former speaker, Telemachos, and his character-text. The underlined portion shows the narrator-text marking a transition back into character-text.

omniscience, which he deploys in depicting the bird sign, and refrains from revealing the omen's ultimate purpose and source, in the same way as he does in Penelope's scene.⁷⁷ Likewise, the poet leaves the final interpretation of the event to be performed solely through character-text for the external audience.⁷⁸

Unlike Iliadic convention, no divine responsibility is allocated to explain the bird sign's occurrence. The eagle is not said to answer a god's will and swoop down on his command, nor does it even make its appearance in the scene originating from heaven.⁷⁹ Instead, the eagle enters the 'frame of vision' of the scene on a mortal level and does not disturb the focus of the narrative on the mortal subjects for the rest of the scene.⁸⁰ That is, from the moment the eagle's flight is documented by the narrator, its appearance and actions are described as though from the perspective of a human participant in the scene. It swoops past, already holding what the narrator recognizes to be one of the household's domestic geese, and disappears, its action then interpreted exactly from what could be observed on the mortal plane in that place and moment.⁸¹ In fact, before Helen's mantic interpretation of its meaning, the sole interpretative commentary

⁷⁷ Note that there is no information included in this narrator-text that could not have been provided by a human witness of the event. This mirrors the restriction that the external audience is subjected to when made to receive Penelope's dream exclusively through her account of it, but is not a restriction to the same scale.

⁷⁸ Again, no omniscient narrator-text provides a window into the divine workings and gives the final say on its purpose etc..

⁷⁹ Contrast, for example, the comparable scene that Heubeck and Hoekstra point out (1989, 242) at *Iliad* 24.283-321, where an eagle appears after Priam entreats it to do so, but even so elicited by a mortal participant, the 'camera' of the scene follows the eagle's appearance from Zeus's reception of Priam's prayer, to his agency sending it, then through to Priam receiving the sign. Nor does the narrator-text tie the sign's appearance or significance back into the divine context of the scene, as does another comparable scene at *Iliad* 13.821, where the conclusion of the scene is marked as being under the purview of Zeus: ἠχῆ δ' ἀμφοτέρων ἵκετ' αἰθέρα καὶ Διὸς αὐγάς (837).

⁸⁰ The only contextualizing marker provided by the narrator-text is the dative of reference, οἱ εἰπόντι, aligning the circumstances of the eagle's arrival with Telemachos's act of speaking, creating a receptive situation seated in a mortal context.

⁸¹ According to de Jong's account of evaluative and affective words and expressions in the narrator-text (1987, 136-148) the descriptors provided for the action are reflective of a secondary focalizer, or the use of an embedded focalization from the point-of-view of an involved character in the event. She notes *πελώριος*, in particular, here a modifier of the goose (161) as a descriptor attributed, in the *Iliad* at least, to an internal focalizer.

comes from the adjective modifying the eagle as δεξιός.⁸² Used twice to describe the bird omen, δεξιός, the divination-charged descriptor for an auspicious sign, represents the narrator's evaluation of the eagle as a divinely sent omen, but one focalized through a mortal spectator's perspective.⁸³ The connotation of δεξιός as auspicious originates in the language of *oinomanteia* and other omen-based divination—a bird appearing upon the right side, δεξιός, is considered good fortune or a confirmation from the gods, while a bird appearing upon the left side, ἀριστερός, is unlucky or inauspicious.⁸⁴ Thus, the narrator's description, though apparently focused on the bird's relationship to the divine, is one based on human-derived divinatory sciences about the gods, and not from the gods. Were it a narration favoring a divine perspective-bias, the scene in Book 15 would have included the god's dispatch of the eagle in addition to the modifier that it was δεξιός, as many an *Iliad* scene undertakes.

Furthermore, this scene is framed to focus even more sharply on the mortal reception of the sign, rather than the sign's origin, because the narrator formats the omen's expository lines as a series of reactions that the human characters progress through as the bird sign occurs.⁸⁵ While the movement and action of the eagle is described, the poet frames each development in relation to the mortal participants of the scene either by making them the subjects of the verbs or the objects of prepositions.⁸⁶ When it becomes clear that the eagle is intended to be a sign, the

⁸² Italicized in the above cited primary text at lines 160 and 164. I believe this evaluative term could be added to de Jong's list referred to above (1987, 136-148).

⁸³ For a general analysis of oinoiomanteia, see Dillon 1996. For oinoiomanteia (orinthomanteia) as a thought matrix, see Burkert 2005 and Flower 2008, esp.104-114.

⁸⁴ *LSJ, Middle Liddell*, 'δεξιός'; see also Dillon 1996, 108-110.

⁸⁵ Compare again, Iliadic divine-human communication moments like the Dream sent to Agamemnon or the eagle sign sent to Priam (24.283-321). The framing does not move from the divine 'author' of the sign, through the divine focalization of the sign, to the mortal reception of the sign.

⁸⁶ Compare the deployment of agency and subjectivity from above in the *Iliad* Book 2 Dream sequence in 2.2. Verbs with mortal nominatives: ἔποντο, γήθησαν; verbs without mortal nominative, but with mortal datives: οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο, σφισιν... ἦϊξε, πασιν... ἰάνθη (this final instance is a transfer of agency from the mortal to their faculty for sensing, θυμός).

circumstances of the omen are related in reference to how they interact with the humans on the mortal plane. The onlookers change their mind when the eagle flies near them and on the right, at which point they are excited and comforted by what they seem to assume is an auspicious omen.⁸⁷ The poet details the embedded focalization of the entire united group as a condensation of their shared experience of the omen at this point, first illustrating their externalized reactions—the shouting and chasing, but no description of anger or fear—and then describing their emotional reactions—rejoicing and feeling gladdened.⁸⁸ The poet utilizes this restricted omniscience, which allows insight into character assumptions about the goose's origin in the household, additionally to peer inside the collective mental response, even so far as to describe the omen's effect on their mind or heart, the θυμὸς.⁸⁹ Again, however, the narrator restricts this insight into the scene to the mortal perspective. No additional details are provided to place the mortals' reactions in relation to the divine will, as in the case of *Iliad 2* when Agamemnon's reaction to the Dream is compared to Zeus's true intentions and derided by the poet.⁹⁰ Instead, the narrator-text ends abruptly and the characters are given free rein to discuss and instill meaning unto the event on their own plane, during which time Helen's prophecy, then, is narrated in her own voice.⁹¹

Therefore, the narrator and his divinely sourced focalization neither entirely disappear behind his characters nor overtake the perspective of the scene. The narrator-text remains to

⁸⁷ Lines 163-165.

⁸⁸ Shouting and chasing: οἱ δ' ἰὺζοντες ἔποντο; rejoicing and feeling gladdened: γήθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη. The transition between the externalized and internalized reaction hinges upon an explicit embedded focalization, ἰδόντες, an aorist that indicates that the action of the main verb that follows is predicated by this act of 'having seen'. What the internal audience has seen is the bird's flight pattern, to the right in front of the horses (164). Against de Jong's reading of a "discrepancy" in the omen-scene (2001, 370).

⁸⁹ 15.166.

⁹⁰ See *Iliad* 2.38 ff.

⁹¹ Lines 167-168 include Peisistratos's character-text response and lines 169-170 include the narrator-text for Menelaos's response before Helen is shown to intervene at 171, her character-text commencing at 172.

frame and contextualize the scene, but eschews the gods' point of view in favor of the lens of a third-person mortal spectator. Consequently, Helen's portent is preserved with both a human point of view and a narrative immediacy and presence later denied to the external audience during Penelope's second iteration of the sign in her dream-scene.⁹² Thus, the omen-scene triggering Helen's prophecy is pared down from the absolute exposition of the *Iliad's* divine perspective-bias narrative, while not quite obfuscating the divine involvement to the extent later experienced in Penelope's dream-scene. Accordingly, Helen's *oionomanteia* can deliver the description and the interpretation naturally and cleanly in two different levels of narrativization while retaining a mortal perspective-bias. The poet provides mortal, but objective, exposition of the actual bird sign in the narrator-text, while Helen's divination of its meaning is delivered via the poet's mimesis of the queen's proclamation, in character-text.⁹³ Penelope's dream, on the other hand, is shoe-horned entirely into character-text, which simultaneously must relate Penelope's experience of the sign and the sign's own interpretation of its meaning. Nonetheless, the overall portent is internally bifurcated into visual and verbal packages, which, respectively, Penelope must describe in her own focalized narration, both as an expository narrator of the visual sign and in mimesis of the dream's internal medium for the verbal portion.⁹⁴ As a result, the entire dream-scene is a mimetic snapshot performed by the poet of the queen's own act of

⁹² Compare 19.534-553 where all of the narrative markers create a point-of-view reference to Penelope's perspective. She describes circumstances of the eagle's arrival through the 3rd person (ἔδουσιν, ἦξε, ἔκτανεν, ἐκέχυντο, ἀέρθη, ἔζετ', κατερήτυε, φώνησέν, ἔφατ'), but additional descriptive clauses and datives of reference giving context to the scene realign the focalization to her (μοι, καί τέ σφιν ἰαίνομαι εἰσορόωσα, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κλαῖον καὶ ἐκόκυον ἔν περ ὄνειρῳ, ἀμφὶ δ' ἔμ' ἠγερέθοντο εὐπλοκαμίδες Ἀχαιαί, οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένην ὃ μοι αἰετὸς ἔκτανε χῆνας; αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ μελιθεῖς ὕπνος ἀνήκε' / παπτήνασα δὲ χῆνας ἐνὶ μεγάροισι νόησα / πυρὸν ἐρεπτομένους παρὰ πύελον, ἦχι πάρος περ.). Thus, the external audience is constantly reminded that they are party only to Penelope's take on this omen.

⁹³ Objective in that the 3rd person perspective is an embedded focalization of the entire mortal, internal audience, a synthesis of all of their focalization, in place of a subjective focalization through one character, and is endorsed by the authority of the narrator.

⁹⁴ She acts as a narrator moving from her own description of the visual event to her mimicry of the eagle's speech at 19.545. Notably, she imitates the use of character-text, as opposed to including his speech in indirect statement and thus relaying the whole portent through her own, explicit, focalized narration.

poetizing a divine portent that mirrors, almost point-by-point, the bird omen that Helen had interpreted earlier.

In addition to the narrative framing of each scene, the internal contexts of the divinatory moments in Book 15 and Book 19 are similar but, significantly, not identical. Nonetheless, their differences function most prominently to highlight the contrast between the performances of each internal medium, rather than the individual story-level requirements that Helen and Penelope must fulfill for their internal audiences. The internal audiences of these books share notable components, which result in parallel situational requirements for the prophetic performers. As noted above, Telemachos is, very much like his father, on the crux of his return from an odyssey. At a moment in which the narrative expects a divine catalyst to drive the completion of the story-pattern, Telemachos is delivered an impelling sign.⁹⁵ His wish to see his father at home appears to be confirmed by the sudden, auspicious appearance of an eagle. This god-sent impetus to action is not, however, a necessary one according to the internal story-context. Telemachos has already been spurred from his delay in this phase of his journey by Athena directly. Telemachos has been integrated into Sparta's social structure and, through an extended conversation, received the information from Menelaos and Helen that he requires to acquaint himself with his father as Athena has seen fit.⁹⁶ The goddess then instructed him to return home, warning him of the dangers the suitors present.⁹⁷ Therefore, according to the story-paradigm followed by his father so far, and more importantly later in Book 19, this stage of

⁹⁵ See Chapter One on story-patterns and thematic cycles. Also, Louden 1999.

⁹⁶ 4.20-217: Telemachos arrives in Sparta, welcomed, washed and identified during their feast; 218-592: extended internal narrations acquaint Telemachos with the *kleos* of his father. At 620 the poet pauses from his account of Telemachos and returns to Ithaka. At 15.1 the poet moves the 'lens' from Ithaka back onto Sparta by following Athena's travel there (de Jong 2001, 362), at which point she brings an end his odyssey, 15.10 ff.: Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι καλὰ δόμων ἄπο τῆλ' ἀλάλησαι...

⁹⁷ 15.10-42 includes Athena's specific instructions for Telemachos upon leaving. See de Jong 2001, 363-366 for a discussion of the scene as a dream and a 'table of contents' for the external audience.

Telemachos' progress is complete; no further divine intervention is needed to complete the pattern and drive his story forward.⁹⁸

The bird omen that answers Telemachos' offhand wish, as a result, appears to reiterate the manifest epiphany Athena granted to Telemachos before, but does not incite a new iteration of a thematic pattern or fulfill a unique requirement of the plot. The omen, according to its context in the story, initially seems to be about to confirm simply that it is auspicious that Telemachos return home—the eagle's appearance is noted first by the narrator in reference to Telemachos as he is speaking, and further, its internal audience immediately offers Telemachos as one of the potential recipients for its boon.⁹⁹ Because of the circumstances of its appearance, it is highly probable that the eagle was sent to mark as auspicious Telemachos' wish to see his father again—that is, until Helen intervenes and provides an alternate and in-depth reading of the sign that extrapolates further meaning for it above and beyond that precipitated by the story context.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, the prophecy she delivers does not appear to have any immediate ramifications upon the plot progression or the characters who hear it. Unlike other intercessions of divine information, her prediction of the future does not motivate characters or change minds.¹⁰¹ In

⁹⁸ Alternatively, the repetition of themes and motifs here may stem from two other poetic impulses: 1) the interlacing of multiple storylines, which the poet is juggling at once (de Jong 2001, 362, 589-590). The repetition reminds the audience of the storyline patterns left off at the end of Book 4 and here resumed. Corresponding to that narrative technique, the repetition may indicate the seams of 2) the integration of the *Telemachiad* into the larger *Odyssey* story (Bertman 1966, 17-27), wherein the poet again picks up the threads of the story that was newly included at the beginning of his song and repeats them to form thematic unity. For the impulse to give the *Telemachiad* and its patterns their own poetic independence, Heubeck and Hoekstra (1989, 242) note that Steisichorus adopts and adapts elements of this passage for his lyrical version. I do not believe these echoes of performative evolution work against my argument, but instead mark the poet's preservation of tradition in his attempt to also innovate.

⁹⁹ When Peisistratus asks Menelaos for the interpretation, he provides *vōiv*, "us two"—himself and Telemachos—or Menelaos himself as the two options for indirect objects of the god's omen (15.167-168).

¹⁰⁰ Greek conventions for unsolicited divine signs preclude mortal audiences to this reading; see Flower 2008, esp. 112.

¹⁰¹ Again, see Chapter One on story-patterns and thematic cycles.

contrast to the dream about which Penelope confides in Odysseus, this omen does not confirm plans or trigger a new stage in a plot.¹⁰² Rather, it incites an additional equation of father and son when Telemachos reacts to Helen's prophecy by wishing for its fulfillment using the same phrase spoken by his father formerly.¹⁰³ At the culmination of Odysseus' social integration in Scheria, when he had just secured promise of transport home, he responds nearly identically to the farewell that Nausikaa bids him. As a result, the external audience is again reminded of the parallels between father and son, in their respective journeys to lands with power female figures; however, significant narration is not supplied to provide plot motivation for the omen itself nor especially for the additional meaning Helen supplies.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the characters participating in the scene do not provide any reception of the prophecy that assimilates its message with ongoing events. In essence, the additional valence Helen contributes to the bird sign appears to be, on a story-level, unsolicited and extraneous information, which is to be left uncontested but also uncontextualized by its internal audience. For the external audience, however, it realigns their perspective on the coming events and provides a commanding, even if not explicitly confirmed and endorsed, prediction of the future.¹⁰⁵

As counterparts in their paralleled scenes, I assert that Helen and Penelope themselves are posed by the poet as a bifurcated pair, a set of performers who each represent an extreme version of different aspects of the inspired medium. I have argued so far that Penelope, by and large, has

¹⁰² Chapter One 1.2.

¹⁰³ The poet employs the exact two lines, in fact: οὕτω νῦν Ζεὺς θεΐη, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης, ... τῷ κέν τοι καὶ κεῖθι θεῶ ὧς εὐχετοῦμην. The only difference is that the specifics of the circumstances are elided in Telemachos' version (8.463-468 vs. 15.179-181).

¹⁰⁴ Both vow to women who each could have impeded their *nostoi*, but instead, provided them with crucial aid at parallel stages of each's journey. Nausikaa represents a temptation to not return to Ithaka at several points, but most obviously when her father offers her in marriage at 7.311-316. Helen presents a collection of dangers, distilled perhaps most definitively in her manipulation of everyone with potions (which is echoed by the *nostos*-destroying ploys of Circe at 10.210-243) at 4.219-234.

¹⁰⁵ De Jong 2001, 370.

been presented as a particularly ineffectual medium by the poet. Her failures, however, are largely limited to her capacity for interpreting the divine message presented to her. That is to say, Penelope may not know what to do with the information presented to her by the gods, but she is in the appropriate role to be the vehicle for that divine message. Her counterpart, Helen, represents exactly the opposite enactment of the medium role. Helen is shown to be more than capable of interpreting the divine message she witnesses, however, the manner in which she goes about doing so demonstrates her transgressive nature and counteracts, to a degree, among her audience the authoritative proficiency that she otherwise exercises in the scene. The poet seems to have placed Helen and Penelope in parallel, therefore, to contrast their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, each queen exhibits different qualities of the mantic and interpretative functions of an inspired medium but not all of them, and therefore, regardless of their other proficiencies, Penelope and Helen are never entirely endorsed by the poet through the narrator-text as an acceptable replacement for his contribution to the divine-human communication of his *poesis*.

Per the poet's stylistic preference for a more inclusively mortal frame of reference, it is also by mortal societal standards that the capacities of both queens for inspired mediation are initially informed and that their performances are acceptable or not. In addition to the indications that Penelope does not have the divine criteria at her disposal to be a capable medium for her scene, the poet likewise—and particularly in the juxtaposition with Helen—indicates that she does, however, qualify to be the inspired recipient of the god's message according to human conventions for divination. As noted in Chapter One, Penelope, as the culturally sanctioned ruler of Ithaka, is representative of the normative inspired dreamer.¹⁰⁶ Kings and queens both are

¹⁰⁶ Chapter One 1.4.

regularly depicted receiving messages from the gods at times of crisis, which allow them, in their positions of power and authority, to deploy their resources in order to resolve the crisis.¹⁰⁷ This is a defining quality of many *basileis*—and, indeed, weakness of Agamemnon which allows him to be manipulated in *Iliad 2*—that demonstrates the ruler’s inherent connection to and endorsement by the gods.¹⁰⁸ Queens, like Penelope, are similarly endowed with such responsibilities when they are made the acting regents of their domains.¹⁰⁹ With Odysseus still technically missing and the household not yet inherited by Telemachos, it falls to Penelope to receive this impactful prefiguration of the whole of Ithaka’s future. As an inspired reporter of her dream, however credibility wanes, where Helen’s shines, in her ability to provide an inspired interpretation of the message delivered to her.

On the other hand, Helen is depicted by the poet as a proficient interpreter but her manner of participation in the divination result in the poet and, eventually, the internal audience withholding full endorsement of her contribution. Unlike Penelope, Helen is not technically the acting regent of her domain, at least by human standards.¹¹⁰ Indeed, her husband Menelaos is alive and sound of mind and body, and therefore, he is the rightful authoritative figure of Sparta. Nonetheless, Helen regularly demonstrates that it is she who holds the ultimate sway over events, behind Menelaos’ ostensible power, and further reinforces that inverted power structure through her participation in the divination-scene. As I will discuss later in this chapter, Helen usurps Menelaos’ socially sanctioned right—and one actually solicited by the internal audience—to act as the principal recipient of the divine message. Helen does not allow her husband to determine

¹⁰⁷ Oppenheim 1956; Flower 2008; Harris 2009, esp. 54-57.

¹⁰⁸ At *Iliad 2.79-83* it is precisely the fact that the Dream was sent to Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek chieftains, that Nestor explains his endorsement of it; moreover, a common epithet of kings is ‘Zeus-reared’ Διοτρεφής, which links their power to a kind of manifest destiny (Kirk 1985, 70).

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Atossa in Aeschylus’s *Persians* and Klytemnestra in the *Libation-bearers*.

¹¹⁰ For Helen’s depiction as a transgressive character, see Doherty 1995, 127-160 and Doherty 1995, in Cohen, 81-92.

the receptive situation of the omen and, in doing so, transgresses as a character, in general, and as a medium for divine information.

The poet continues to perpetuate the transgressive atmosphere of Helen's co-opted divination scene by foregoing any conformational commentary in the narrator-text. Moreover, he excludes any corrective or endorsing response from Menelaos, who could have sanctioned Helen's actions by aligning her prophecy with the mortal patriarchal authority.¹¹¹ Instead, the entire scene is left to subvert and transgress those patriarchal norms, the equivalent for Telemachos of the woman-dominated households that recurred throughout Odysseus' wanderings. Consequently, in flagrant transgression of mortal standards, Helen is able to provide an inspired interpretation of the sign, one which is made possible because Helen operates outside and beyond human rules and according to her divine heritage.

Thus, neither woman can perform the entire role of the medium and their explicit inability hinges upon them both embodying the *eschatoi* of the spectrum that spans the duality of human and divine, which the inspired medium must expertly negotiate. Indeed, the coupling of Helen's and Penelope's scenes ultimately results in the focus of the external audience falling upon the fact that both women are too marginal to perform the medium's complete task to the level that the poet expects and presents himself as performing. Each woman, instead, performs one of the medium's 'specialist' roles—instead of the generalist medium's entire role—according to the inspired qualities that each exhibit, qualities that, I suggest, are ineptly exhibited so as to portray the queens as laypersons attempting unsuccessfully a professional's task.

¹¹¹ For the importance of the reception of divination performances, see Flower 2008.

2.4 A Medium's Toolkit: Cognizance and Command Over Inspiration

When juxtaposed with Helen's precedent, Penelope's performance as an inspired medium appears to be more inadequate, despite the fact that neither queen is allowed by the poet to perform the role to its fullest extent. Penelope is not an inspired interpreter, whereas Helen clearly is, and as a result Penelope's stint as the stand-in narrator falls flat next to Helen's more proficient performance. In the crafting of these dual scenes, the medium's command over her inspiration is the stylistic tool with which the poet underscores the differences between Penelope's and Helen's contribution to their roles. As discussed in Chapter One, Penelope is characterized by her passivity as a medium, in particular in her relationship to the divine. In direct contrast, Helen is a preeminently commanding character and medium, which is only strengthened by—and moreover, as I will argue, due to—her relationship to the divine.

Helen's transgressive nature extends, thanks to some narratological finagling by the poet, even into the disruption of the epic's text. When Helen interjects and delivers her prophecy, she is depicted imposing her authority not only over her husband's, but also over the very framing of her scene, which had been staged by the narrator up until that point as a symbolic bird sign with a different point of reference.¹¹² When the poet, therefore, yields to Helen and does not further re-contextualize her pronouncement into the receptive atmosphere he has created with the preceding exposition narrator-text, I argue that he does so in an explicit stylization of Helen's assertion of her command, divinely sourced and confidently exercised, over the mortal standards of divinatory reception.

It is not inconsequential exposition that Helen derails and discards. Rather, the poet has carefully framed for his audience the eagle's approach through the lens of a human observer. As

¹¹² Above, in 2.3, I outline the depiction of focalization through the mortal internal audience, by which the interest of the omen seems to be Telemachos' kingly bloodline.

the poet of the *Iliad* creates a perspective-bias through the sequencing of subjects, the *Odyssey*'s poet places his audience in the internal audience's reception-situation first and foremost, and thus, makes the mortal understanding of the event the precedent for interpreting it moving forward. Still focused upon the most recent speaker, the poet orients the arrival of the eagle, as the internal audience would notice it, in relation to Telemachos.¹¹³ When Peisistratus is described speaking up and giving voice to the internal audience's reception of the event, the external audience is primed similarly to understand that bird sign by mortal standards.¹¹⁴ Menelaos is framed to interpret for whom it was sent by the progression of the exposition and by his social standing. "Did some god make this omen appear for us two, or for you yourself?" Peisistratus asks and the external audience awaits the answer, even being allowed insight into Menelaos' head.¹¹⁵ Making it as clear as possible that Menelaos' response is the predetermined resolution to the omen-scene, the narrator describes him preparing to answer, only to not be allowed to do so. Helen literally is described as getting her word in beforehand, to anticipate his response and beat him to the punch. She even overtakes the syntax of the line, given precedence with the nominative and forcing Menelaos into the accusative as an object of her actions before she even speaks.¹¹⁶ Thus, Helen interjects, interrupts the narrator and the characters around her, and entirely derails the mortal reading of the scene.

After her prophecy, the bird sign is no longer about any of the present internal audience members, nor even about the god granting good fortune to anyone. Instead, it is about the words spoken to incite the omen. Telemachos' wish to see his father at home has been confirmed by the

¹¹³ 15.160 ff.

¹¹⁴ 15.166-168: τοῖσι δὲ Νεστορίδης Πεισίστρατος ἤρχετο μύθων· φράζεο δὴ, Μενέλαε **διοτρεφές**, ὄρχαμε λαῶν, / ἢ νῶϊν τόδ' ἔφηνε θεὸς τέρας ἦε σοὶ αὐτῷ. Mark how Peisistratos' address names Menelaos as the divinely sanctioned person at the gathering, using the διοτρεφές epithet discussed above.

¹¹⁵ 15.169-170: ὧς φάτο, μερμήριξε δ' ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος, / ὅπως οἱ κατὰ μοῖραν ὑποκρίναίτο νοήσας.

¹¹⁶ 15.171: τὸν δ' Ἑλένη τανύπεπλος ὑποφθαμένη φάτο μῦθον·

eagle's arrival and, better yet, the eagle's predatory success indicates not the power of the ruling persons in the audience, but rather Odysseus' predation of the suitors.¹¹⁷ In other words, Helen's interruption has upset the expectations of the internal and external audience for the omen's meaning, which were fostered by the narrator through the sequencing of the scene, and redirects the scene to continue along her reading of its significance. It is not with a hint to his good fortune, but with words about Helen's prophecy in his mouth and his mind on his father that Telemachos leaves Sparta and ends the scene.¹¹⁸ Helen supersedes the wishes of the mortals around her and imposes her own will on the divination-scene, to the effect that, because she sees more meaning in the sign than the internal audiences even imagine there to be, she coerces the entire receptive situation to follow her perspective.

The result of her proclamation is that the trope of the auspicious bird sign, which is promoted by the internal audience and the narrator and which would have created simply dramatic irony for the external audience, is elevated to a full-blown, articulated prediction of the future through Helen's over-active and unwieldy divine cognizance.¹¹⁹ Perhaps as a reflection of Helen's authorial clout in her scene, the narrator steps aside and leaves Helen's character-text to relay the meaning of the omen in emancipated fashion; that is, Helen's commanding nature makes her focalization and narration of the communication the primary vehicle by which the external audience receives its meaning, though not its form.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Helen's very prophecy echoes some of the language used in Telemachos' wish, which triggered the omen. Compare Telemachos at 15.156-158: αἰ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὧς/ **νοστήσας** Ἰθάκηνδε, κίχων Ὀδυσῆ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ./ εἶπομ'... with Helen at 15.176-178: ὧς Ὀδυσσεὺς κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν καὶ πόλλ' ἐπαληθεῖς/ οἴκαδε **νοστήσει** καὶ τίσεται· ἤε καὶ ἤδη/ οἴκοι,...

¹¹⁸ Another wish, that her prophecy be true (15.180-181), discussed above.

¹¹⁹ More on her prophecy itself below. De Jong 2001, 370 comments: "The narratees may note that what is presented by Helen in 177-178 as mere hypothesis, 'or maybe he [Odysseus] is already at home and planning the Suitors' destruction', is in fact reality."

¹²⁰ They receive the first focalization and narration of the bird sign's form in the narrator-text.

Contrary to Helen's emancipation and authority as a character and medium, Penelope appears to relinquish all agency to Athena at every turn as she delivers the report of her dream, assuming a level of passivity that is at odds with her usual characterization as a queen. When Penelope attempts to abandon this passivity, however, and provides her own interpretation of the omen, her control over its meaning, her authority, is undermined by Odysseus as he reasserts the dream's own self-interpretation as the true one.¹²¹ To further enforce the contrast between each queen's command over the performance, the nature of the direct speech that each undertakes represents the amount of control and autonomy each has over their contribution. Helen is allowed to deliver her own words in direct speech as the interpretation of Book 15's omen, but Penelope must relay second-hand the dream's words in reported speech before delivering her own half-hearted take on its meaning.¹²² Helen's authorship is strongly asserted in her independent and uncontested statement on the bird sign's meaning, whereas Penelope is made a passive vehicle of the god's message and, again, when she does attempt to assert some autonomous judgment on the dream-sign, her authority is undercut by a contesting voice with more command. Indeed, despite acting as the primary voice throughout Odysseus and Penelope's interview, the queen is characterized by few untainted moments of independent thought and expression. Her passivity in this divination episode is only underlined by the diametric opposition created by the poet between her participation and the agency Helen demonstrates within her omen-reading sequence.

¹²¹ Twice Odysseus speaks over Penelope's reception of the dream. First, when she's finished reporting it, he answers, in the face of her clear disbelief, that clearly there is no other interpretation than the one provided by the eagle (19.555-558). When Penelope pushes back with the axiom of the two dream gates and then her own prolepsis (19.560-575), again Odysseus provides an alternative prediction of events, that Odysseus will arrive and win the contest of the bow (19.583-587).

¹²² Half-hearted, because Penelope returns to the associative speech style directly after the interpretation, declaring the contest of the bow that she seems induced, likely possessed, in order to announce, particularly at this precise moment. See Chapter One and de Jong 2001, 479-481.

Consequently, alongside Helen's *oionomanteia*-scene, the treatment of Penelope's dream-scene demonstrates that the poem is coding the proficiency and command, with which the medium performs their role in a divinatory scene, as the determining factors in the efficacy of divine-human communication when the divine perspective-bias is removed as an expositional crutch. In Book 19, the narrative may simply be depicting Penelope as an inadequate executor of both performative requirements of the medium's role. Conversely, the poet may be using these episodes to craft a story of men that mimics human perception and understanding of their world, which relies upon mortal participants as focalizers of events for the external audience.¹²³ Indeed, between Helen's and Penelope's scenes, it becomes observable in particular that, when the *Odyssey*'s narrative moves away from what is knowable by purely human standards, the poet closes off the external audience's access to the underpinning divine events and, instead, encapsulates the divine involvement in the character-text of the god's proxy. Thus, just as would be the case in a consultation with a real-world *mantis*, the external audience must rely entirely upon their own judgment to extract meaning for what the medium of a divine-human communication-scene provides concerning the gods' involvement.¹²⁴ Without narrative omniscience, the medium stands as the only source for divine information for the external audience. Because Penelope has no conscious access to or command over divine inspiration, the focalization of her scene is purely a mortal one and, respectively, her external audience can only understand the scene through the vehicles available to those humans who are not themselves inspired interpreters—empirical logic and inference from tradition and memorized pieces of information.

¹²³ See Saïd 2011, 95-131 for one treatment of the narrative techniques used throughout the poem to innovate the audience's perception of the poem and its story.

¹²⁴ See Flower 2008 for an account of the pressures and conventions surrounding 'real-world' *manteis*.

Finally, narratively, each omen's purpose operates on a different level of messaging. Helen's *oionomanteia* falls flat among its internal audiences but, through her command over its delivery, offers a bold signpost for the external audiences, while also drawing attention to the circumstances and execution of such a remarkable omen-based prophecy. Helen's authority makes her a competent inspired interpreter and allows her to contribute more to the epic's text as a narrator providing exposition. Penelope's dream discussion, on the other hand, performs flawlessly on an internal story level, while more or less causing more confusion than exposition narratologically, because she exhibits little of the cognizant command over her inspiration apparently required to explicate a god's message. Her passiveness may undermine her ability to inform the text through interpretation, but simultaneously it allows her to act appropriately as an inspired vessel for a divine communication that, in turn, enables the epic's story. In other words, Penelope's incognizance allows her to receive the 'story' from the gods directly and relay it in a straight, unadulterated narration that avoids disrupting its carefully contrived performance context.

Each woman's scene has, thus, been positioned by the poet to illustrate the complementary components of a medium's role, and moreover, the portions that inform each stage of *poesis*. Therefore, Penelope is not simply a failed medium. Instead, she is an inspired dreamer—a traditionally passive, human role—who then is constrained by the adaption of a mortal perspective-bias also to undertake an interpretive, narratorial role, which she is not equipped to perform. The poet has stylized two scenes of divine-human communication to exemplify the components of a successful medium, but bifurcated and polarized them into these contributing qualities: human and divine, reactive and cognizant. What is the effect, however, of this bifurcation? I propose that it is an exemplum through antithesis.

2.5 A Medium's Toolkit: Performance Context and Technique

To recap, without the absolute exposition and transparency of the divine perspective-bias, the internal medium of a god's message becomes the focal point of the external audience's critical evaluation of the message and their normally overshadowed contributions dictate how the external audience is made to interact with the divine information. Therefore, mediums such as Helen and Penelope determine the effectiveness of their communication of divine information by those traits that their own background and direct participation in the event provide. In other words, the external audience must interact with Helen and Penelope as mediums according to what they individually can supply to the divination, independent of the mollycoddling omniscient narrator, just as their internal audiences must rely upon their qualifications and performance to inform the reception of the divination.

Thus far in the *Odyssey*, the reception of the speeches that characters deliver seems to be gauged by their internal audiences according to the persuasiveness of their performance and of what credentials their identity can provide. For strangers, the poet seems to foster a sense that performance is the primary factor in the audience's positive reception of the message. Take, for instance, Odysseus' performance of his own adventures for the Phaiakians in Scheria. The wonder and awe with which they attend his tale indicates that he has charmed them with his ability to construct the narrative, regardless of the truth contained within his words.¹²⁵ Other incredible stories seem to gain credibility purely from the reputation their performer has with his internal audience. Menelaos details a long interaction with the sea god, Nereus, including wonderful feats of shape-shifting and oracles that Telemachos accepts without apparent pause

¹²⁵ 11.333-334; 13.1-2.

because he has been instructed by a party known for wisdom, Nestor, to trust Menelaos at his word and because he is strangely taken with hearing the tales.¹²⁶

Thus, depending upon the internal audience and their understanding of the performer, a collection of salient qualities and character traits contribute to the legitimacy that the medium earns among their internal audience. Furthermore, when a medium's competency and command over their performance affects the scene holding their character-text more significantly, the external audience is forced to deduce the medium's legitimacy more by those same qualities and traits that the internal audience must. With Helen's scene, the narrator provides minimal expository confirmation of Helen's interpretation and thus, to a greater extent than that to which the audience has yet had to resort, Helen's individual characteristics contribute to both her particular brand of mediation and the external audience's reception of her as a diviner. Likewise, Penelope is affected even more so by the context of her announcement of the dream and the qualifications she performs therein.

When the Book 15 bird sign first appears, the company refers to the king's authority and his relationship to Zeus, in deference to Menelaos' social standing, in order to best determine the sign's intended recipient.¹²⁷ Without an experienced seer in the company, it appears to be protocol and tradition for the person of authority (who incidentally is also more likely to receive communications from the gods, as an individual with the clout to effect change in communities) to interpret to their best ability the message of the gods. Moreover, as noted above, the narrator has framed this divinatory moment to a mortal focalization and to stand in the narrative simply as a portent relayed purely in human terms—lucky or unlucky for a particular recipient. Indeed, the

¹²⁶ For the account, see 4.332-587; for Nestor's instruction, 3.327-328; for Telemachos' bewitchment with the story, 4.597.

¹²⁷ See above in 2.2.

poet continues the scene with an insight into Menelaos' internal reaction to the inquiry, describing how the king begins to think over "how he might provide an interpretation in proper order and with due consideration."¹²⁸ So, it appears that Menelaos' response will follow a reading of the sign according to what is considered established and esteemed as proper—κατὰ μοῖραν, what is traditionally correct—but also what he has determined according to his logical approximation of the situation, νοήσας. Menelaos' interpretation would again have delivered an additional valence to the bird sign that corresponded to human understanding of divine communication. By a craft standard and his own rational faculties, learning and reason, he was planning to determine the recipient for the sign. However, before the king is given a chance to come to his conclusions and announce them, his wife, Helen, anticipates his response and intercedes to provide her own.

Although she overturns the situational expectations for the type of divination performed, Helen's prophecy aligns with other epic depictions and archaic conventions of the seer's pronouncement. "Hear me," she declares, in the style of other prophetic figures demanding their attention, before announcing her intentions, "and I instead will prophesy..."¹²⁹ Almost as if providing her credentials for the claim that she is making, that she will act as a *mantis*, Helen then explains the two factors contributing to her reading of the omen. Her interpretation will derive from two sources, the gods' inspiration and her own intuition: "as the immortals place it in

¹²⁸ 15.169-170: ὡς φάτο, μερμήριξε δ' ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος, / ὅπως οἱ κατὰ μοῖραν ὑποκρίναιτο νοήσας. Note the contrast in the words that the poet uses for the style of divination that Menelaos would have used, ὑποκρίνομαι, and the style that Helen will use μαντεύομαι. For the importance of this distinction, see Flower 2008, 23, where the mant- root communicates the importance of an altered state of mind, of inspiration. ὑποκρίνομαι carries no such connotation and instead means more readily 'answer' or here, 'interpret logically'.

¹²⁹ 15.172-178. E.g. Odysseus when about to relay to his comrades the prophecies of Kirke and Teiresias (12.271-273): κέκλυτέ μευ μύθων κακά περ πάσχοντες ἐταῖροι, / ὄφρ' ὑμῖν εἶπω μαντήια Τειρεσίαο/ Κίρκης τ' Αἰαίης... ; Eidothea also addresses her audience and then proclaims her intentions before prophecy (e.g. 4.399): τοιγὰρ ἐγὼ τοι, ξεῖνε, μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω. see also Flower 2001, 211 ff.; Fontenrose 1981 and Maurizio 1997.

my heart and I suspect it will come to pass."¹³⁰ This phrasing that Helen employs immediately places her method of interpreting the sign in almost direct opposition to what the narrator explained would be Menelaos' approach. Where the king would have used human, mortal traditional knowledge and historically-enforced pattern-driven translations, Helen's understanding is derived from an inspiration direct from the gods into her mind. Where Menelaos would have used his rational faculty, Helen would have used her intuitive faculty, from the verb οἶομαι, used of belief, suspicion, and foreboding.¹³¹ Helen's version of thought is still a form of mentally processing of reality, but one that does not rely solely on observable facts and objective reasoning but rather on feelings and instinct. Menelaos' interpretation is positioned on the mortal, logical side and Helen's on the divine, intuitive side of divinatory reasoning.

These two approaches, indeed, confirm her initial claim that she would μαντεύομαι, act as a diviner or prophet, as she is utilizing the two primary tools of a *mantis* for divination: divine favor or inspiration that allows them to peer past the mist into the realm of the gods' knowledge, and their own talent for prediction that is instilled in them either with instruction and practice or as an innate gift.¹³² Whereas more professional *manteis* would have relied on some combination of Menelaos' approach and Helen's, using a conventionally accepted matrix for interpretation, as well as a spark of divine inspiration to enlighten them further, Helen takes the entirely divine path.¹³³ Her reading is god-sent and her intuition is god-bestowed. Her innate ability to intuit the will of the gods is not a result of instruction, but rather presumably from her divine birth. Significantly, her basis for credibility is not through professional training and credentials, but

¹³⁰ κλυτέ μεν· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι, ὡς ἐνὶ θυμῷ/ ἀθάνατοι βάλλουσι καὶ ὡς τελέεσθαι οἶω.

¹³¹ *LSJ* “οἶομαι”.

¹³² Again, Flower 2008, 22-25.

¹³³ For the combination embodied in Theoklumenos, see again Flower 2008, 42 (guild heritage) and 78-79 (ability to prophesy).

rather is derived from her imitation of such a performance.¹³⁴ As a result, as a medium, Helen simply demands her audience's belief in her performance because of her own ultra-mortal understanding.

And accordingly, as opposed to the narrator's account of Menelaos' contemplation of the omen, the cataloguing of tradition and reason as his tools for interpretation, Helen's oracular response is preserved entirely in character-text. The inspired interpretation that she appears to deliver stands solely in her direct speech, unembellished by any further interpretation or contextualization by the narrator. If her internal and external audiences choose to accept Helen's interpretation, they must both do so based on her word alone, without the guiding insight the narrator-text could provide. This problem is complicated by, and perhaps a reflection of, the fact that the poet neither confirms nor denies Helen's competence. She knows some of the steps, but her aggressive approach also undermines her performance and exposes some of her faults. She does not entirely succeed in performing the mediating role for her internal audience—they do not declare acceptance of her omen or give it social sanctioning. And indeed, despite her best efforts, Helen foregoes an important component of her prophetic performance: the contextualization for her interpretation.

Helen does not describe the eagle's flight like a human diviner, according to the matrix of a right-left binary, but she does so like an epic poet on a metaphorical level that her internal audience was not employing.¹³⁵ Exhibiting her mastery of inspired interpretation, but foregoing the structure established by the narrative context and her internal audience, Helen provides her

¹³⁴ Arguably, her talent for imitation is also due to her divine nature and gifts. E.g. her uncanny ability to mimic the voices of men's wives while the Achaians hide within the Trojan Horse, as told by Menelaos at 4.276-290.

¹³⁵ The narrator-text uses the left-right binary, but Helen uses a simile "just as... so...": ὧς ὅδε χῆν' ἤρπαιζ' ἀπιταλλομένην ἐνὶ οἴκῳ/ ἐλθὼν ἐξ ὄρεος, ὅθι οἱ γενεή τε τόκος τε./ ὧς Ὀδυσσεὺς κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν καὶ πόλλ' ἐπαληθεῖς/ οἴκαδε νοστήσει καὶ τίσεται· ἠὲ καὶ ἤδη/ οἴκοι, ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει, 15.174-176.

own epic simile (ὥς [...] ὥς [...], 15.174-176) to describe the bird sign. In doing so, she constructs a point of comparison by which, just as the epic poet does, her audience is given a tangible, understandable, relatable metaphor to carry over the divine message that may otherwise be incomprehensible. Helen is more proficient in the deployment of her inspired understanding, more discerning in her focalization of the signs sent her by the gods, and more effective in narrating them for her audiences. Nonetheless, she compels her audience to change their approach to the reception of the divinatory moment instead of interpreting it correctly according to the traditional binary oionomanteic language. By not complying, by repeatedly transgressing mortal norms, Helen does not, it seems, earn their full-hearted approval judging by the narrator's silence and the lack of verbal confirmation from the internal audience. Telemachos merely asserts that, if she turns out to be right, she must be divine.

Helen is an exceptional inspired medium, but perhaps her exceptionality is exactly the quality the poet wishes to capitalize upon in his dual depiction of her alongside Penelope. Due to her aggressive approach and confidence in her abilities, Helen's authority as a medium within the story and for the external audience matches the active role the poem forces upon her on a narrative level. The narrator cedes exposition to Helen and she is able to shoulder that responsibility to a degree that passive Penelope cannot when she is endowed with the same degree of narrative control. Moreover, she draws from her divine background and magical prowess to deliver a prophecy based on the god's sign that rivals the insight the narrator might have provided to the external audience in narrator-text. As a result, the external audience is left with no absolute lack of information about the circumstances of the divine message, but rather with a lack of certainty about the validity of the details imparted about that divine message from the immediate text of the scene.

Her performance, then, falls short not, like Penelope's, because her cognizance and command over her inspiration is not suitable to undertaking the role, but rather because Helen cannot temper her divine, transgressive qualities enough to make them fully palatable for her mortal audience. Helen is drawing on the rawest, most unrefined inspiration for her interpretation—she is semi-divine and savvy in the ways of reality, but is notorious for being equally conniving when it comes to her access to the extra-human—and, just as her hyper-aggressive usurpation of the moment demonstrates, she lacks some of the refinement of a practiced diviner who advises and consults rather than shouting over others. Helen lacks subtlety and finesse in wielding her inspiration, and her access to the gods' perception of knowledge is, perhaps, a little too unrefined, too close to the divine. A medium of divine-human communication needs to be able to understand the divine, as well as to read the expectations of human performance in order to fulfill their role as go-between. Helen does not seem to have the tact or performance technique to adapt her divine information to her performance context, and therefore, provides a translation of the communication that does not quite assimilate the message into human standards of understanding. Her correct and inspired interpretation is left without context for her mortal internal audience and with a certain degree of uncertainty for her external audience, almost as if her interpretation requires an extra interpretation because it retains too much of the divine.

Penelope's relationship to the divine and her incognizance create an inverted type of inadequacy in a medium. Penelope's interactions with the divine are unconscious and passive and, therefore, her understanding of the ways of the gods is extremely limited. She is not divine in heritage and she has no established relationship with a godly patron. The queen has clearly been gifted with a keen mind and exemplary skills, which are normally considered a gift from

the gods, but she is merely a recipient of that grace, passively embodying their favor rather than participating in an active relationship with a god to execute her skills. Instead, Penelope's strongest connection with a god lies in her position as a puppet of Athena's will. Moreover, unlike the inverted social structure in Sparta, Penelope is situated in such a way as to perform along the sanctioned guidelines for a ruler in communication with the gods explicitly because of her opportune passivity.

The gods provide the human rulers with a piece of information, for example, Agamemnon's dream, making the human the passive object of that inspiration. If they are capable, they may apply their own training to provide a mortal interpretation on the message, or consult a specialist.¹³⁶ Penelope cannot perform any subsequent interpretive role herself because she does not have the training to read divinatory signs like a professional seer nor is she an inspired interpreter of the gods' languages. She does not attempt to focalize the bird sign of her dream through the left-right binary of the narrator-text, as we saw in Helen's scene and likewise overlooked by Helen, and her mortal conceptual matrix of numerology must yield to the more direct and explicit interpretation by a divine messenger in the dream itself.¹³⁷ If we can view Penelope's confidence of the dream in beggar-Odysseus as a variation on the consultation of a specialist, then Odysseus' more experienced understanding of the ways of the gods would serve as the appropriate authority to endorse one reading or the other. Penelope is, thus, framed and rigorously depicted by the poet to be the embodiment of the mortal aspects of the medium, the qualities that react and contextualize. She can, rightfully, receive and give voice to the message

¹³⁶ Indeed, in *Iliad 2*, Agamemnon exemplifies this impulse, to dream and interpret. Alternatively, the ruler may seek an inspired interpreter to provide a divinely-enlightened reading of the message, employing their authority in the pursuit of a meaning. Flower 2008, 188-210.

¹³⁷ Penelope only describes the number and death of the geese, the only directions she provides for the eagle associate him with the mountain and with the heavens (19.535-540).

of the gods but she cannot herself provide it with any further meaning. She inadvertently performs an inspired *manteia*, but she cannot deliver upon the full role of an inspired *mantis* and provide an inspired exegesis for that *manteia*. Penelope is an inspired prophetess but not an inspired interpreter.

Nonetheless, the poet poses her to act as an inspired prophetess and interpreter for his external audience. By taking on the role of the poet, Penelope assumes an even more active narrative role, requiring more participation and creative contribution from the medium than Helen's.¹³⁸ As a result, she fails in her responsibility to the external audience to reveal the divine workings behind the dream and the narrator leaves her to fail and be resuscitated by the more divinely inspired interpreter, Odysseus—a social dynamic that is unlike the inversion found in Sparta and therefore is endorsed by the poet.¹³⁹ Moreover, she emphasizes the failure of her mediation in her own performance, unlike Helen, by casting doubt upon its very relevance.¹⁴⁰ Whereas Helen, at least, does not invite her internal audience to doubt her outright, Penelope expressly draws uncertainty onto her performance, which is then doubled by the fact that she has no conscious access to the divine and her internal audience has no manifest proof of her unconscious access to the divine in waking reality.¹⁴¹

Point for point, the poet has established a precedent for Penelope's dream-narration in the person of Helen and, point for point, the poet has ensured that Penelope appeared to

¹³⁸ No descriptive narrator-text accompanies dream of the likes found preceding Helen's prophecy.

¹³⁹ Athena herself confirms the inevitability of this prophecy in the early lines of the next book, 20.45-53. Additionally, when Penelope requests an interpretation from the beggar, she unintentionally restores the responsibility for interpreting the omen to the rightful recipient and interpreter, the king of Ithaca. Where she fails in the execution of the divination, she unwittingly succeeds in apportioning it to a more capable diviner, precisely because of Athena's manipulation of the queen and the situation.

¹⁴⁰ See Chapter One 1.3-1.4.

¹⁴¹ Interestingly, it is narratively efficient for Penelope's internal audience—especially her silent internal audience of potentially treacherous handmaids—to doubt the reality of her dream's message. Otherwise, those handmaidens could possibly betray Odysseus' surprise return to the suitors.

underperform in comparison, through the deployment of an extreme mortal perspective-bias. Whether by capitalizing on Penelope's innate characteristics or by orchestrating the scene to create a narrative situation that makes Penelope a less effective substitute for the narrator, the poet has crafted a moment in which Penelope failed where Helen seemed to have some qualified success. If Helen's scene invites some consideration, Penelope's demands scrutiny and contemplation. Of course, the audience knows (so far as they can know from the canon) that both women will be proven correct in their predictions, but nevertheless the poet's portrayal of the mediations is crafted with a heavy fog of obfuscation.

Pause is meant to be taken when both women reveal slivers of revelation from the divine realm. The explicit removal of the divine perspective-bias ensures that the external audience knows nothing of the divine underpinnings of the omens and the clarity of the narrative behind each divination is further obfuscated by the systematically undermined performances of inspiration from both mediums. Ultimately, the same sign is twice communicated and, yet, neither medium can assure the external audience that it is a true sign, until the dénouement of Odysseus' return, when the omniscient narrator-text effectively confirms those predictions.

2.6 The Poet Demands

The poet of our *Odyssey* expends a substantial portion of his narrative license to subvert the norms of divinatory moments in Book 15 and nearly to invert them in Book 19. The result is a contrast that exploits the cognizance of and connection to the divine, which Helen commandingly utilizes and through which Penelope is used, in order to bring to the critical fore how each woman, despite their proficiencies in other capacities, ultimately falls short of the requirements the poet upholds for a sufficient medium of divine-human communication. The poet, furthermore, innovates narrative standards so that such moments in the story are preserved

not just by a mortal perspective-bias, but an individual mortal's perspective-bias, adjusted to represent, from perception through comprehension and judgment, their own personal understanding of events. The emphasis falls on the contribution of the individual mortal. Thus, I suggest that the poet is preparing to make a salient point about the necessary qualities of a medium by using two characters in two roles that already existed and that, with minimal alteration to the story, could be capitalized upon to make a comparative illustration in the epic's text.

Simply in viewing Helen's and Penelope's scenes side by side, one can see that, if a medium is inexperienced and too mortal, their message will be convoluted and less believable for any audience who is not specifically looking out for some auspicious sign or confirmation. On the other hand, if a medium is immoderate and too divine, their command of the communication and expertise with its contents will overpower their performance context and result in an interpretation that is overcomplicated for their human audience. Ultimately, the predispositions and competency of each medium will, because of the mortal perspective-bias, dictate the effectiveness of the divine-human communication as a scene, not as a story point. Helen, despite all her apparent innate qualifications, cannot be a perfect stand-in for the poem's narrator and Penelope, who exhibits the opposite traits of Helen in many regards, is even less qualified. In other words, a layperson is never the best option, not when one can have a professional medium.

To answer the question posed in this chapter's title, 'Penelope the Prophetess?': Penelope is a prophetess, but she is not a poetess, and neither is Helen. Interpretation comes easily for Helen, but she cannot adhere to performance standards in order to deliver her proclamation and have it successfully received. Penelope can receive a message but she cannot instill it with

meaning. Thus, neither is an ideal substitute narrator. It is in the spirit of making this precise point that, I believe, the poet included, where he did, Penelope's reflection on the nature of dreams, and indeed on the nature of receiving and understanding any divine information.

ξείν', ἧ̃ τοι μὲν ὄνειροι ἀμήχανοι ἀκριτόμυθοι
γίγνοντ', οὐδέ τι πάντα τελείεται ἀνθρώποισι.
δοιαὶ γάρ τε πύλαι ἀμνηνῶν εἰσὶν ὀνείρων·
αἱ μὲν γὰρ κεράεσσι τετεύχεται, αἱ δ' ἑλέφαντι·
τῶν οἱ μὲν κ' ἔλθωσι διὰ πριστοῦ ἑλέφαντος,
οἳ ῥ' ἑλεφαίρονται, ἔπε' ἀκράαντα φέροντες·
οἱ δὲ διὰ ξεστῶν κεράων ἔλθωσι θύραζε,
οἳ ῥ' ἔτυμα κραίνουσι, βροτῶν ὅτε κέν τις ἴδῃται.

Stranger, you know, dreams are indecipherable nonsense
And they in no way come to completion in every respect for men
For there are two gates of fleeting dreams;
For some are wrought in horn and some in ivory;
Of these, those that come through split ivory
They indeed deceive, carrying futile words;
And those that come out through buffed horn
They indeed truly come to pass, whenever a mortal sees them. (19.560-568)

The gods' messages are perplexing and difficult to decipher. The circumstances of divination demand that an interpreter be able to peer through the veil and to divine intention in order to instill meaning. Ironically, of course, she delivers this sage insight in the aftermath of her very own ineptitude to do so, but also to the very person who is enabled to succeed at the task.

Odysseus navigates the divine and the mortal with almost unparalleled expertise throughout the epic, to the point where his feats of story-telling are placed on par with those of the poet.¹⁴²

Odysseus, like Theoklumenos who follows, correctly embodies both necessary poles of the medium spectrum; both exercise balanced cognizance and authority, both negotiate their divine source and mortal audience with tact and care. In other words, anyone can receive a message from the gods—see Agamemnon—but not everyone can appropriately deduce the

¹⁴² Cook 2009, 111-134; Walcot 2009, 143-153.

message's meaning—again, see Agamemnon—particularly if they do not have the essential qualities that allow them to straddle both spheres of understanding, divine insight and human technical training. The significance of the technical training arises especially in the final step of revelation, in audience reception. The medium must create a message that their audience can understand both in its meaning and significance. If the message delivered does not adhere to reality as the audience understands it, if it is not performed through a socially-sanctioned avenue, like Helen's clearly inspired reading of the bird omen, it may not be accepted fully.

Through contrast, the poet is building a case for the extreme importance of a specific kind of medium, for an individual that somehow encapsulates traits and abilities that powerful, capable characters of the likes of Helen and Penelope do not entirely have. The negative space that the poet leaves primes the audience to notice individuals who negotiate the divine and the mortal qualities of the medium and demonstrate that ability in a way that highlights instead of undermines their contribution to the effort. As just mentioned, the poet seems prepared to answer his own question, creating a narratological dilemma and then solving it with an immediate contrast of performance. Odysseus can interpret, he has an excellent relationship with a divine patron, and he happily straddles all the traditional Greek binaries. In order to further impress this point, I suggest that the poet bookends his carefully sabotaged medium-scenes of Helen and Penelope with a proficient manifestation of the type he expects, but one which raises its own set of questions and problems. Happy with the impression that his audience will not complacently stand by and accept the hierarchy of traditional standards of epic performance, the poet, as we shall see, turns his critical verse upon the audience, creating a critique, in the guise of the professional seer, Theoklumenos, of the epic performance's reception.

CHAPTER THREE: THEOKLUMENOS & HIS MANTIC SPEECH

3.1 Theoklumenos' Outburst: Clarifying Terminology

ὥς φάτο Τηλέμαχος· μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς
Ἀθήνη
ἄσβεστον γέλω ὄρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα.
οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελοίων ἀλλοτρίοισιν,
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ' ἄρα
σφέων
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός.
τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοειδής·
ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν
ὕμέων
εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε
γοῦνα.
οἰμωγὴ δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί,
αἵματι δ' ἐρράδαται τοῖχοι καλαί τε μεσόδμαι·
εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
ἱεμένων Ἐρεβόςδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἠέλιος δὲ
οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν
ἀχλύς.

So spoke Telemachos; and Pallas Athena in/for
the suitors/ Incited an unquenchable laughter
and knocked their thoughts off course./ And
now they were laughing with jaws belonging to
others/ And were eating meat defiled with
blood; but lo their eyes/Were filled with tears
and their mind was intent upon weeping./ And
to them godlike Theoklumenos addressed:/ Ah
wretches! Why are you suffering *this evil*? In
night your heads /Have been veiled, and your
faces, and your knees beneath./ Lamentation
has quickened, and your cheeks have been
flooded with tears/ And with blood have been
sprinkled the walls and fine ceiling coffers;/
And the porch is full of ghosts, and the
courtyard is also full,/ Of those hurtling to
Erebos down under the gloom; and the sun/
Has perished utterly from heaven and an evil
mist has spread over.

(*Odyssey* 20.345-357)

By the time the events of Book 20 come to their dramatic close, it has been made abundantly clear that both the epic and Athena's plan are tumbling headlong towards their climax. Theoklumenos' macabre tour de force sits at the crux of this denouement, uniting plot and thematic points, as well as vividly foretelling that climax in gruesome detail.¹ Indeed, scholars have already demonstrated conclusively that Theoklumenos' scene is integral and integrated into the poem's structure.² Nevertheless, despite the episode's neatly executed thematic and narrative functions, Theoklumenos' contribution stands out as anomalous in the eyes of scholars and commentators.³ Much like Penelope's dream, Theoklumenos' outburst

¹ *Odyssey* xx. 345-374.

² See especially Levine 1983 and Mitchell 2011.

³ Russo 1988, 124-5 provides the standard commentative breakdown of the scene, noting discrepancies in interpretations about who sees the morbid signs, curious turns of phrase, as well as quoting Stanford's take on Theoklumenos' prophecy as a "spontaneous visionary outburst" before attempting to parse apart the significance of the symbolism in the prophecy. Dodds 1951, 64-101 remains the seminal work distinguishing the scene as ecstatic

among the suitors has been interpreted as the sole extant example of its particular type of divination in the Homeric epics: inspired prophecy. Scholars have used a variety of terms to describe this unusual quality of Theoklumenos' two-part speech, ranging from mantic to ecstatic to intuitive.⁴ For this project, I assert that it is more fitting to examine the entire performance through a slightly modified variation of the lens by which we already have analyzed Penelope's and Helen's scenes, the effect of inspiration on individual divinatory performances. However, rather than 'inspired', which connotes the act of a divine source imparting something into a mortal in the moment, I will refer to Theoklumenos as 'affected' during his outburst and to his mantic prophecy as being a result of this affected state. Once affected, Theoklumenos enters into his special mode of mantic performative and operates according to, as the root of *manteia* and *mantis* suggests, an enhanced mental or perceptive situation.⁵

and unusual. See also Burkert 1985 and 2005 for discussions attempting to typify the scene, Lovatt 2013, 134 ff. about the effects of madness in the scene and, finally, Scodel 2009, 120-122 about Theoklumenos' unique presentation in general in the *Odyssey*.

⁴ Mantic remains the general term for the quality of acts performed by a mantis or seer/diviner. Its use without qualifying modifiers, however, invites the added connotations that the root of the verb provides, those of mania and madness (see Nagy 1990 and Maurizio 1995) that I would like to side-step when referring to the overall performance. Ecstatic, the term used by Dodds to point out the uniqueness of this scene, also invites questions of the seer's autonomy, which, as we will see in this chapter, is the opposite of the situation I read from Theoklumenos' performance. Intuitive, used by scholars of the psychoanalytical bent (see Lange 2007) avoids the real crux of the event, the involvement of the gods, in favor of a milder, modern rationalization for foreknowledge, latent instinct. Not only is this anachronistic, but this flavor of terminology is reductive of the complex cultural system that externalizes reality and its phenomena instead of internalizing it in the way of modern psychology (see Pratt 1994).

⁵ See Nagy 1990, 56-64 for an etymological discussion.

Human State	Inspired	Affected
Professionals	<i>mantis</i> , oral poet	<i>mantis</i>
Laypersons	ruler (king/queen)	hero, ruler
Examples	Calchas, Penelope, Helen	Theoklumenos (<i>Ody.</i> 17 & 20), Achilles (<i>Il.</i> 1) (Odysseus)
Act of Intervention	“breathing” a message into human	“touching” the <i>nous</i> of a human
Altered Mental State	intellectual; information-based	perspectival; sense-based
Divine Contribution to Medium	divinely-focalized information about reality	privileged perspective on reality
Narratological Aspects of Divine Contribution	focalization of fabula into story	activating internal narrator-focalizer
Narratological Aspects of Human Contribution	re-focalization of story and narration of story into text	focalization of fabula into story and narration of story into text

Table 1. *Qualities of altered mental states. A table outlining the differences between an inspired and an affected state.*

As seen above, the affected quality is the result of a god’s intervention, like inspiration, but, in the sense of the Latin *affectus*, is the resulting condition of a god exerting their influence so as to bring the affected person’s mind into a particular state. An affected state is more physically inflicted than inspiration and results from the *mantis*’s *nous* being manipulated by a god so that he perceives things differently.⁶ Thus, an affected individual has an augmented experience of their entire reality, whereas an inspired individual is fed privileged information about reality. The difference, in sum, centers around an inspired medium’s employment as a conduit of information compared to an affected medium’s activation literally as a “seer”. The import of this distinction between ‘affected’ and ‘inspired’ mediums will become clear when Theoklumenos’ performance

⁶ Another term for this “touched” state could be “possession.” In this regard, an affected medium exhibits behavior that is coded to be specifically non-normative and, in turn, indicative of an external influence upon their mind. Thus, an affected medium is “possessed” because of the fact that it is not solely their own faculties being employed to perform their medium act, but rather their faculties being physically manipulated to enable them to perform their medium act. Mist is wiped from their eyes or their attention is redirected and, thereby, the medium is able to pronounce about occurrences that they would not have been able to observe and interpret otherwise.

is compared to the examples of inspired performance in the *Odyssey* and, particularly, when juxtaposed directly with the poet's own inspired *poesis* and when questions of involvement and motivation are factored into the presentation of the scene.

In brief, the impetus for Theoklumenos' interjection in the scene is the result of divine intervention, but of a different variety than that which overcomes Penelope or enhances Helen's interpretation, or even legitimizes Theoklumenos' earlier performances. Therefore, its singular quality can be distilled down not only to his state of mind or his instincts, but to the fact that a divine source outside of Theoklumenos has activated these qualities in him and, in doing so, has assisted him in performing his pronouncement and the interpretation of it that follows. As a result, Theoklumenos' final prophecy appears distinct both from other prophetic moments and the other examples of divination in Homer, which are considered empirical or deductive.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, this empirical and oionomanteic variety of divinatory performance, although traditionally considered predominant in the Homeric epics, does not appear to be the style of divination that has received the most creative focus throughout the *Odyssey*. Indeed, the *Odyssey*'s performers seemed much more interested in depictions of less strictly dualized practices and instead in divination that embodied a combined approach. As Flower has proposed, Greek divination existed on a sliding scale, featuring to varying degrees and predominance factors of both empirical and inspired divination.⁷ Theoklumenos' moment in Book 20 stands distinct even on this scale because his contribution features as an additional component a different type of divine-human communication, manifest epiphany, but framed in the style of and in tandem with a narrator-level performance of inspired prophecy. Thus, the poet

⁷ For my discussion of the scale of divination, see the Introduction I.6; Flower 2009, 84-91, esp. 90: "Rather than accepting this type of strict dichotomy [of inspired or technical divination] under the spell of Plato and Cicero we should rather think in terms of a spectrum or range of activities".

depicts in Theoklumenos a refraction of his own inspired performance, which stands as a commentary on the influence of the individual performer, on a case-by-case basis, in locating their divinatory act on sliding scale.⁸

I draw attention here, in particular, to the *Odyssey*'s depictions of Helen and Penelope in acts of divination, which each highlight the value of certain divine and human contributions to divination, but also, in singling out those distinct contributions, point towards the superiority of a combined approach.⁹ In fact, I suggest that in the sparse Homeric representations of professional diviners, which are restricted by the subject matter, style, and conventions of the epic genre, we have preserved for us an oblique representation of an artisan craft not yet compartmentalized into separate specializations.¹⁰ In much the same way that Nagy has argued that conceptions and representations of the singer evolve from generalist to specialist, I assert that the Homeric epic preserves an original class of generalist diviner who, ideally, practices all varieties of the divining profession, according to the potential that his background provides.¹¹ In Theoklumenos, the poet preserves an example of this generalist diviner exercising his potential to the fullest possible measure, but also frames him as an individual practitioner whose execution can be used to compare and contrast the poet's own performance of cooperative divine-human communication.

The poet achieves this singular depiction of divine-human communication in Theoklumenos' scene through a constellation of specific narrative choices. In other words, it is the way in which the poet brings to life Theoklumenos' contribution to the scene that, unlike any other moment of divine-human communication extant in the epics, makes the scene so

⁸ For a more detailed definition of "refraction" as an operative term in this thesis, see Introduction I.6.

⁹ See Chapter Two 2.5-6.

¹⁰ Pausanias provides an account of this original seer type according to Lange 2007, 470.

¹¹ Nagy 1990, 56-64.

memorable and outstanding.¹² As we examined in the previous chapters, the narratological structure of scenes like Helen's bird-sign prophecy and Penelope's dream-pronouncement marks those moments as metapoetically significant and informative. By circumventing the normal epic omniscience by eschewing the narrator-text and employing a dominantly mortal perspective-bias, the poet presents two instances of incompletely inspired divination.¹³ As we saw earlier, Penelope's dream demonstrates her inspiration as a prophetess through her performance as a conduit for divine information on the mortal plane, but explicitly illustrates her ineptitude in the art of inspired interpretation, which is only exacerbated by the lack of explicative narrator-text in the scene.¹⁴ On the other hand, Helen's reading of the bird sign proves that the Spartan queen has an innate understanding of the divine and an inspired ability to interpret the gods' signs, but not necessarily the performative skills to act as a channel for that divine information as well.¹⁵ The poet preserves the bird sign itself outside of Helen's focalization but still through a mortal-perspective bias, and therefore does not fully commit its communication and explanation to the queen nor entirely endorses her performance with his own narrator-text's confirmation.¹⁶ In contrast to these two specially crafted scenes of inspired divine-human communication, I will argue in this and the following chapter that the poet crafts Theoklumenos' performance of an affected state to the effect that he, and he alone, fully performs a piece of cooperative divination to its fullest potential, from the communication of the divine information all the way through to the interpretation of the gods' message. The first of the two-part structure of this collaborative

¹² For more on my use of the catch-all term "the poet," see Introduction I.3.

¹³ See Chapter Two, esp. 2.5.

¹⁴ *Odyssey* 19.535-575. See Chapter One, esp. 1.3.

¹⁵ *Odyssey* 15.160-180. See Chapter Two, esp. 2.4.

¹⁶ See Chapter Two at 2.3.

performance, the mantic speech at lines 20.351-357, will be covered this chapter and the second half, the interpretative speech at lines 20.364-370, will be addressed in the next chapter.

As I alluded to above, not only does Theoklumenos' performance single out his status as a master diviner, but the deployment of narrator-text alongside Theoklumenos' character-text endorses Theoklumenos' claims and legitimizes his authority on the matter, ultimately illustrating him as a refraction of the poet himself. First, in preparation for Book 20's climactic exhibition of divine-human communication, the poet features Theoklumenos in two other scenes of divination which contextualize his abilities in both narrator- and character-text and characterize him as an effective medium for the external audience. With Theoklumenos' credentials thus established, in Book 20's episode proper, the poet abandons the divine and mortal perspective-biases that dominate the remainder of the poem, and thereby, fashions a scene that weaves the two together. To do so, the poet manipulates the structure of the scene in order to emulate the interactions in which Theoklumenos participates during divination and, which the poet himself nominally performs during *poesis*. In other words, I assert that the external audience notices in particular Theoklumenos' performance because the poet has framed the scene and woven together its contents in such a way as to dramatize the process of collaborative prophecy, a pronouncement of divine-human communication which he himself is performing in the inspired singing of his song.

Moreover, in contrast to the imperfect exempla of Helen and Penelope, the juxtaposition of Theoklumenos with the poet allows the epic's singer to present metapoetically, through the structure and the content of the scene, his ideal of an inspired artisan. Indeed, just as Theoklumenos' performance is divided into separated mantic and interpretative speeches, Book 20's divination episode is divided into two coordinating halves of narrator- and character-text

pairs, each providing their own complementary versions of the mantic and interpretative prophecies. The result is a structure of AabB, with the ‘a’s representing mantic performance and the ‘b’s representing interpretative performance, while the uppercase represents narrator-text and the lowercase character-text. In the next two chapters, I will illustrate how Theoklumenos’ efficacy as an affected *mantis* is demonstrated by this recapitulation of his prophecy in the narrator-text that surrounds Theoklumenos’ character-text, a recapitulation which shows him excelling at both functions of a diviner—*mantis* and *prophetes*—because of the cooperation therein demonstrated between the narrator- and character-text. By incorporating to one end both approaches to the event, the poet creates a stylistically distinct moment of divine-human communication that is simultaneously lucid and seamless in its narration. By showing how Theoklumenos’ character and carefully crafted scene are made to align with inspired moments, like Helen’s and Penelope’s, I will demonstrate how the scene has been constructed to reflect upon the efficacy and necessary qualities of an influenced medium.¹⁷ Additionally, with these comparisons in mind, in my final chapter, I will endeavor to show how the scene overall creates a tableau about the reception that such performers receive among their mortal audiences: Theoklumenos and his reception among the suitors didactically illustrates the importance of inspired or affected performers’ roles and the consequences of underappreciating or deriding their contributions.

In order to lay the groundwork for such a discussion, I will use this chapter to examine generally the contextual work the poet has undertaken to ensure that Theoklumenos performs as a paragon medium for the external audience, and to explore, more specifically, the first half of Book 20’s remarkable divinatory episode. Thus, the first half of the chapter uses Theoklumenos’

¹⁷ By “influenced medium” and the like I mean a medium experiencing an altered mental state due to the influence, either inspiration or affectedness, of an intervening deity. See Introduction I.6.

first two divinatory performances to demonstrate his quintessential mantic qualities and to establish his authority as a capable medium, in preparation for the narratologically unique portrayal of his third, final, and most demonstrative performance of influenced mediation in divine-human communication. After establishing his capability, integrity, and techniques, I will undertake an analysis of the first half of Book 20's divination scene, establishing the narrator- and character-text contributions to the portrayal of the portent. This mantic speech-act, in turn, I will present as capturing a moment of divine intervention in the manner of an ekphrasis, with the result that this otherwise simple omen-episode expositis the process of translating the gods' semiotics into human language. Finally, I will discuss the paired stylization of the performance, which colors and shapes the narrator- and character-text so as to align them as two distinct but interlocking portions of a whole, which together coordinate to realize and embody the epitome (as a complete spectrum) of the mantic portion of a medium's role in divine-human communication.

3.2 The Mantis's Burden

As we have seen in the preceding two chapters, the reception of the divine-human communication by its mortal audience—both internal and external—acts as the final word on the overall efficacy of the divinatory process. If the mortal audience pays no heed or takes no stock in the sign's provenance or the diviner's interpretation, then the communication itself proves futile. The warning about the future does not change that future. The foreshadowing of the next plot point creates no anticipation. In this regard, the context of divinatory events and the reception situation, in which a mediating performer finds himself, becomes a vital component in the performance. Indeed, the effect of Theoklumenos' performance hinges upon his track record as a *mantis* within the poem and the general atmosphere in Ithaka towards divine signs, where he

ends up performing his most elaborate and final divinatory act. It is important, therefore, as an audience outside of the performance of the poem and the mythical tradition, to consider the preconceptions and attitudes that the internal and external audiences would have had towards the itinerant craftsman when his morbid outburst began.

When Theoklumenos begins his largest and most complicated divinatory performance in Book 20, he may appear to be a feckless stranger, out of place and out of his mind, but the professional seer is, by no means, performing outside of his social position or his character in the poem. In fact, the pronouncement and interpretation that Theoklumenos delivers over the suitors' wanton feasting conclude the trio of divinatory performances he has provided to Odysseus's household since his introduction in the epic, as well as testifying to and validating the elaborate genealogical heralding that the poet provides him. As more recent treatises about Theoklumenos' final performance have shown, the episode fits into the broader context of the poem.¹⁸ That is, despite its apparent tonal dissonance and abrupt interjection into the story, its context and contents firmly root the scene amongst the quickening pulse of the poem, its culminating plots, and densely manifesting themes. Furthermore, the poet subtly interweaves Theoklumenos' performances and other such divinatory moments in the epic in such a way as to portray the wandering seer as the medium par excellence, analogous—but pointedly not synonymous—with the poet.

Not fifty lines after Helen's *oionomanteia* and Telemachos' lukewarm reception of her performance, the poet ambushes his audience and Telemachos with a professional seer, complete with his own heroic tale.¹⁹ Considering the brevity of the part he subsequently plays, Theoklumenos' introduction into the epic is a long and complicated one. After he joins

¹⁸ Levine 1983; de Jong 2001, 372; Scodel 2009, 120-122; Mitchell 2011.

¹⁹ *Odyssey* 15.223-278.

Telemachos' journeying party, Theoklumenos speaks only three times and all three speeches are reactive moments of divination.²⁰ In other words, Theoklumenos is allowed by the poet to introduce himself and his role, both in society and the epic, as a *mantis*, and then he is only utilized in that role of *mantis*. Before the external audience's eyes, Theoklumenos is allowed to prove his worth incrementally as a diviner via each of his performance contexts. From the one-on-one *oionomanteia* of Telemachos' destiny of Book 15 to the palace-wide prediction of death and destruction of Book 20, the poet expands the depth and complexity of Theoklumenos' role and also underlines his efficacy and adaptability as a performer.

On the subject of Theoklumenos' overall role in the epic, scholars, including Scodel and Levine, have already argued in favor of the validity of the *mantis*'s appearance by demonstrating that the poet takes the careful steps necessary to reveal to the external audience that within the epic Theoklumenos is a trustworthy source of information about the divine, despite the fact that his internal audiences disregard or openly mock his divinations. The puzzlingly long introduction that he receives informs the external audience of his prophetic lineage and his family's legacy as trust-worthy diviners.²¹ Moreover, in demonstration of his divinatory expertise, Theoklumenos is shown to see and interpret the messages of the gods with a professional aptitude that is otherwise unseen in divining figures in the *Odyssey*, and that the narrator-text endorses.²² Consequently, while his internal audiences are not yet required by the epic to judge his trustworthiness, Theoklumenos is allowed to incrementally prove his abilities as a seer to the external audience and, in this way, prepare them for the enormous masterstroke of divine-human communication

²⁰ Prophecy one: 15.525-534; prophecy two: 17.152-161; final prophecy: 20.345 ff.

²¹ Scodel 2009, 121.

²² Other figures, like Teiresias and Proteus, are described providing faultless prophecies, but they are performed without the interpretative element of decoding an initial semiotic communication. Both prophets simply speak their divine knowledge. Meanwhile, Penelope and Helen are refused the full endorsement of confirmation in the surrounding narrator-text.

that his apocalyptic divination forces them to accept, not on faith, but with confidence that he is a capable medium.²³

Unlike Book 20's morbidly symbolic divinatory moment, the first two episodes of Theoklumenos' mantic work clearly feature the standard Homeric type of divine-human communication, a bird sign. In fact, the bird sign is the same divine message twice divined. The narrator-text first describes its appearance in Book 15, at which point Theoklumenos provides a preliminary interpretation for Telemachos. Then later, he reperforms the divination for Penelope in Book 17, framing the very occurrence of the omen as a marked moment, which he then interprets as an omen accordingly, expanding its significance to align with the new context. Not only does Theoklumenos coordinate his performance and reperformance of the omen's meaning in order to provide foreknowledge appropriate to each moment of uncertainty for the internal audiences, but both performances also contrast with the less professional interpretations of the bird signs of Book 17 and Book 19, which both parties have just witnessed, or will soon experience.²⁴ Compared to Helen's performance for Telemachos and Penelope's bird-oriented dream, Theoklumenos' handling of his bird omen appears more deft and more acceptable to his audiences, even if not whole-heartedly or enthusiastically believed. In these instances, the authority seems to stem from Theoklumenos' professional demeanor and, more specifically, from the formulaic language with which he delivers his divinatory acts, a stylization of

²³ Levine 1983, 5.

²⁴ The poignancy of Theoklumenos' interpretation for Penelope will vary in immediacy depending upon when one argues she dreamed of the eagle and the geese. If, as I believe, the poet has constructed the real-life omen and the dream-omen to occur simultaneously, then Penelope has already had this dream by the time Theoklumenos brings up another bird sign that assures her husband's return to Ithaka. In this case, Penelope's response demonstrates her absolute hopelessness towards the possibility of Odysseus's return, and further influences her own dismissive interpretation of the dream that she will deliver to beggar Odysseus in Book 19. If, on the other hand, Penelope has not yet had her dream, the coincidence of bird signs from a travelling mantis and her dream reality is clearly ignored by the queen and further confirms that she had turned a blind eye to all divinely based signs, probably due to manipulation by Athena. See Chapter One for further discussion on Athena's possession and manipulation of Penelope.

communication with which he is also received by his audiences. Additionally, and specifically unlike Helen’s and Penelope’s episodes, the narrator treats the initial bird sign as objective fact and preserves its occurrence in narrator-text with a mixed perspective-bias. These narratological choices, which juxtapose the scene with Helen’s and frame it to resonate later with Penelope’s, also, significantly, provide the key exegetical information about the origin and motivation behind the omen that further endorses Theoklumenos’ divinatory skill for the external audience.

ὥς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις,
κίρκος, Ἀπόλλωνος ταχὺς ἄγγελος· ἐν δὲ πόδεσσι
τίλλε πέλειαν ἔχων, κατὰ δὲ πτερὰ χεῦεν ἔραζε
μεσσηγὺς νηὸς τε καὶ αὐτοῦ Τηλεμάχοιο.

Just then, as he was speaking, a bird of good omen flew past on the right
A hawk, swift messenger of Apollo; and holding a dove
In his feet, he was plucking [her] and shed [her] feathers down to the ground
Between the ship and Telemachos himself. (15.525-528)

As would have been immediately evident to the external audience, Theoklumenos’ bird sign is formulated in almost a direct parallel to Helen’s.²⁵ Similarly instigated by a comment from Telemachos about the uncertainty of his future, the bird omen begins, in the narrator-text, with the exact same line used earlier at 160: ὥς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις.²⁶ However, once the echo of the earlier omen has drawn it to the listener’s mind, the narrator-text diverts and, abandoning a purely mortal perspective-bias, provides the bird’s provenance—it is a hawk, “swift messenger of Apollo.” Not even the traditionally coded messenger of Zeus, the eagle, is

²⁵ 15.160-165· ὥς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις,
αιετὸς ἀργὴν χῆνα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον,
ἡμερον ἐξ αὐλῆς· οἱ δ’ ἰϋζόντες ἔποντο
ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δὲ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν ἐλθὼν
δεξιὸς ἠΐξε πρόσθ’ ἵππων· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
γῆθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη.

²⁶ At 155-159, Telemachos wishes that he might see his father when he returns home, among other things. Here, Telemachos tells Theoklumenos that he cannot personally provide him with hospitality because neither he nor his mother can properly provide it, but instead suggests that he seek xenia with Eurumachos whom he suspects will soon have the prerogative of Odysseus. He then digresses momentarily and comments that only Zeus knows if this will happen before the day of the suitors’ demise. It is to this almost-wish that the bird omen responds.

named as such in the purely mortally perspectivized account of the bird omen in Helen's scene.²⁷ Indeed, the bird signs in the *Odyssey* bestowed with prophetic gravitas have generally been more oblique than in this moment.²⁸ Through this descriptive choice, the narrator-text has differentiated these moments in the immediacy and clarity of their meanings, as well as in their connections to the divine. Whether by the poet's endorsement of the sign and the divination that will follow, or by Theoklumenos' inherently divine perspective-bias that he imparts through his focalization, the narrator-text has here marked out this bird sign as genuine and Apollonian. Therefore, the poet has also immediately framed Theoklumenos as a superior medium to Helen, one with an unequivocal line of communication with, not only the gods in general, but a particular god: Apollo, patron of poetry and prophecy.²⁹ Additionally, from the focalization of the omen that derives from mortal convention, the tag δεξιός, the external audience is informed of the fact that the omen is auspicious.³⁰ Thus, the poet merely leaves the full meaning of the auspicious message from Apollo to be imparted by Theoklumenos' character-text, a task that the seer completes eagerly, but not without first doubling the poet's assertion that the bird was god-sent.

τὸν δὲ Θεοκλύμενος ἐτάρων ἀπονόσφι καλέσσας
 ἔν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῶ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·
 Τηλέμαχ', οὐ τοι ἄνευ θεοῦ ἔπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις
 ἔγνω γάρ μιν ἐσάντα ἰδὼν οἰωνὸν ἔόντα.
 ὑμετέρου δ' οὐκ ἔστι γένος βασιλεύτερον ἄλλο
 ἐν δῆμῳ Ἰθάκης, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς καρτεροὶ αἰεὶ.

And Theoklumenos, after calling him (Telemachos) far away from his friends,
Then he clasped him in hand, and spoke out a word to him, and named him:
 "Telemachos, you know, the bird did not fly past on the right independent of some god

²⁷ See Chapter Two 2.3

²⁸ Compare Helen's *oionomanteia*, as well as Book 20's bird omen to the suitors, 240 ff., which do not feature the god-sent tag, and which contrast so sharply with the divine ownership that generally decorates bird signs in the *Iliad*, e.g. 7.274, 24.314-316.

²⁹ E.g. *Hom. Hymn Apollo* 3 244 ff. and 523 ff.

³⁰ See Chapter Two 2.3.

For I knew, once I saw it head-on, that it was a bird of omen.
But, no other line is more kingly than yours
In the deme of Ithaka, but you all [are] ever in control." (15.529-534)

Theoklumenos, the moment after the bird omen appears, calls out Telemachos and assures him of the divine source for the auspicious bird omen because he recognized it as a bird of omen, οἰωνόν, upon seeing it. Notably, Theoklumenos does not cite inspiration, nor even name Apollo, as the credentials for his divinatory knowledge. Instead, he uses an empirical, and therefore mortal, verb ἔγνων to support his claim.³¹

Using the context of the omen's appearance, Theoklumenos then provides a narrative for the bird's arrival that is both auspicious and relates to the circumstances. Just as Helen did, Theoklumenos seems to respond to Telemachos' insecurity about his family's future—in this instance, whether or not his household can even shelter a guest, because at any point his mother may be married and thereby the stability of the household be disturbed—and gives a prophecy meant to dissuade the prince of that doubt. Unlike Helen, Theoklumenos does not attempt to justify his particular reading of the omen by relating portions of the sign to equitable moments or events in reality.³² He simply makes a sweeping statement of fact: there is no other clan more kingly than Telemachos' among the people of Ithaka, but his family [are] ever dominant.³³ Interestingly, perhaps because of the exact spoken circumstances of Telemachos' comment, Theoklumenos makes no mention of Odysseus as the source of this dominance on Ithaka. His performance conforms exactly to the situational expectations of the moment that elicited the omen, and stretches no further, again unlike Helen's.³⁴ Because of Theoklumenos' adherence to

³¹ On knowledge-based verbs, like γιγνώσκω or νοέω, versus οἶμαι see Chapter Two 2.5. See also Flowers 2009, 58-65 on professional technical skills of seers.

³² Compare Helen's impressively epic simile at lines 15.174-177.

³³ Above, 15.553-554.

³⁴ Telemachos' attribution of his and the suitors' future to Zeus's will only mentions his mother's marriage and the suitors' evil day, not his father's return. In the episode with Helen, Telemachos wishes to come home and see his father and Helen claims Odysseus is at home and is ready to murder the suitors. Telemachos' wish: 15.155-159.

the performance context and the standard parameters of his mantic craft, including and potentially especially due to his emphasis upon the mortal approaches to divination, Telemachos receives the seer's interpretation of the bird omen actively, in contrast to his passive response to Helen's prophecy.³⁵ Instead of just a verbal response, Telemachos reacts to the prophecy by changing his initial answer to Theoklumenos' request for hospitality. Originally, Theoklumenos' inquiry for hospitality at the palace had been deflected by the prince, who insisted that the royal family was not currently fit to host him as a guest. Because Telemachos apparently presumed the rights and privileges of the house would soon pass to the new husband of his mother, he first urged Theoklumenos to seek *xenia* with the frontrunner of the suitors, Eurumachos. However, then the omen appeared. After his oionomanteic performance, the seer will be housed with Peiraios, a close comrade of Telemachos, until the prince himself can receive Theoklumenos, and will specifically not be made a guest of one of the suitors.³⁶ It appears that, with his interpretation of the auspicious bird omen, Theoklumenos has changed Telemachos' expectations for his mother's marriage and his near future in Ithaka among the suitors.

Narratively, this performance puts Theoklumenos soundly within the social sphere of the royal household and emboldens Telemachos on the brink of returning and facing the suitors' ambush. Beyond this, the interchange also exhibits Theoklumenos' omen-reading and establishes his divinatory skills. The short vignette conveys both the accuracy of the seer's skills, in regards to the divine foreknowledge that they can reveal, and their appropriateness, in regards to how they allow him to assimilate to the requirements of the performance context. Finally, the episode

Helen's transgressive prophecy: 15.174-178. For a discussion of her transgressive performance, see Chapter Two 2.3.

³⁵ See Chapter Two 2.3 for an account of Telemachos' reception of Helen's oionomanteia. At 15.179 ff. you can see that he answers with a formulaic wish-prayer that Zeus fulfill that future, and then he immediately departs, not changing his course of action nor otherwise is he actively affected by the prophecy from what the narrator-text reveals.

³⁶ 15.535-543.

continues the motif of bird symbolism that the poet has repeatedly attached to the royal family and the foreshadowing of their storyline climax. Thus, when Theoklumenos refers again to this bird omen and offers a re-performance of his interpretation of its significance, the reference reminds the external audience of his mantic skill and reinforces his reputation with such skill, as well as again weaving the relevance of himself as a seer and of bird symbolism into the plot at that moment. The performance context of this second prophecy, however, is significantly changed from that of the original bird omen and reading.

When Theoklumenos, later in Book 17, interjects a re-telling of that past omen and his fresh re-interpretation of its significance, he has not been properly introduced—and is, therefore, known only to Telemachos and the external audience as a *mantis*—and interrupts a conversation between Penelope and Telemachos about his travels. Specifically, Telemachos has just related to his mother what Menelaos told him that the old man of the sea had prophesied about Odysseus, namely that he was trapped in the halls of Kalypso.³⁷ In other words, Theoklumenos' prophecy, re-performing an earlier omen-reading, is delivered in competitive response to another prophecy that both he and the external audience know to be outdated. Furthermore, again, the seer's exegesis of the god's message corrects his internal audience's perception of reality—Telemachos can provide *xenia* to Theoklumenos rather than the suitors and, now, Odysseus is not trapped in Ogugia and unable to return to Ithaka, but is, instead, already home and plotting against the suitors. The internal audience is not aware of Theoklumenos' accuracy, but importantly, the external audience is.

τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοειδής·
ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος,
ἦ τοι ὅ γ' οὐ σάφα οἶδεν, ἐμεῖο δὲ σύνθεο μῦθον·
ἀτρεκέως γάρ σοι μαντεύσομαι οὐδ' ἐπικεύσω·
ἴστω νῦν Ζεὺς πρῶτα θεῶν, ξενίη τε τράπεζα

³⁷ 17.139-152.

ἰστίη τ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀμύμονος, ἦν ἀφικάνω,
ὡς ἦ τοι Ὀδυσσεὺς ἤδη ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ,
ἦμενος ἦ ἔρπων, τάδε πευθόμενος κακὰ ἔργα,
ἔστιν, ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει·
τοῖον ἐγὼν οἰωνὸν ἐϋσσέλμου ἐπὶ νηὸς
ἦμενος ἐφρασάμην καὶ Τηλεμάχῳ ἐγεγώνευν.

And among them godlike Theoklumenos also spoke:
“Oh revered wife of Odysseus son of Laertes,
You know, he at least [has not seen and] does not know clearly, but take in this account
from me:
For I will prophesy to you precisely and will not conceal [anything]:
Now let Zeus, foremost of the gods, witness, and the hospitable table
And the hearth of blameless Odysseus, to which I have come
That truly, you know, Odysseus is already in his home land,
Lying in wait or prowling, learning about these here wicked deeds,
And indeed, he is sowing evil for all of the suitors:
Just such a bird omen I myself marked while sitting
Upon the well-benched ship and tried to proclaim to Telemachos.” (17.152-161)

In reflection of the constant narrative development that the poet provides, Theoklumenos accurately updates Telemachos and Penelope about how Odysseus’s tale has progressed since they last heard. In doing so, he is shown to the external audience to be a proficient reader of epic events and, in turn, a capable narrator of those events and their underlying significance to his own internal audience from performance to performance. Theoklumenos, thus, is revealed to be an adaptable and reliable medium figure. Additionally, he performs this identity through a stylized procedure that likely aligns with socially ingrained expectations for a diviner.³⁸ Expanding upon the formal mantic aspects of his first omen-reading, Theoklumenos includes a more detailed address to his audience, a significantly longer and more formalized claim to his divinatory authority, and finally, interprets the omen with more specificity than the vague prediction that he delivered to Telemachos initially.³⁹

³⁸ See Flowers 2009, 62-64; 122-126; 215-226 for a general discussion of oracle-mongers’ performance routines and the formalistic mannerisms of oracles like the Pythia in Delphi.

³⁹ Next to this second prophecy, Theoklumenos’ first performance smacks strongly of a modern-day fortune cookie’s prediction, vague and formulaic enough that any gullible audience could project their own situation onto its promised future. The same comparison could be made with the snippets of Classical era oracle books peddled by

Penelope, first and foremost, receives a full-line address of the sort that occurs in other heraldic or prophetic set-pieces, “oh, revered wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes.”⁴⁰ Next, Theoklumenos belittles the skill of Menelaos as a purveyor of prophetic information, stating that “indeed, that one at least [has not seen and therefore] does not know with certainty, but hear a [performed] account from me.”⁴¹ Then, just as Helen earlier attempted, Theoklumenos declares his divinatory intent with two specific phrases: “I will prophesy (μαντεύσομαι) precisely to you” and “I will not conceal (ἐπικεύσω) [anything].”⁴² The specific verbs are notable because μαντεύσομαι was pointedly used by Helen in her performance, an inspired prophecy which communicated essentially the same message about Odysseus, and because ἐπικεύσω is regularly used by speakers in Homer to assure an audience that no information is being withheld from their account.⁴³ His mantic capacity is underlined through μαντεύσομαι, which indicates his application of divine influence in the prophecy, without revealing the exact nature of that divine source as Helen does with the comment ὡς ἐνὶ θυμῷ/ἀθάνατοι βάλλουσι, “as the immortals place [it] in my heart.”⁴⁴ The fact that Theoklumenos repeats this verb that Proteus had also used to make the same assertion further demonstrates his enactment of a formalized mantic role and

chresmologoi and mocked by Aristophanes for this very charlatan quality. E.g. the comedian’s take in *The Birds* circa lines 332 and 987.

⁴⁰ 17.153.

⁴¹ Russo 1988, 153 discusses the intended antecedent of the ὄ γ’ at line 154. I agree that Menelaos is the obvious reference for Theoklumenos’ derision because it is his mortal capacity for relaying divine information, in the shape of the insight from Proteus, to humans against which Theoklumenos setting in direct opposition his own skill. I believe the use of οἶδεν in Theoklumenos’ assertion is here very pointed, which is why I have chosen to translate it with its full aspectual meaning decompressed. Menelaos takes his account of reality from a god’s mouth, word for word, but Theoklumenos has been bestowed with a gift of focalization and interpretation from the gods which he employs in observing his reality. Thus, when he saw the bird omen earlier, perceived and marked in the verb ἐφρασάμην of line 161, Theoklumenos came to know its meaning in an evolution of other incidental information revealed to his heightened perception by the gods. Hence, the amended interpretation here. Theoklumenos does not simply take into account for his prophecies the word of the gods as their message but all the other circumstantial data along with which that message is revealed.

⁴² 17.155.

⁴³ 4.374 ff for Proteus’ use of the verb; *LSJ*, ἐπικεύθω.

⁴⁴ 15.172-173.

doubly indicates that his interpretation is the updated, truer one, which includes developments that were not available during the previous iteration.⁴⁵

To provide further solemnity and authority to his divinatory performance, Theoklumenos then marks this performance by invoking Zeus to witness his prophecy and the two instantiations of *xenia* provided him in the palace, the table and hearth of Odysseus.⁴⁶ Only at this point, with his specific authority so established, does Theoklumenos begin his actual corrective prophecy, narrowing his earlier declaration on Telemachos' familial fate to specifically illuminate the situation of the head of that family. Because he is prophesying against an earlier prediction, Theoklumenos constructs his interpretation to counter the prior foretelling and then to replace it. Counterbalancing the message from Menelaos that Odysseus was stranded in the halls of Kalypso, his prophecy first asserts that Odysseus is already in his home land, ἤδη ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ... ἔστιν, lying in wait or prowling, since he has learned of the wicked deeds done there and is sowing evil for all the suitors. The last part of Theoklumenos' prophecy is, notably, the same final five words used by Helen in her bird-reading: ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει.⁴⁷ This makes it the second time that both the external audience and Telemachos have heard the same prediction and it demonstrably reinforces the reliability of the message, particularly in comparison to the outdated information provided from Proteus through Menelaos.

As in the case of his first bird-reading, Theoklumenos extracts information from the initial sign and its circumstances without providing an explanation for his interpretation. Furthermore, the information he extracts from that original omen for this second prophecy includes a level of specificity not found in his first prophecy, which is situationally appropriate

⁴⁵ Russo 1988, 153.

⁴⁶ 17.166-167.

⁴⁷ 15.178 and 17.159.

and, as the external audience knows well, still fundamentally correct. In reperforming the initial divination, Theoklumenos successfully applies the omen's more specific meaning in a context where it can be productively received. He thereby corrects the mantic and narrative transgression of his fellow bird interpreter, Helen, and proves his worth in comparison to secondhand divine knowledge. This second act of *manteia*, I propose, is undertaken either (a) by Theoklumenos revealing information he previously divined from the bird sign but chose to withhold due to his performance context, or (b) by Theoklumenos responding to an enhanced and broadened understanding of the context into which the original bird sign was introduced and reperforming the interpretation of the bird omen as it occurs to him in the presence of Penelope and Telemachos, or (c) by Theoklumenos understanding the entire occurrence of the prior *oionomanteia* as a marked event from which he can now divine significance in order to correct and update the information just provided to the queen.⁴⁸

Commentators have pointed to Theoklumenos' self-referential citation at the end of the performance as being a narrative touchstone, a flashback to strengthen rhetorically his speech, or a performative reflex caused by oral composition reflecting "the poet's desire to 'update' the prophecy to suit the progression of the plot."⁴⁹ I assert, however, that the compositional effect of the episode more than serves this narrative purpose, but rather also, in combining approaches b

⁴⁸ Mitchell 2011 has a peculiar, but detailed, discussion of this second prophecy as reperformance from oral composition standpoint. For the basis of his argument, he refers the reader to Nagy 1996 in regards to orality allowing for "sameness" in each iteration of the poem, despite the fact that different performances resulted in individual changes. For mantic performance, he argues and in this I agree, its occasional nature requires certain contextual signs to coexist with the performance. When these are not available, when no thunderclap has sounded or bird has flown but a mantic performance is still situationally applicable, "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." In Theoklumenos, however, I believe the performer is not willfully ignorant of the necessary difference between each performance, but rather is aware that difference does not intrinsically mean wrongness. Instead, difference is a necessity and a skill of adaptation to the pressures of a performance context and, therefore, is the marker of an adept *mantis*.

⁴⁹ De Jong 2001, 414 and Steiner 2010, 95-97.

and c from above, illustrates Theoklumenos performing a divinatory act less strictly empirical than the first prophecy but not quite as divinely motivated as that in his final prophecy. In other words, Theoklumenos' second interpretation of the bird omen reflects an affected interpretation of the event, regarded and reassessed by the seer after his perception on its occurrence has been shifted.

He delivers the prophecy unsolicited, as if the thought just occurred to him, and his introductory comments, as mentioned above, reflect a conventional type of posturing that would frame the speech as somehow divinely influenced. Rather than directly inspired, however, I suggest that Theoklumenos operates on a basis of being affected, at which point, whether by what he considers to be direct divine provenance or indirect auspicious coincidence, the attending circumstances manifest, as if in an epiphany, an enhanced perspective on the omen. With his perception thus affected, Theoklumenos can see, past the mist of normal perception, the other implications and meanings involved and affecting the circumstances of the omen, and with this he can deliver a more specific, more detailed interpretation to his audience. First, seemingly out of the blue, Theoklumenos refers to specific plot developments on Ithaka, *τάδε πευθόμενος κακὰ ἔργα*, which, if he has even heard tale of them, he knows only from passing comments. When he alludes to the plots and machinations of the suitors, Theoklumenos names them with specificity, using a distinctly deictic adjective *τάδε*, which is commonly used to describe objects or persons that are within sight, or recent memory, for the audience in a demonstrative fashion. Despite the fact that neither Telemachos nor Penelope have raised the issue of the suitors' plots against the prince's life or the conniving to take the queen for wife, Theoklumenos speaks of them as though they were just a topic of conversation. Moreover, he gives them a further qualifying adjective, *κακὰ*, as if he knows personally the nature of the deeds to which he is

referring, again without the details of them being spoken of in the present conversation. It is clearly with a level of perception and understanding beyond mortal limits that Theoklumenos begins his own prophecy.

Theoklumenos further emphasizes the level of affected insight that he employs in this prediction with the verb of perception that he employs, *πεύθομαι*, which depicts the internalized process of an embedded focalization.⁵⁰ In other words, Theoklumenos adopts narrative omniscience and performs the result of being able to see past the mist with his affected state, in order to describe Odysseus's mental processes to his audience. The indicative colors both Odysseus's acts of learning and plotting, *πευθόμενος* and *φυτεύει—ἔστιν* is the main verb governing the participle—and indicates the seer's certainty of the reality that he has observed and now describes. Furthermore, in recycling a partial line previously used by Helen in her inspired performance (*ἀτὰρ μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει*), Theoklumenos alludes to the strengthened divine influence in his reperformance (first performatively asserted with the declaration *μαντεύσομαι*) by including that formulation of reality that Telemachos and the external audience would hear and recognize to be nominally sourced from elsewhere. However, in his prophecy he does not entirely elide his willful participation as a practitioner or performer and makes a point to emphasize his contribution, through applying his affected state, when concluding the performance.

In his closing remarks, Theoklumenos explains the source of his information in a brief reference that makes clear that, although he was influenced, his active participation was paramount in the divinatory act. His reference also provides sound authority for the divination, but only from the perspective of the external audience and Telemachos. Penelope must take his

⁵⁰ De Jong 1987, 102-110.

word on faith, judging from the strength of his performance alone. “Just such a bird omen,” he claims, “I myself marked while sitting upon the well-benched ship and tried to proclaim to Telemachos.”⁵¹ The particular bird omen, τοῖον οἰωνόν, Theoklumenos attributes directly as his source material, using the specialized noun οἰωνός, from which the term *oionomanteia* is derived, that distinguishes its signified as specifically a bird of prey and one that is regularly considered, by human divinatory standards, to be a bird of augury.⁵² The qualitative adjective τοῖον designates the omen-text delivered above as conceptually likened to the bird-omen that Theoklumenos here describes, particularly ascribing the demonstrative qualities of the aforementioned prophecy to it without disclosing how he equates this symbolism with that meaning. With emphasis, Theoklumenos chooses the words of his reference and makes sure to highlight that he himself was the subject of the two performative verbs that follow.

With the extra, and therefore emphatic, pronoun ἐγών situating him at the front of the sentence, Theoklumenos then uses two human-focused verbs, φράζω and γεγωνέω, which put his contributions of noticing, understanding, and professing from a mortal standpoint in the forefront of this divinatory act.⁵³ Moreover, as Steiner points out in his commentary on this scene, the use of φράζω marks his performance with another tag of an affected state because “early epic regularly uses the verb in the context of the display or perception of a sign, whether visual or oral, whose significance may be intelligible only to a select audience.”⁵⁴ Quite unlike Helen and

⁵¹ 17.160-161. For a discussion of the inconsistency in Theoklumenos’ performance here with the actual state of events in Book 15, see Russo 1988, 26 for lines 160-1. As I am focusing not on the accuracy of Theoklumenos’ recounting of events but on the effect of his re-performance, I will not further address the significance of this discrepancy.

⁵² *LSJ* οἰωνός; See also Dillon 1996 on bird augury.

⁵³ Like νοέω or γίγνομαι, φράζω is a verb of observation that purely relies on human external senses as opposed to something like the verb οἶομαι which is internalized and intuitive. See Chapter Two 2.5 for a more detailed discussion of the different utilizations of these indirect speech verbs. More regularly, γεγωνέω is used for heroic performance by leaders like Hektor, Menelaos, and Agamemnon throughout the *Iliad* when addressing the masses of soldiers or councils.

⁵⁴ Steiner 2010, 97.

her direct claim to divine inspiration, Theoklumenos only alludes to the legitimizing divine source of his knowledge with his claim to an affected state.⁵⁵ In terms of authorship, the focus still falls on Theoklumenos' active contribution and foregrounds the force of his mantic reputation and performance in effectively executing his divinatory performance.

Thus, Theoklumenos roots the basis for the truth of his divination in divine influence but eschews the exact nature of that influence in preference for illustrating his own proficiencies. As a result, the source for this *manteia* is muddied but not entirely lost. Through the tags of his affected state and situationally motivated delivery, one can reconstruct Theoklumenos' focalization for his epiphany and reperformance. The second prophecy is a reperformance of the first, not because Theoklumenos is reflecting back on the flight direction and type of bird and then deriving new significance from a reconsideration of its behavior, but because, in looking back at his first performance, Theoklumenos recognizes with his affected perception what he was not able to communicate initially and then interprets the entire situation as a marked moment, the significance of which can be derived from an expanded understanding of its context. The opening and closing verbs of his prophecy proper reinforce this reading. Factoring in the information from Proteus and responding in kind, Theoklumenos is also correcting his own initial approach to his omen by specifically employing his mantic abilities, *μαντεύσομαι*, which include an augmented perception of reality, and by not leaving anything out, with *ἐπικέυσω* not just used as a competitive jab at another performer but also to contrast his own earlier interpretation.

Theoklumenos is now fully marked as correctively prophesying in an affected state. When he concludes, he again reflects on not giving the full story, as it were, the first time

⁵⁵ Compare the speech-act performance of her inspiration at 15.172-173.

around, construing his observation of the sign as an affected action, but his interpretation of it as less so. This can be seen in the tenses of the verbs ἐφρασάμην and ἐγγεγώνευν, an aorist and an imperfect. While reflecting on an action in the past, Theoklumenos naturally uses past-time verbs, but the aspect of each is significant—the aorist communicates simple execution of the action, while the imperfect provides a sense of incompleteness, a conative sense. Theoklumenos tried, but sees now that he did not fully proclaim this very bird sign to Telemachos. This implication, although subtle, is that now, with this reperformance, Theoklumenos, in the proper context and appropriate situation, has realized the full meaning of the omen in the prophecy. Telemachos' family will still always be in power, not only because he will not lose his standing in the royal house, but more specifically because his father is returned and in the process of securing his son's standing in perpetuity through the elimination of the competition. Most significantly, Theoklumenos delivers this promise when it is most poignant narratively and, consequently, its message does not go entirely squandered in the final stage of performance, the reception-act.

In sum, Theoklumenos recalls and describes a divine sign, in the same manner as Penelope recalls and narrates her omen dream, but he does so of his own volition in a conscious, direct response to a perceived stimulus for divine-human communication in his environment. Furthermore, his performance of the message is supported by earlier attestation in the epic via the narrator-text and is accompanied by a prophetic pronouncement that corroborates and is corroborated by other events in the story that have been confirmed by the narrator-text as actual and accurate, i.e. the prophecy of Helen and the descriptions of Odysseus throughout books 15, 16, and 17. Theoklumenos' augury is, therefore, utterly effective to the external audience—and, consequently, stands in direct juxtaposition to Helen's topically similar but flawed

performance—and moderately successful for its internal audience. Theoklumenos demonstrably performs his mantic identity effectively and prophesizes accurately and, as a result, is solidified as a creditable medium between the divine and human for the external audience moving forward with the epic. Regardless of his internal audience’s reception of the prophecy—Penelope’s response is neither discernably enthusiastic nor dismissive, more on that below⁵⁶—

Theoklumenos has been established narratologically as a legitimate *mantis*, as a seer compliant with human institutional conventions of divination, and as an adept focalizer and narrator, who, through his self-aware interaction with the divine sphere, performs acts of *poesis* comparable to those the poet enacts in the process of singing the epic.

Indeed, I suggest that the poet has capitalized on the two introductory scenes of Theoklumenos, the *mantis*, to frame a skilled professional performer in both contrast with and refraction of pre-existing examples of mediums of divine-human communication. His contributions have been clearly juxtaposed with the less proficient examples of divination that demonstrate divine influence: Penelope’s incognizant inspiration and Helen’s more practiced utilization of inspiration. In such contrasts, Theoklumenos is both more professional and effective, as well as more independent as a diviner. He predominantly relies—and explicitly performs his reliance—upon his acquired skills, with his collaboration with a divine source referentially cited and focalized so that his contribution is foremost. His affected state is Theoklumenos’ most distinctive and empowering quality as a *mantis* in the *Odyssey*. It is, most importantly for this project, the characteristic that, as we shall see, differentiates him from his peers, including the inspired poet.

⁵⁶ Her reaction at 17.163-165 mirrors word for word Telemachos’ from 15.536-538 and less directly recalls Telemachos’ response to Helen’s prophecy at 15.180-181. All three express a wish that this prophecy might be fulfilled and then promise reverence in turn for the presage of such fortune. Without being directly dismissive or accepting, each response receives their respective prophecy with caution, as discussed later, in Chapter Four 4.4.

In his third and final prophecy, the poet even more vividly elaborates upon Theoklumenos' affected version of divination and, in doing so, also presents the *mantis* as a refraction of himself, as an echo that allows for direct comparison but also allows for some slight contrasts, which in turn can emphasize the poet's own value as an inspired performer. With Helen and Penelope presented by the poet as examples of inspired mediums that the external audience should not want as their intermediaries with the divine, Theoklumenos is staged as an affected medium that they should prefer. When finally paired with the poet in a dueling mediation of a divine message, Theoklumenos is used as a lens that refracts the positive qualities that a cognizant medium employs, while leaving the poet to shine in his unique capacity for effective inspired mediation. I use here the term 'refract' to represent the interplay between the poet's representation of his own inspired mediation and his representation of an analogous but not identical performance in Theoklumenos' affected mediation. I believe the term is particularly effective and evocative because it captures the image of sending light through a prism, whereby the intrinsic varied spectrum of components of the original is made manifest and can be analyzed, but it is not a perfect reflection as one would find in a mirror. In just this such manner, I suggest, the poet is utilizing Theoklumenos' affected divinatory role like a lens or prism, through which to bring to life and into relief their shared elements, as well as their distinct qualities as mediums of divine-human communication.⁵⁷ This metapoetic depiction is

⁵⁷ For my project, the metaphors "lens" and "refraction" are analogous to the narratological concepts of "focalizer" and "focalization" but will serve additionally outside of the narratological context. Lens is employed here because it functions as a filter for light that affects the projection of the light uniquely depending upon the qualities of the lens. In other words, just as an individual focalizer will render a unique 'story', an affected medium and Theoklumenos, especially, will project a unique presentation of reality. I use this metaphorical language specifically because it is not limited to narratological employment but does align neatly with the idea of a focalizer that is particularly pertinent to an affected medium's visually-based altered mental state, in contrast to an inspired medium's verbally-based one. Therefore, an affected medium can be conceived of as a lens, in general, within the process of divine-human communication, while a specific affected medium, like Theoklumenos, can be portrayed as a lens in the very act of focalizing. Furthermore, the lens and its verbal counterpart "refraction" are metaphors that can be extended to apply,

highlighted further by the narrative role it plays, accelerating the climax of the poem's primary story arc. Indeed, Theoklumenos' performance further instigates the suitors towards their demise and, I propose, serves as a successful divine sign for the other half of the internal audience, Odysseus and Telemachos, that completes narrative patterns and culminates a number of stylistic motifs of the epic. And, just as Athena manipulates the suitors to make their infamy and its punishment all the starker, the narrative framework surrounding the poet's metaperformative message makes it all the more meaningful. So, first, let us consider the performance context of book 20's prophetic tour de force.

3.3 Self-fulfilling Prophecies

Since Odysseus's return to Ithaka, there has been a quickening of the thematic cycle responsible for orchestrating his ultimate return and revenge.⁵⁸ At the start of Book 20, the narrative is so densely populated with divine signs that only a few hundred lines of character dialogue and necessary exposition intervene between Athena's direct interventions in human events. As we know from Chapter One, this represents a stark change in the epic's environment, kicked off by Book 19's interview between Odysseus and Penelope, with its galvanizing injection of oblique divine-human communication.⁵⁹ This crescendo of divine interventions, with their prophetic moments of foreshadowing and ensuing culmination stacked so closely together,

outside of traditional narratology, to the metapoetic topic of the introspective poet, as employed here and as we will see below.

⁵⁸ See in particular the series of divinely orchestrated events initiated by Penelope's recounting of her dream in Book 19: the dream-scene at lines 535 ff., Athena's visitation of Odysseus at 20.30 ff., then another dream of Penelope at 20.87 ff., and then the twinned omens requested by Odysseus 20.98 ff. After that first dream's bird omen and prophecy, this series of divine interventions and signs occurs in rapid succession before Odysseus, all of which impel the narrative towards the feast-scene of Book 20, complete with its own divine meddling that starts with Athena's goad at 20.284 ff., and Theoklumenos' performance at 20.350.

⁵⁹ Again, at 20.30-55 and next at 284. This is without considering the thunder and chance speech omens of Zeus that appear during the mill woman's chance speech, 20.111-121, as well as the inauspicious bird portent delivered to the suitors at 240-246. For the preceding dearth of gods in the text, see Chapter One 1.3.

brings into stark relief the self-fulfilling narratological nature of their enactment.⁶⁰ Omens and their interpretations seem in retrospect, often quite immediately, to have elicited the future that they predict by motivating the factors responsible for it.⁶¹ The self-fulfilling quality of inspired speech or divine messages reflects well the purpose of such interventions of the divine on the mortal plane when they advance the plot in this way. Consequently, the closer Odysseus and the suitors advance towards the climax of their storylines, the more frequent and less subtle these self-fulfilling prophecies become. There is no intricacy or finesse required in orchestrating human decisions to align with Athena's will once all of her puppets are set up on the same stage. The poet needs no dilatory tactics or innuendo to carefully allude to the plot's denouement.

All the players are in the palace, a feast is being prepared, and, with Penelope's decision to hold the archery contest, the device for the slaughter of the suitors has been prepared. The ultimate plot point is well within sight of both the internal and external authors of events. Odysseus quite literally just needs an excuse to put his hands on the bow. Thus, the formerly largely absent divine contribution to the story reappears in full force in the narrator-text, Zeus and Athena are given explicit agency in events, and the gods' participation elicits direct and immediate effects that advance the humans under their sway towards their goal. Through these portrayals, not only the gods, but the poet himself is shown to be exercising his abilities to their fullest extent. Narrative omniscience is restored to portray the divine authors' omnipotence—both in orchestrating story events and articulating the tale behind the poet's song. Both roles are executed cooperatively in the culmination of the epic, but most evidently when they are literally

⁶⁰ See 20.45-53 for Athena's epitome, 20.98-121 for Odysseus prayer to Zeus and dual omen response.

⁶¹ See especially the mill woman's chance speech, 20.111-121, which the narrator-text singles out as a sign, σῆμα ἄνακτι, for her lord, and a joyful one for Odysseus who interprets it, along with the earlier omen of Zeus's thunder, as confirmation that he would take vengeance on those who wronged him, at which point he moves on from vacillating and uncertainty to action, allowing the story to advance on to the feast preparation scenes and so on.

combined through paired performances of divine-human communication. Theoklumenos' final performance is one half of this pairing and narrates one of the final divine interventions in the poem's thematic cycle before its culmination. Furthermore, set in this primed atmosphere among this confluence of factors, actors, and events, the *mantis*'s third divination also epitomizes the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Unlike the allusions to themes and motifs that connected Theoklumenos' earlier performances implicitly with the narrative context, his final prophecy is direct and explicitly integrated with Athena's established pattern of intervention to ensure *atasthala* ("recklessness") and incite the suitors' fate.⁶² In answer to Telemachos' wish to not force his mother to marry and in pursuit of her own selfsame goal, Athena incites *atasthala* not just in one suitor, but in all of them and thus begins the divine sign to which Theoklumenos responds and performs his self-fulfilling prophecy.

ὥς φάτο Τηλέμαχος· μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
ἄσβεστον γέλω ὤρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα.
οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελοίων ἀλλοτρίοισιν,
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων
δακρῦόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός.

So spoke Telemachos; and Pallas Athena in/for the suitors
Incited an unquenchable laughter and knocked their thoughts off course.
And now they were laughing with jaws belonging to others
And were eating meat defiled with blood; but lo their eyes
Were filled with tears and their mind was intent upon weeping. (20.345-349)

As can be seen in the enjambment of the narration of Telemachos' speech into the beginning of the account of Athena's intervention, the poet creates a sequential correlation between the wish and the goddess's meddling. Thus, to bring to fulfillment her end goal for Odysseus's tale,

⁶² First, following the inauspicious bird omen that interrupted the suitors' plans to murder Telemachos, Athena is described as not abiding the suitors not being outrageous so as to enrage Odysseus all the more into exacting his retribution (20.284-286). Her will is immediately enacted at 285-286 and at 301-306 we see the seed of her intent, Odysseus revenge, has taken root. It is with their hubris tamped down again (20.321-337) by the possibility of a peaceful resolution to the courtship that the above following intervention occurs.

Athena drives the suitors into a mania that is, itself, a reiteration of their wantonness. This mania disrupts the mortal sphere to an extent that it becomes an omen through Theoklumenos' reaction to it, a performance of mediation that further entices the suitors to prove their insolence. In the extremity of the laughter that she causes, Athena orchestrate the apex of the behavior of the suitors that has epitomized their recklessness: mockery in the face of *xenia*. Up until this point, this behavior has been most repeatedly directed towards Telemachos and his guests during an expression of the very *xenia* that they mock him over, the feast.⁶³ In the case of this outburst of delusional laughter, the suitors are made to complete the pattern of abuse that has characterized their insolence and, simultaneously, are positioned to demonstrate yet again, in immediate succession, another instantiation of their abuse during their reception of Theoklumenos' reaction to their omen.

Upon the completion of his performance, the suitors laugh at Theoklumenos and ridicule him as a madman, then turn their derision on Telemachos once more.⁶⁴ The character-text of the suitor's general mockery is the last of this episode and the narrator closes the scene by reflecting upon the situation—Telemachos waits for his father's cue to set upon the suitors and Penelope is sitting in the hall, listening to their conversation.⁶⁵ The final scene is at hand. However, before Athena inspires Penelope to begin the contest of the bow with the first lines of Book 21, the narrator revisits the themes of laughter and feasting, further emphasizing the impact of the goddess's intervention.

δεῖπνον μὲν γὰρ τοῖ γε γελοίωντες τετύκοντο
ἦδὺν τε καὶ μενοεικές, ἐπεὶ μάλα πόλλ' ἰέρευσαν·

⁶³ Levine 1983; Mitchell 2011; Russo 1988, 124-125. At 18.346 ff. instigated by Athena, Eurumachos taunts Odysseus during their feast and throws a stool at him, earning the laughter of the suitors; earlier, at the start of the feast, as noted above, Ktesippos repeats this pattern to with an ox hoof hurled and mockery but without the laughter, here provided by Athena's manipulation.

⁶⁴ 20.360-362 and, with embedded focalization clarifying their intent, 20.373-383.

⁶⁵ 20.384-389.

δόρπου δ' οὐκ ἄν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο,
οἷον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερός ἀνὴρ
θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο.

For, you know, a meal, while laughing, they had prepared
both sweet and suited to their tastes, since they had slaughtered very many
but, nothing else ever would be more graceless than their supper
just such a one indeed the goddess and steadfast man were soon going
to serve; for they were first contriving unseemly deeds. (20.390-394)

According to the narrator's estimation, with the laughter and repeated mockery of a guest over dinner, the suitors have sealed their fate at the hands of Odysseus and Athena, who will make this feast the men's last in payment for all their wrongs. Here, those wrongs are fully manifested and made to invite retribution one more time because of the goddess's intervention, but also, notably, in the face of the goddess's intervention, when her interpreter becomes yet another target of their abuse. It is no coincidence of narrative that the line, directly following the narrator's moralistic reflection, reveals Athena's inspiration of Penelope to begin the contest of the bow.⁶⁶

In the scene surrounding and including Theoklumenos' performance, the poet includes all requisite components of the thematic cycle utilized to advance the plot.⁶⁷ The components of the mortal sphere are realized not in the shape of Athena's direct interaction with and aid to Odysseus, but indirectly through the behavior of the suitors towards Theoklumenos and the seer's prophetic sign, which provide the same enlightening information on his status to Odysseus as, for example, the interview with Penelope had.⁶⁸ Well-informed of the suitors' full *atasthala* and of Athena's marking of their fate, Odysseus is prepared to execute his plan when Penelope sets the final puzzle piece in place. Thus, Theoklumenos' is the final 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of

⁶⁶ 21.1-4.

⁶⁷ See Chapter One 1.2 for more on the thematic cycle.

⁶⁸ See Chapter One 1.3.

the epic that foretells and initiates the action of the epic's denouement. The divinatory act that his performance actually depicts is far more than a final iteration of a narrative pattern, however. These thematic alignments rather, I assert, further emphasize the correlation of Theoklumenos with the poet, as Theoklumenos also becomes the spokesman by which the poet incites his own tour de force of narrative (the slaughter of the suitors). By creating these analogies between himself and Theoklumenos, framing the seer as both his spokesman and a refraction of his own role, the poet constructs Book 20's episode as the epitome of divine-human communication. Furthermore, it is in response to this functionally perfect act of mediation that the suitors rebuke and revile the performer, a topic that we will explore more next chapter. First, however, we will address the narratological (not literary or narrative) tools employed in the scene to create an analogy between the poet and his seer character, primarily the alignment and cooperative performance of an act of focalization, otherwise considered a mantic prophecy.

3.4 Through a Mirror, Darkly

In order to move past interpretations of the episode that center upon its egregious and apocalyptic qualities alone, I will here demonstrate that Theoklumenos' divinatory act is not an aberrant depiction of Homeric divination, but rather that is a narratological set-piece. By analyzing its structure and components, I will show that the episode is a representation of an omen-scene whose singular qualities derive from metapoetic stylization of both the omen and its interpretation. Far from diverging from the standard instantiation of divination in Homeric epic, Theoklumenos' performance represents the poet's elaboration on empirical, omen-based divination with the addition of the service that an influenced medium can provide.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ As assessed above, descriptors vary from scholar to scholar with many settling on some version of 'prophetic vision' (Levine 1983; Mitchell 2011; Russo 1988; Stanford 1940) with the visual and declarative components of the scene emphasized.

Theoklumenos' scene is not the first of its type in the epic. It is, however, I assert, the first time that the *Odyssey's* poet has realized the portrayal of a mediated divine sign so that it is framed and formatted to be unequivocally effective as a performance. In fact, in the next chapter, I will argue that Theoklumenos' scene is stylized as the exemplum par excellence of divinatory performance for the external audience, so much so that the suitors' contemptuous disregard in the face of such an explicit divine warning figures largely as a cautionary tale against audiences making a similar mistake out of ignorance or arrogance.⁷⁰

First, once the scene is broken down into its most basic parts, we will see Theoklumenos providing a pronouncement and interpretation of the omen, both in response to Athena's intervention. As mentioned above, the laughter of the suitors and Theoklumenos' reaction to that omen occur because of Athena's explicit orchestration of the suitors' demise. Thus, arguably, Theoklumenos' scene is, in the grander scheme an example of the goddess's authorship. However, within the immediate context of the scene, the laughter and subsequent portent occur as a response to just one in a chain of reactive events that cumulatively realize Athena's goal. I argued above that the coordination of Telemachos' wish and Athena's intervention is demonstrated by the anatomy of the line that introduces the suitors' laughter and is reinforced by thematic patterns of divine involvement and plot progression. The narrator's description of Telemachos' speech-act leads immediately into the goddess's meddling and creates a portrayal of cause and effect. Thematic pattern of the narrative aside, this correspondence of a mortal wish and a divine sign provided in response recurs throughout the epic and, particularly, aligns with Athena's steadily increasing and intensifying habit of intervening, inspiring, possessing, and

⁷⁰ Much in the same vein as cautionary myths that feature divinities disguised as reproachable old mortals who could visit retribution or reward upon unsuspecting mortals based on how they receive them; e.g. Demeter in the *Hom. Hymn Dem.* The motif is common in Indo-European folklore and is even more forcefully moralizing in later tales like *The Beauty and the Beast*.

manifesting upon the mortal plane to further her plot for Odysseus’s fate.⁷¹ In other words, when Telemachos voices a wish that points toward the culmination of the goddess’s goal, Athena intervenes to show her confirmation of that future’s probability. As a result, the laughter of the suitors becomes an elicited divine intervention—as if Telemachos were asking the gods to assure him that he would not be forced to marry off his mother against her will—or an example of Athena’s reactive authorship of events on the mortal plane. In this respect, the episode begins ordinarily. Athena creates a divine sign communicating with one of her mortal collaborators in response to the situation on the mortal plane.

Moreover, the divine sign is explicitly semiotic. Athena does not manifest and deliver a speech dooming the suitors; with the incongruous laughter of the suitors, she creates a non-verbal message that must be translated into human language in order to be instilled with meaning for its audience.⁷² As the acting medium of the episode for the internal audience, Theoklumenos performs two roles in the process of translating this message. First, in coordination with the narrator (the external audience’s medium), Theoklumenos verbalizes what is a visual and auditory omen into a coherent narrative of the event.⁷³

ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων
εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε γούνα.
οἴμωγῇ δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί,
αἶματι δ’ ἐρράδαται τοῖχοι καλαί τε μεσόδμαι·
εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
ἰεμένων Ἑρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἥελιος δὲ
οὐρανοῦ ἐξάπόλωλε, κακὴ δ’ ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀγλύς.

“Ah wretches! Why are you suffering *this* evil? In night your
Heads have been veiled, and your faces and knees beneath.

⁷¹ See Karp 1998 for signs incited by mortal request (conscious and inadvertent). For the increasing involvement of Athena in the preceding books, see Chapter One 1.3.

⁷² For laughter as a symbolic action or an omen, see Colakis 1986 and Lateiner 1995. See also Maurizio 1995, 76 for a discussion of culturally contextualized behaviors of possession; following Colakis’s arguments and the other instances of laughter exhibited by Penelope in the *Odyssey*, laughter is arguably a behavioral indicator of possession within the Odyssean, if not Homeric, context.

⁷³ Narrator-text of omen: 20.345-349; Theoklumenos’ character-text narration of the omen: 20.351-357.

Lamentation has quickened, and your cheeks have been flooded with tears, and with blood have been sprinkled the walls and fine ceiling coffers And the porch is full of ghosts, and the courtyard is also full of those hurtling to Erebus down under the gloom; and the sun has perished utterly from heaven and an evil mist has spread over.” (*Odyssey* 20.351-357)

Second, he translates his purely descriptive verbalization by explaining its meaning within the context of its occurrence and its audience, specifically in reaction to his internal audience’s failure to take his meaning from the first prophetic pronouncement that he makes.⁷⁴ The exceptionalness of Theoklumenos’ episode, therefore, arises not from the manner of the divine contribution to the divination, but rather from the uniquely complete role that the human medium plays in actualizing the communication. Theoklumenos’ performance of his omen divination is unique because it is preserved in its entirety—from his verbalized focalization of the ‘fabula’, resulting in the ‘story,’ to his narrative explanation of the ‘text’, the point of the message—alongside the narrator-text’s corresponding focalization and narration of the event. Consequently, this doubled ‘perspective’ on Athena’s omen narratologically structures Theoklumenos’ contribution to echo the narrator’s and, in doing so, to refract the poet’s role.⁷⁵

The doubling and coordination of the internal and external narrators in Book 20 is further emphasized in the focalization of the entire scene. Before Theoklumenos makes his contribution, the poet moves his external audience through the focalization on the events that the narrator-text employs, which frames Athena as the principal instigator whose actions manipulate the suitors as objects first and then to dictate their actions once they are described again as subjects.⁷⁶ In other

⁷⁴ Theoklumenos’ character-text interpretation of the omen: 20.365-370. This is delivered directly after the suitor, Eurumachos, mocks Theoklumenos for his outburst at 360-362. I will address both next chapter.

⁷⁵ In regards to the doubled account of the omen, de Jong 2001, 502, reads this as the narrator and Theoklumenos splitting the description of the event between their texts. Although this is not an explicit confirmation of Theoklumenos’ accuracy, of the likes we see after Teiresias’s prophecies in Book 11, for example, it does implicitly affirm that Theoklumenos is neither dissembling nor hallucinating. The event described by both narrators is, thus, presented as real.

⁷⁶ Following Maurizio’s word choice (1995), I use “possession” in the context of this scene of divine intervention/omen to refer to a behavior coded to be specifically non-normative and, therefore, indicative of an

words, through the conceit of his omniscient perspective, the narrator describes the authorship of the event through Athena’s focalization first, then the resulting effect of her action concerning the suitors, moving from the agent of the action to her objects, and thereby fully illustrating the process by which Athena possesses and manipulates the suitors into effecting her will.

ὣς φάτο Τηλέμαχος· μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
ἄσβεστον γέλω ᾤρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα.
οἱ δ’ ἤδη γναθμοῖσι *γελοίων* **ἀλλοτρίοισιν**,
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ’ ἄρα **σφέων**
δακρυόφιν *πίμπλαντο*, γόνον δ’ ὠΐετο θυμός.⁷⁷

So spoke Telemachos; and Pallas Athena in/for the suitors
Incited an **unquenchable** laughter and *knocked* their thoughts *off course*.
And now they *were laughing* with jaws **belonging to others**
And *were eating* meat **defiled with blood**; but lo **their** eyes
Were filled with tears and their mind was intent upon weeping. (20.345-349)

Once Athena has been definitively presented as the agent behind the suitors’ laughter, the narrator further marks the laughter as a divine product by describing it as ἄσβεστον, “unquenchable”.⁷⁸ As a descriptor that has only been sparingly employed in this *Odyssey*, ἄσβεστον carries with it a rarefied connotation. Up until this point, the external audience has heard it used to describe only two nouns: κλέος, specifically in a potential sense when spoken by mortals, and γέλως, the laughter of the gods described in an inspired singer’s tale and delivered from a divine perspective.⁷⁹ Furthermore, in the larger Homeric context, the only laughter that

external influence. I do not mean to suggest that Athena has stepped into the suitors’ bodies herself, but rather that she has affected them, striking aside their thoughts—literally and physically bashing them from their *nous*—and replacing them with her own will, in this instance, the divinely unbridled laughter that constitutes the omen.

⁷⁷ Subjectively colored modifiers and verb tenses sign post a specific point of view on the realization of the omen for the external audience, one which prioritizes Athena’s individual contribution and the immediate effect of her contribution on the suitors. Bolded words are tags for internal focalization following de Jong 1985 (136-146); italicized words are the finite verbs used to describe the action and effects of the omen—of special note is the tense shift from effective aorist to describe Athena’s participation to resultative imperfect to describe the suitors’ experience; the underlined phrase is the final tag marking the explicit embedded focalization of the suitors.

⁷⁸ 20.345-346.

⁷⁹ κλέος: *Odyssey* 4.584, 7.333; γέλως: 8.326. For the assimilation of the narrator with Demodokos during his songs on Scheria, see Hunter 2012.

we have preserved as ἄσβεστος is the laughter of the gods: at Hephaestus in the *Iliad* and at Ares and Aphrodite in Demodokos' song.⁸⁰ When used in an indicative statement, ἄσβεστος is an exclusive tool of the divine perspective. Thus, referentially, the use of ἄσβεστον as a modifier here adds a nuance of, if not a direct nod to, a divine origin and colors the description as from gods' point of view.⁸¹ Coupled with the second clause, “and knocked their thoughts off course,” this specific presentation of the laughter that Athena has created not only reveals that she is the orchestrator of this moment, but also discloses the motivation and intent of her involvement. She has not only prompted an expression of the suitors' *atathala*, but has made sure, by possessing their minds, that that expression is excessive.⁸² The realization of this goal is encapsulated in the

⁸⁰ *Iliad* 1.599 and *Odyssey* 8.326. Specifically, this laughter is an activity of the gods directed at someone (in the other instances, other gods) who has been visited by the punishment of another god in response to an affront: Hephaestus's lameness from Zeus's punishment for his subordination in defense of Hera, Ares and Aphrodite's embarrassment in Hephaestus's trap.

Other uses of *asbestos* in the *Iliad* occur in the narrator-text and include of a flame, φλόξ at 16.123 and 17.89, of Hector's μένος at 22.96, and of war cries βοή at 11.50, 11.500, 11.530, 13.169, 13.540, 16.267, 16.267. Also applicable in this moment is Don Lateiner's (1995) added cultural facets of smiles and laughter, which additionally code this act as something scornful and aggressive but with an ominous divine permanence, as opposed to the suitors' group act that is normally tagged as enjoyable for them—i.e. at 358: οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἠδὺ γέλασσαν—and aggressive towards Telemachos and the royal household.

⁸¹ De Jong 1987, 136-146 on “[e]valuative and affective words/expressions in the narrator-text” where de Jong discusses the use of words that are not simply descriptive but break the “rule of objectivity” exercised in the narrator-text in their “emotionally coloured” quality. I extend this usage from revealing judgement on the internal focalizer's part to revealing their insight on the event, here including the divine perspective-bias's specialized knowledge about the particular source of the laughter Athena incites. By describing something as unquenchable, the narrator is extending his evaluation of its present quality into the future and, I argue, deriving this minor descriptive conclusion from the associative implication that it is somehow divine and eternal in the same absolute sense that the gods are undying.

⁸² Athena's possession is coded strongly throughout line 346 with the laughter she elicits in them, arguably, being divine laughter and being paired with striking them witless. The phrase *παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα* creates the image of Athena, like a storm at sea battering a ship off course, striking the thoughts of the suitors aside, so that they are no longer in their right mind. This could be a figuration of creating a mania in the suitors, of taking their normal *atathala* and insulting laughter and exacerbating it to an extreme form. That said, I believe the pairing of this turn of phrase coupled with the unquenchable laughter represents a divine possession of the suitors. Athena knocks their minds to the side and, again like the winds of a storm, takes control of their direction; part of that direction is inspiring laughter, which is specifically coded to be of the gods. It is unquenchable and, from its Homeric connotation, punitive because it arises in response to a god's punishment of an affront. In the suitors' instance, they are made to laugh at themselves, becoming literal mouthpieces of the gods' derision at their forthcoming punishment, which is further illustrated through the next line's phrasing, *γναθμοῖσι γελοίων ἄλλοτρίοισιν*, “they were laughing with jaws belonging to others.” The jaws of the others here are the gods (or god, Athena) who are controlling them while their thoughts are off-course.

two instantaneous aorists used to narrate Athena's own actions, ὄρσε and παρέπλαγγεν.⁸³ Her will and its fulfillment can be expressed in the simple aspect of the aorist verbs because the two are effected instantaneously and concurrently. When Athena intends something, she acts and it happens, plain and simple. Consequently, when she incites delirious laughter and commandeers the suitors' minds, that action has observable effects on the mortal plane, which also figure as an omen.

The effects of her possession, on the other hand, are expressed through durative verbs that focus more on the results of the actions. Following the full stop at the end of Athena's actions (346), the narrator moves to a different nominative subject, here expressed through a pronoun standing in for the suitors, but undermines its autonomy with the modifier ἀλλοτρίοισιν. The suitors are described as laughing "with jaws belonging to others" by the narrator, focalizing the effect of Athena's action through the depiction of subjects without true agency.⁸⁴ The syntax demonstrates that, while the suitors are formally the 'subjects' of the action, their agency is superficial and empty, simply for appearances.⁸⁵ Despite the fact that scornful laughter has become abusively characteristic of the suitors, the narrator has carefully marked this particular instantiation as abnormal both from an objective point of view—gods causing and observing

⁸³ Rijksbaron 2002, 11 ff. for the aspect of the aorist tense.

⁸⁴ As noted two footnotes above, the "others" possessing and controlling the suitors' laughing jaws are flagged to be the god(s) and the divine laughter that fills them is a manifestation of both Athena's intervention and their doom, at which, of course, the laughter is directed.

⁸⁵ 20.347; The pronoun in use is οἱ, which does not specifically name the suitors but, instead, referentially points back to them, its antecedent in the form of the indirect object of Athena's action, μνηστῆρσι, from the preceding two lines.

A reference to the current subject's position as the indirect object of Athena, without explicitly naming that subject, neatly avoids directly placing the suitors themselves in the nominative position and recalls to the audience's mind the subject agency of Athena from the line immediately preceding. Additionally, this construction connects her agency to the suitors' position as the subject of this verbal action that is not at all one occurring due to their own volition. With the grammar already vacillating on true and ostensible subject agency, the suitors then enact that action with a dative instrument that they do not recognize as their own. Thus, the suitors are positioned syntactically to be the nominal subjects of the action but in form are shown to be themselves absent—just the referent pronoun standing in for a noun-clause that would have been the indirect object of Athena's verbal action and performing that clause's action with body parts expressed as instrumental datives that are not their own body parts.

effects on objects—and subjective point of view—the suitors, as commandeered subjects, experiencing the effects. For all intents and purposes, Athena is the only entity here with authorship over events while the suitors are her puppets, who carry out the action of her will without exercising any volition of their own.

Furthermore, the initial verb for which they are the apparent agents is the imperfect *γελοῖων*, a verbalization of the object-noun *γέλω* (ἄσβεστον) effected by Athena's first action in the previous line. The suitors' first action, therefore, is simply the result of Athena's action being carried out, preserved explicitly in a semantic echo, and without the summary incidence of the aorist. The imperfect endures and carries the connotation of continuation or repetition, so, while Athena acted once and instantaneously, the effect of her deed carries on through her possessed agents.⁸⁶ This aspect of duration is expressed in the three other verbs used to describe the suitors' contributions to the omen. Besides laughing, they are also eating, their eyes are filling with tears, and their minds are intent upon weeping. All of these actions are in the imperfect, all results of Athena's second act of driving their thoughts off course.

Aside from the ominous laughter, which was already made an evident portion of the omen during Athena's participation in its inception, the suitors are described as eating meat defiled with blood, *αἰμοφόροκτα*, their own eyes are described as filling with tears, and their [collective] mind was intent upon weeping *γόον δ' ὄϊετο θυμός*. The final clause represents a clear instance of embedded focalization through a phrase expressing thoughts or emotions—the event must be focalized from the suitors' perspective as it reveals their own internal mental processes—and represents yet another focalization that the narrator employs to enlighten his external audience on the internal workings of the moment.⁸⁷ Such a focalization seems to be

⁸⁶ Rijksbaron 2002, 11 ff. on verbal aspect of the imperfect.

⁸⁷ De Jong 1987, 110.

unique to the narrator, and later Theoklumenos, since no other internal audience members are shown to react to such a horrifying spectacle. Indeed, all three of these effects are encapsulated entirely in the narrator-text's account of the suitors' experience; notably, neither Odysseus, nor Telemachos, nor Penelope are mentioned as reacting to what would have surely been the alarming sight of the suitors laughing and weeping simultaneously while eating bloodied meat.

On the contrary, the observable reality of the internal audience—excluding the suitors in the exact time of their possession and, of course, Theoklumenos—consists of the suitors laughing and eating their well-prepared feast. The blood-defiled meat and urge to weep are side-effects of Athena's intervention that are only observable through the viewpoint of an inspired medium like the narrator (or one affected like Theoklumenos). In fact, I assert that the use of referential particles, which create the quality of “presence” for epic events, connects the actions of Athena with the experiences of the suitors in a kind of presentational cause and effect chain.⁸⁸ Thus, an otherwise unobservable component of the scene is captured and the poet emphasizes this special, enhanced perspective through the flagging particles (bolded below) that orally perform changes in the narrative, which in a dramatic medium would have been realized through scene-changes or masks.

οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθοῖσι γελοίων ἀλλοτρίοισιν,
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός.

And **now** they were laughing with jaws belonging to others
And were eating meat defiled with blood; **but lo** their eyes
Were filled with tears and their mind was intent upon weeping. (20.347-349)

Transitioning from Athena's causation into its effects, the narrator marks the action of the first clause from the omniscient focalization with the adverb ἤδη, which can be used circumstantially

⁸⁸ Bakker 1997, 13-17.

to indicate contrast or causality. Both readings, “actually” and “straightaway” are viable and not at all mutually exclusive to the context. Thus, upon Athena’s intervention, the suitors actually were laughing as an immediate result of, or directly in answer to, Athena’s actions.⁸⁹ The second clause follows, marked with the conjunction-particle pair δὲ δὴ that brings the sight more evidently before the audience’s eyes and adds to the reality of the results that Athena has effected. Straightaway the suitors were laughing with jaws that were not their own and indeed they were eating meat defiled with blood. The δὴ creates the effect of an evident sight that the external audience is witnessing through the narrator’s description and one which follows on the causal immediacy of the former clause thanks to the connective δέ.⁹⁰ Finally, the narrator marks the last new component of the effect of Athena’s possession with the particle ἄρα, which Bakker especially denotes as one creating “presence.”⁹¹ The narrator’s “process of seeing-interpreting-verbalizing” is made evident with the ‘lo’ of ἄρα, which indicates the tears that fill the suitors’ eyes, according to this interpretation of the events observed, to be the logical conclusion of the other effects that preceded.⁹²

Note that, once Athena ceases her possession, the suitors behave as if they have no recollection of their horrifying experience.⁹³ Thus, the narrator’s presentation of this omen preserves the suitors’ temporarily altered experience of their own situation as a permanent revelation for his external audience, in addition to the revelatory exposition provided through the

⁸⁹ The audience has “seen” Athena instigate events and, suddenly, her possession is in effect before their eyes. If this were dramatized, special masks might have been quickly slipped on or the scene somehow changed, but the oral performer must rely instead on the *enargeia* of his words, hence these potent particles.

⁹⁰ Bakker 1997, 14. *Middle Liddell* defines the particle as an intensifier that imparts the sense of exactness upon the words it modifies, also noting that it may be a shortened form of ἤδη. The sense of performative immediacy and causality follows easily from this usage, particularly beside δέ.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 16-18; Furthermore, regular definitions of the particle attribute to it the sense of immediate transition, consequence, and connection between the preceding and following.

⁹² Bakker 1997, 17.

⁹³ They are not described any further as shedding tears or feeling mournful. Instead, the next description of them at 20.358 reverts to characterizing them as wantonly jubilant.

goddess's perspective on its purpose. By employing this ensemble of focalization, the narrator has allowed the external audience to see absolute reality—what is truly happening to the suitors and what will happen to them subsequently. As our affected mantis, Theoklumenos, will be shortly shown to do, the narrator sifts through perspectives in order to privilege his audience with a glimpse past the mist that obscures mortal vision from the truth of reality. It is thus revealed that, by possessing them and inciting their final, most inflammatory act of *atasthala*, Athena has enacted and actualized the suitors' future, one that they seem presciently to experience through a premonition of their own deaths—the weeping and gore over their meal that will presently be made a reality.⁹⁴ The narrator-text reinforces the significance of this temporary prescience in the recap of the scene, before transitioning into the contest of the bow episode, when the narrator comments on the contradictory sweetness of the meal at present compared to the bitter fate it will bring at the hands of Odysseus and Athena.⁹⁵ In the event that the external audience did not gather that the climax of the plot was at hand from that ominous foreshadowing, the narrator further extrapolates the significance of the omen as a literary device in his own explicit prognostication that reflects on and builds off of the themes within the omen.⁹⁶

Thus, the narrator-text provides an inspired perspective on the event that aligns with the poet's narrative goal: describing the motivation-driven action of a character, as well as the

⁹⁴ As we will see below, Theoklumenos similarly employs prolepsis in his own narration of the omen. Whereas here, the suitors proleptically see the physical aftereffects of their slaughter with the befouled meat, Theoklumenos will proleptically see the metaphysical effects as well with the suitors' ghosts filling the palace before Hermes guides them down to Hades in Book 24.

⁹⁵ 20.390-394: δεῖπνον μὲν γὰρ τοῖ γε γελοίωντες τετύκοντο/ἤδ' ὃ τε καὶ μενοεικές, ἐπεὶ μάλα πόλλ' ἰέρευσαν/δόρπου δ' οὐκ ἂν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο, /οἶον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερός ἀνήρ/θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο.

⁹⁶ To be discussed more below, but here in brief, the motifs of laughter and feasting are referred to heavily along with nods to recompense for the lack of proper reciprocity in the use of ἀχαρίστερον in reference to their final feast and in the final explanatory comment πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο. Thus, the suitors' laughter and feast are grossly inappropriate both in accordance to their preceding behavior, which was an affront to the guest-host relationship of *xenia* that relies on reciprocity and the thanks-favor concept behind *χάρις*, and in contrast to the gruesome fate that awaits them in answer to that behavior as a whole.

culmination of a plot, and ensuring the fulfillment of a thematic cycle for his story. In effect, the poet demonstrates the characteristic of an inspired medium that was already presented in Helen's and Penelope's episodes; namely that, according to their own qualities and goals, the individual medium colors the text of their divine-human communication. When immediately juxtaposed with a secondary narrator-focalizer of the same divine event, the significance of this effect is highlighted.⁹⁷ As opposed to the focus on the suitors' outrageousness and improper eating practices that the narrator-text creates for the external audience, Theoklumenos' focalization on the omen centers more immediately on the secondary message of the narrator-text's version, the impending doom of the suitors. The external audience, therefore, enjoys the privileged insight of a medium looking backwards and crafting a story, as well as of a medium reacting to his immediate reality in a mantic capacity. In this regard, Theoklumenos contributes to the narrative because his outburst and interpretation translates the omen into a full-fledge sign for Odysseus (like Penelope's dream-narration) and responds to Telemachos' wish (like Helen's *oinoiomanteia*). It also, however, allows the poet to preserve an additional version of the omen from a perspective that is just as relevant and qualified as the poet's but differently shaped due to the internal performer's position relative to the events.⁹⁸ The coordination between both performances is subtle but, I will assert, systemic to the entire episode, observable from the macro level in the framing of the scene, all the way down to the syntax of the lines in each

⁹⁷ Mitchell 2011 provides an alternative analysis of this paired focalization; he sees the narratological device acting to link the prophecy with the rest of the poem, calling the pairing of both focalizations a "perspectival zeugma" which demonstrates that Theoklumenos is represented as acting in collusion with the poet to strengthen, through "rhapsodic magic," the poet's chosen topic of *atasthala*. While I agree that there is a performative analogy between the mantic and the rhapsodic in epic, here epitomized in this scene, I do not believe that the formal similarities represent a depiction of magical hypnotism by means of verse, but rather a self-reflective commentary on inspired performance in an analogous vignette, with Theoklumenos acting as an in-world refraction of the poet. More on this below.

⁹⁸ Mitchell notes here that the narrator and soothsayer blur together in this, but I insist rather that the two are paired and compared, but in a way that preserves distinctions and uses them to demonstrate their shared abilities, instead of erasing distinctions as happens in moments of true narrator-character melding like Demodokos' songs in Book 8.

portion. Starting with a device I have already briefly discussed, let us focus first on the metacommentative function of verb tenses.

3.5 Coordinated Complements

Above, I commented on the instantaneous and durative contrast created between the use of the aorist tense to describe Athena's actions and the imperfect tense to portray the suitors'. Principally, I aimed to demonstrate that the aspect of each tense inflects upon the agency of each subject; that Athena had a more active, effective role as subject while the suitors had a more passive, experiential role thanks to the narrator-text's verb choices that essentially framed them as objects. I assert that this depiction of agency is similarly present in Theoklumenos' narration of the divine intervention, however it is exercised through not just verbal aspect but also the nuances of voice and transitivity. To the same effect, Theoklumenos verbalizes what he witnesses during the divine intervention so that the suitors are principally positioned as the subjects of the omen without expressing any direct control over their actions.

ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων
εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε γούνα.
οἰμωγὴ δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί,
αἵματι δ' ἔρράδαται τοῖχοι καλαί τε μεσόδμαι·
εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
ιεμένων Ἑρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἥελιος δὲ
οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀγλύς.

“Ah wretches! Why **are you suffering** *this* evil? In night your
Heads have been veiled, and your faces and knees beneath.
Lamentation has quickened, and your cheeks have been flooded with
tears, and with blood have been sprinkled the walls and fine ceiling coffers
And the porch is full of ghosts, and the courtyard is also full
of those hurtling to Erebus down under the gloom; and the sun
Has perished utterly from heaven and an evil mist has spread over.” (20.351-357)

Theoklumenos begins to objectify the suitors immediately when he cries out and addresses them in the preface to his own narration of the omen. In a more emotive tone than the

usual, formal preamble of a mantic performance, Theoklumenos reacts with an outburst of surprise at what he sees before describing it, and does so by pointing to the suitors' status as persons subjected to misfortune.⁹⁹ First, the vocative δειλοί does not explicitly name the suitors themselves, and colors the address first and foremost with a pitying tone.¹⁰⁰ "Ah wretches!" he cries and then asks them: "Why do you suffer this evil?" Denying them a personalized address, Theoklumenos chips away at the suitors' nominative agency in the syntax of his opening line with the semiotic force of the finite verb and with emphatic word order. Although in the active voice, the verb πάσχω literally expresses the sense of experiencing or suffering some effect. It exists as a semantic and semiotic dichotomy; as a verb, it allows the object of an action to be featured, grammatically, as the subject while still maintaining the ultimate signification that the effect affected the subject. Thus, when Theoklumenos poses the question to the suitors about suffering an evil effect, they are subsumed into the verb while "this evil" becomes paramount. Mentioned first and made emphatically tangible with the deictic adjective, the object of the verb is thereby made the principal focus of the sentence. Instead, his focalization entirely skirts the issue of an actual party responsible for the action and succinctly delegates the suitors to the position of objectified subjects.

In further contrast to the narrator-text's focalization, neither the effector nor the effected but the effect itself then becomes the epicenter of his omen.¹⁰¹ Here, nominal agency is entirely

⁹⁹ See the vocative address to Telemachos in his first prophecy, the formal full-line address to Penelope in his second, and Helen's elaborate claim with which she introduces her prophecy in Book 15; lines 15.531, 17.152, and 15.172-173 respectively.

¹⁰⁰ As a vocative, δειλοί evokes an air of superiority from the speaker that encapsulates an emotional response both of taunting and pity. See especially *Iliad* 24.518 where Achilles address Priam and his grief.

¹⁰¹ I purposefully use here a different inflection of the verbal pair affect-effect. In this instance, I am referring to Athena as the party bringing about the verbal action, effector, to the suitors as the party made to perform the verbal action, effected, and the actual verbal action as effect. This is, of course, in close connection to affecter, affected, affect, but with a distinct difference of deed versus state. Effect is an external event while affect details an internal state.

eschewed as Theoklumenos continues to describe the portent. In other words, he does not point out explicitly that the suitors are the victims of some divine possession, but rather, once he declares that they are being made victim to some evil effect, his focalization concentrates on the future ramifications that the possession manifests. Consequently, the remainder of his narration makes the *κακὸν τόδε* and all the effects that it entails the subjects, while the agency behind them is deferred with the use of the true passive voice. “In night your heads have been veiled (*εἰλύαται*) and your faces and knees beneath,” he declares, continuing, “lamentation has quickened, and [your] cheeks have been flooded with tears (*δεδάκρυνται*) and with blood have been sprinkled (*ἐπράδαται*) the walls and fine ceiling coffers....” For three of the first four effects of the omen, Theoklumenos employs the perfect passive verbs *εἰλύαται*, *δεδάκρυνται*, and *ἐπράδαται*, while posing the heads, faces, and knees of the suitors, as well as lamentation, cheeks, and the walls and ceiling coffers as the nominative subjects of the verbs.¹⁰² Of course, as subjects of passive verbs these non-sentient body parts and architectural components have no agency; they are simply the grammatical subjects made the focus of the effects described. As a result, the agency of the suitors is even further subsumed when they are merely framed as referentially involved through the possessive genitive pronoun *ὑμέων*, which indicates their ownership of the body parts affected. The suitors, therefore, are depicted as suffering the effects that are befalling their persons but are rendered inert, static. As a result, their autonomy and control over the events is removed from them even more than in the narration provided by the poet.

This passivity is most starkly obvious when Theoklumenos’ description of the omen overlaps with the narrator’s. When the weeping effect of the possession is described, the

¹⁰² *δέδηγε* is perfect active in the intransitive sense (Autenrieth, *δαίω*) which details the effect of the abstracted concept coming into being precisely in place of a true subject noun having effected lamentation as its object.

narrator-text preserves a fraction of involvement for the suitors by including the pronoun σφέων to modify the subject ὄσσε, eyes, and by portraying the actual weeping as imminent but not yet manifest. The suitors' eyes were filling with tears (imperfect πίμπλαντο) but those tears have not yet spilled out in the narrator's account.¹⁰³ This is further enforced by the comment included through the suitors' focalization that their minds were intent upon weeping: γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός. Thus, the suitors are indirectly shown to be still involved in the event, whether as objects of the effect or through some minute agency that staves off that desire to weep from becoming reality. In Theoklumenos' version, however, they are entirely removed. Lamentation, οἰμωγή, the abstract noun becomes the subject that has quickened through the hall—in contrast, the narrator-text version assigns subject-status syntactically to the θυμός of the suitors. While the narrator's version of the event still understands the suitors to be involved, however infinitesimally in the event, Theoklumenos' version refracts that understanding of diminished agency into excised agency. Furthermore, Theoklumenos' echo of the narrator's description of the welling of tears takes this a step further and makes implicit the possessors of the cheeks, which in turn become the subject of the action that is in full effect—the cheeks have been made tearful, have flooded with tears.¹⁰⁴ The tears of the narrator's account, welling in the suitors' eyes, have been made to fall in Theoklumenos' version and are still being shed, but the suitors are not mentioned in any regard as the ones who are shedding them.

Not only are autonomy, agency, and control stylistically denied to the suitors in Theoklumenos' narration, the suitors themselves are, by and large, made absent. They are

¹⁰³ This effect is figured through the middle-passive form πίμπλαντο, here I believe, in the intransitive middle sense because of the use of the dative, δακρυόφιν, as opposed to the subjective genitive found more often with the passive. Moreover, the imperfect tense focuses more on the event of actively filling in the past than on the one time action of bursting into tears or being filled to the brim with tears, and then spilling over that an aorist might have conveyed. There is no completive connotation to that imperfect.

¹⁰⁴ 20.353: οἰμωγή δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί. The last personal pronoun to which ownership of the described body part can be ascribed is the ὑμέων from two lines before, discussed above.

depicted neither as straw-man subjects nor as direct objects, and are hardly included referentially in the text with datives or genitives. Indeed, Theoklumenos seems to gradually refrain from even alluding to them after they are featured as the unnamed subject of the first main verb. The genitive pronoun ὑμέων effectively phases them out of focus once it referentially designates them as the owners of the body parts affected by the curtain of darkness, and they are made to haunt the edges of the omen as the indirect but implicit source of the tears, the blood, and the ghosts that follow, over which they have no control and which they contribute to the scene against their will. Unlike in the narrator-text, the blood motif is featured in Theoklumenos' character-text not as a symbol of the improper eating practices that the suitors perpetrate, but as the consequence of the suitors' aforementioned crimes, as their blood shed in retribution.¹⁰⁵ Instead of clarifying and revealing the reality of the suitors' actions in the past and present, the blood's symbolism points forward towards the future and the punishment they will be subjected to as a result of their past actions. Appropriately, the suitors are not included as nominal subjects of any verb overseeing the bloodying in the moment and, instead, the walls and ceiling have already been splattered with [read: the suitors'] blood. Thus, Theoklumenos complements the narrator's account of causality and implementation through Athena's possession with an omen-narration that details the possession's effect in full culmination (as compared to the narrator-text which describes it on the precipice of activation). As a refraction of the narrator's account, Theoklumenos' version details the same event but with different, distinct components brought to the visual forefront.

¹⁰⁵ The narrator-text echoes motifs of the Cattle of the Sun episode and, in this regard thematically foreshadows their doom also through an equation of the suitors and their atasthalia with the crew of Odysseus and their atasthalia. However, Theoklumenos' interpretation of the blood in the omen more directly prefigures the suitors' slaughter which will result in this exact bloodying of the hall in the next few hundred lines. In other words, Theoklumenos' blood symbol is a more direct portent of the future than a figurative symbol found in the narrator-text, a distinction appropriate to the types of mediums focalizing and narrating these signs. Russo 1988, 124-125 on lines 351-7 gives an account of the omen symbolism as a nigh on universal language of impending doom, the blood in particular.

Following the phasing out of the suitors' presence grammatically, Theoklumenos construes them as a metaphysical presence only in his prophecy, transfiguring them, in a form of soothsaying alchemy, from bodies into spirits. He advances through their doom, moving from blood portents into specters and symbols of death and the underworld: "and the porch [is] full of ghosts and the courtyard [is] also full of those hurtling to Erebus down under the gloom; and the sun has perished utterly from heaven and an evil mist has spread over." Notably, no verbs are used in the description of the palace and its population of ghosts and, when a finite verb is again employed, Theoklumenos chooses perfects in the active voice with an intransitive sense: ἐξαπόλωλε and ἐπιδέδρομεν. Just like the former portents, these signs point forward towards the ultimate result of the suitors' possession and the fate that they earned through their outrageous behavior—at the end of the slaughter, the suitors' ghosts will fill the palace and then will be escorted down to Hades by Hermes.¹⁰⁶ The consequences awaiting them are their death and departure to the underworld, here figured symbolically through the supernatural darkness of an eclipse, a historically attested ill-omen—and perhaps also portending the lack of sun in Hades—and the evil mist, a traditional stylization of life fading from a man's eyes.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ 24.1 ff.

¹⁰⁷ Russo 1988, 124-123. Flower 2008, 114 for historical accounts of eclipses, both solar and lunar, as omens. The vanishing of Helios from heaven may also be a callback to the Cattle of the Sun episode (narrated by Odysseus from Kalypso's account of the event) when Helios threatened to go down to Hades and shine upon the dead only if recompense was not made for his lost cattle: 7.377-383.

Apollo, although not directly featured in the *Odyssey* for his role in association with the sun, has been named with the epithet Phoibos, Bright One, earlier at 3.279 and has been mentioned in passing as significant to the particular day—at 20.276-280 the narrator mentions observance of rites in Apollo's grove. Later, when the suitors fail to string the bow, they rationalize their failure as owed to the god Apollo, on whose feast day they should not engage in competition: 21.258-268. It may also be significant that the verb that the sun oversees here has phonetic echoes with Apollo: ἐξαπόλωλε and Ἀπόλλων may resound in the audience's mind upon hearing this line. Thus, the sun that utterly perishes from heaven could be a reference to Helios or Apollo, or both.

ἀχλύς is the word used for the mist shed upon men's eyes as they die at *Iliad* 5.696, 16.344, and 20.421, and soon will be used to describe one of the suitor's deaths at 22.88. As a veil between the worlds of gods and men, the ἀχλύς is depicted in use by the gods in both epics: *Iliad* 5.127, 15.668, 20.321, 20.341 and *Odyssey* 7.41. In the *Iliad* in particular, the mist is employed to ensure that the god's favorites are kept safe or are made successful in their endeavors.

Arguably, these motifs simply bring the omen full circle, further describing the effect of night falling upon the suitors and foreshadowing the rest of their fate from slaughter to departure from this world. However, I assert that the inclusion of these components and, specifically, the verbs used (or not used) to illustrate them creates an additional contrast between the narrator- and character-text contributions to the divine-human communication episode as a whole. Moreover, no passive verbs are here employed to describe the implementation of these effects. No verb at all is explicitly used to describe the presence of the ghosts and one may only assume the implicit presence of an ἐστί, is, to copulate the subject nouns, πρόθυρον and αὐλή, and their modifying adjectives, πλέον and πλείη respectively. The action of ghosts filling the porch and courtyard is not itself important, but rather the significance lies in the fact that they are already full of ghosts. The suitors' doom is in full effect, their ghosts mingle among them before Theoklumenos' eyes.

Theoklumenos' verb choices indicate one thing in particular: the act is required but its resulting state is crucial. While the narrator-text animates cause and effect through the juxtaposition of divine aorist and mortal imperfect actions, Theoklumenos' character-text suspends the action and renders it instead as various disparate states. In this adjustment of focalization, Theoklumenos' performance is again made a refraction of the narrator's; here, the metaphor is more tangible, as the single sequence, in the narrator's account, of possession to omen becomes serialized, when shown through the prism Theoklumenos, into an array of static points. Ekphrasis is the domain of an inspired poet. An inanimate work of art is miraculously imbued with life and a whole world of ongoing events is incorporated into its description. Our affected *mantis* must instead instantaneously preserve, as a single speech, a bombardment of information about his whole reality. In terms of aspect, the refraction through Theoklumenos

inverts the narrator's contribution and Theoklumenos' narration becomes a freeze-frame. In a series of flashbulb moments, captured like snapshots of a larger, overarching event, Theoklumenos preserves static renderings of several images that progress, almost episodically, through a slightly disjointed composition. Like a cameraman, he captures a specific array of images according to where he directs his gaze through the specialized lens of his affected state.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the suitors become heads, faces, knees. The palace becomes walls, ceiling, porch, courtyard, and the setting becomes discrete points of ambience (almost like stage directions): lamentation, blood, ghosts, no sun, an evil mist.¹⁰⁹ This is the effect of the perfect on Theoklumenos' speech.

Once he has indicated the topic of his proclamation (and the opening address of his divination has been duly performed), Theoklumenos utilizes the perfect tense, which not only spans more of reality temporally but communicates a denser, more complex action in terms of its aspect. The perfect tense brings to Theoklumenos' description more than a focus on the duration of the effects that the narrator-text's imperfect tense imbues. It spotlights the fact that the verbal action has begun and has been completed by the time it is described.¹¹⁰ Thus, the English

¹⁰⁸ In an extension of this cinematic metaphor, Theoklumenos is the cameraman who operates the specialized device that captures the very particular perspective on events that the director, Athena, has organized to be captured. Theoklumenos' ability to perceive and translate information, therefore, is the camera, while his affected state is the lens that allows for his enhanced perception. In this regard, the comparison between his affected state and, say, an infrared array on a camera could be applicable. Thus, Theoklumenos observes reality, through his camera, more keenly than normal and captures as much of the event as his capacity as the camera operator allows. Unfortunately, his product is not visual, but verbal, so the snapshots he captures are even more condensed by the limitations of spoken language than a purely visual medium would be.

¹⁰⁹ To extend the metaphor into that of the visual arts, the atomization of the suitors and the palace architecture results in a description that almost fashions those negative spaces between subjects and states into picture frames, like borders in a work of art around each component, and captures them frozen and static in that exact position for an instant before their original reference fades forever from view. With this single editorial choice, our professional affected medium can capture a whole series of complicated events, spanning past and future, as a snapshot, a glimpse of a reality past the mist caught before he blinks and the view changes.

¹¹⁰ Gero and Stechow 2003 and Rijksbaron 2002, 35-37, esp. note 3: "[the] perfect has totalizing value, i.e. it implies that the state is the result of a series of occurrences of the preceding state of affairs"; Allan 2016 102-3, "[the] perfect denotes a present state, while it presupposes a past event."

rendering of, for instance, ειλύαται as “have been veiled” does not entirely express the full suggestions of the perfect verbs. The use of the perfect, specifically, first indicates that the action of veiling happened prior to Theoklumenos’ perception, then that it has been completed by the point at which he describes it, and finally and most importantly, that it results in an enduring state: have been covered and are now still veiled in night. The same can be said for the other perfects:

- δέδηε: “lamentation has quickened and now spreads”
- δεδάκρυνται: “cheeks have been made wet and are now flooded with tears”
- ἐρράδαται: “the walls and fine ceiling coffers have been splattered and are still mottled with blood”
- ἐξαπόλωλε: “the sun has perished utterly and is now absent from heaven”
- ἐπιδέδρομεν: “an evil mist has come in and is now spread over everything”

Thus, his performance becomes a flashbulb moment. The use of the perfect tense clearly makes the events that Theoklumenos describes more present and immediate before the mind’s eye of his audiences. The full span of their inception and duration is illustrated in the completive aspect of the tense and, consequently, their results weigh heavily upon the message he delivers.¹¹¹ Indeed, the future results of these states are so imminent in each portrait’s perfect verb that they are made manifest and already static in the next snapshot of Theoklumenos’ prophecy.¹¹² The freeze frame of the disintegrating suitors jumps to the gore of their already

¹¹¹ De Jong 2001, 502: “A striking feature of Theoclymenus’ description is his use of perfects (e.g., ειλύαται, δέδηε). Since the semantic force of the perfect tense is to describe a situation achieved, the tense seems to be used here rhetorically, to underline the warning nature of his words: what he describes is the nearby and inevitable future; cf. ἤδη/δή 347, 348.

¹¹² The perfect tense also semantically encapsulates the future because of its forward-looking tone in this passage and in the very resonance of the perfect tense’s resultive and stative aspect. As an enduring result of a past action, the perfect illustrates a state in the present that may be assumed to continue to persist into the future. Alternatively, the perfect is employed to even stronger rhetorical effect in reference to the vacillations of the future and, “although the state of affairs concerned has still to be realized, the perfect suggests that it has already been realized, and with lasting results.” Rijksbaron 2002, 37 note 5. The example given here includes a conditional clause, situating the statement as future-facing. I believe the same nuance is carried in Theoklumenos’ prophecy—perhaps unbeknownst to him but assuredly resonant to the external audience. In this, Theoklumenos’ pronouncement brings the suitors’ impending future into their immediate present, both for his internal audience and the external audience, but still roots its inception in the past.

sundered bodies, which then jumps to their ghosts awaiting their *psychopomp*, and then those ghosts are hurtling down towards and immediately are in the underworld. The effect of Theoklumenos' verbs creates this breathless pace of reality being unveiled before him, so overwhelming, in fact, that he temporarily drops any main verbs while describing the ghosts' omnipresence. The enjambment of *ἰεμένων* in line 356, modifying the former line's *εἰδώλων*, goes so far as to course-correct the now outdated information of his vision—*εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή, / ἰεμένων Ἔρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον....*¹¹³ Whereas, a blink before, the ghosts filled the palace, suddenly they are hurtling to the Underworld. So sudden is the transition into the next freeze-frame that not even Theoklumenos seems to understand that he beholds the landscape of their eternity. He frames the scene as though the sun has gone missing, as opposed to that it never shines down there, and a mist has rolled in around him, as opposed to is ever-present in the gloaming fields. In a burst of static instances, Theoklumenos has foretold the suitors' entire fate. In other words, Theoklumenos perceives through his affected state the doom of the suitors throughout its entire timeline, with which they have just been marked by Athena through her possession, and he describes it in its entirety as if it has already been brought completion, looking backwards at its origin from the vantage point of its fulfillment.

The narrator-text catalyzes reality and reveals the entire reaction, and especially Athena's hand in it, to the external audience. Theoklumenos' character-text monumentalizes the event with a timeless memorial, not in honor, but in horror.¹¹⁴ By featuring the narrator- and character-text accounts of the divine intervention in juxtaposition like this, the poet has allowed his

¹¹³ Theoklumenos cannot finish that thought since the description of Erebus, already manifest, encroaches upon the end of that line with *ἠέλιος δέ*. As line 356 bleeds into 357, the suitors' ghosts instantaneously are already arrived in the sunless, misty gloom of Erebus—*οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀγλύς*.

¹¹⁴ This proleptically ties in their entire fate all in one condensed, static moment, preserving them as a tableau of their role in the epic by which is created a negative exemplum, as I will discuss further in Chapter Four 4.4 with their transgressions' consequences attached.

audience to experience the very same moment of communication between the divine and mortal planes from two different but analogous points of focus: through an inspired and affected mediums' perspective. The ultimate message is the same, the suitors are doomed, but the conveyance of that message through two vectors provides a swath of information that spans the whole spectrum of perspectives on the event, from a divinely biased, literarily motivated point of view to one mortally biased and concentrating on the 'real-world' results of the communication. From a different angle, the poet can be seen to be preserving distinct vignettes on separate components of Athena's intervention and participation in events. The narrator-text motivates and incites her intervention while the character-text reveals the full extent of its effects.

In either case, despite the functionally distinct approach to narrating the possession of the suitors, the poet and seer are aligned through their techniques. The figuration of subject and object through their syntax creates the same general effect—the suitors are stripped of agency by this moment and this lack of autonomy prefigures their loss of life at the hands of Odysseus. Furthermore, diction surrounding the employment of verbs figures prominently in the formal composition of the paired narrations. More than the verbs' efficacy in stylizing objectification, aspect appears to have been stylistically employed by the poet to create a mimicry in structure between the narrator- and character-text, the effect of which bifurcates the actual narrative performance into a declarative proclamation of an event and a descriptive account of the action and its ensuing results. In the narrator-text, this divide separates the enactment of the effect first through Athena's actions and then the experience of the effect through the suitors'. In the character-text, the binary is starker and encapsulated in the use of the simple, indicative present tense to proclaim the existence of the effect (τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε;) and then the far more

semantically complex perfects that follow and make the effect so present before the eyes of the external audience.

Thus, the poet and *mantis* are juxtaposed in this scene, made analogous and yet distinct. The particular type of their altered state of mind, which allows for a mantic aspect to be featured in each performance of the omen, is the distinguishing factor. The poet is inspired, while Theoklumenos is affected. By pairing the two versions, the poet has formally made evident the commonalities and differences in each medium's approach to divine-human communication. Unlike the in-story *mantis*, the poet in his epic *poesis* cannot so immediately and obviously demarcate a moment of particularly mantic performance from the entirety of his song, which is formally stylized as a creation of a special mental state, the inspiration of the Muses. The stereotypical non-normative behaviors that a Greek archaic audience may have understood as indicative of a mantic state are already naturally present in the poet's narrator-text and might have only been redoubled in order to further emphasize his special mental state and the particularly inspired quality of his performance at that moment.¹¹⁵ Although it would have been a subtle contribution, I suggest that the poet does redouble his efforts to perform mantic inspiration during his exposition of Athena's possession omen, and that he does so in order to reinforce the pairing of his mantic performance with Theoklumenos' and, in turn, their separate and distinct performances as interpreters.

Furthermore, in his third and final prophecy, I insist, Theoklumenos is circumstantially affected in a much more acute manner than what is otherwise depicted of *manteis*. His enhanced

¹¹⁵ The standard qualities used to indicate a mantic state that are later found in oracular pronouncements, for instance, cannot be employed to create distinction because the epic is already stylized with those very qualities, dactylic hexametrical verse and poetic metaphors and imagery, and very well may be the actual source for that cultural conception of inspiration. See Maurizio 1995, 81-86 on randomizing factors employed in oracular performance. Mitchell 2011 includes a summary of parallel aspects between the *mantis* and the poet.

understanding does not occur to him gently and his excited performance reflects the violent manifestation of his affected state. In place of an address formally beginning his pronouncement and naming his particular addressee, Theoklumenos cries out in emotionally colored exclamations. The vocative *δειλοί* is a descriptor resulting from his reaction to their plight and, proceeded by the exclamatory *ᾗ* regularly expresses a responsive emotion like horror or contempt in the Homeric epics.¹¹⁶ Coupled with the exclamatory question that follows, “why are you suffering this here evil?” which is rhetorical and clearly does not expect an answer but rather further expresses his horror, I suggest that the opening invocation, of sorts, of Theoklumenos’ proclamation is so emotionally colored as to resonate with other attestations of Athena’s particular brand of affecting a mortal’s perception of reality.¹¹⁷ It is not the adjacent jostling of the suitors’ thoughts alone that leads me to this conclusion, but also another of the goddess’s particularly physical interactions with a mortal whose response is similarly colored with first emotion, then understanding: *Iliad* Book 1’s epiphany to Achilles.

στῆ δ’ ὀπιθεν, ξανθῆς δὲ κόμης ἔλε Πηλεΐωνα
οἴφ φανομένη· τῶν δ’ ἄλλων οὔ τις ὄρατο·
θάμβησεν δ’ Ἀχιλεὺς, μετὰ δ’ ἐτρέπετ’, αὐτίκα δ’ ἔγνω
Παλλάδ’ Ἀθηναίην· δεινῶ δέ οἱ ὄσσε φάανθεν·

She stood behind him and grabbed the son of Peleus by his golden hair
appearing to him alone, and no one of the others saw
and Achilles was astounded and turned around and immediately
recognized Pallas Athena; and her two eyes shone terribly... (*Iliad* 1.197-200)

Admittedly, Achilles is a character fraught with emotion. I cannot extend an analogy between his states pre- and post-epiphany and Theoklumenos’. However, there is a parallel

¹¹⁶ *LSJ* “ᾗ”.

¹¹⁷ Emotional outbursts are classified by Maurizio (1995, 80-83) as one of the randomizing factors employed performatively as indicators that a diviner’s actions are objective and being affected by an outside influence on his/her mental state. This broad range of ‘spirit possession’ that Maurizio discusses could span Homeric representations of both an inspired and an affected state and is arguably observable in moments of manifest divine epiphany where the epic externalizes, as an interaction between two characters, what would be an internal experience of a god communing with a single human unbeknownst to all other mortals in the vicinity.

between the stark divergence in their behaviors catalyzed by Athena's intervention in both scenes. Achilles was on the verge of murdering Agamemnon before Athena yanked him back by the hair and talked some sense into him. In fact, it is through an exchange of kinds of prophetic promises that the scene is resolved and Achilles is left to smolder in his wrath, rather than be consumed by it and act on his impulses.¹¹⁸ By the end of their interaction, Achilles has changed his mind—or in other words, because of his more privileged insight into the reality of his situation, Achilles has adjusted his behavior. Athena intervenes physically and then changes her mortal target's perspective to prompt the desired behavior.

The same could be said to happen if her smacking about of the suitors is imagined to extend to the other party experiencing heightened visions of his surroundings. It need not be Theoklumenos' hair that she yanks, but instead the mist before his eyes, which she has been shown already in the *Odyssey* to manipulate in order to carry out her will. In Scheria, she cloaks and then dramatically reveals Odysseus from the mist.¹¹⁹ Here, in Ithaka, she could just as easily have brushed it from Theoklumenos' eyes and turned his chin, or in some other way directed his attention to the fate of the suitors unfolding around them. Regardless of her method, Theoklumenos exhibits a response to the goddess's intervention that is comparable to Achilles'. The latter is described as astounded, θάμβησεν, an emotion that clearly overcomes Theoklumenos when he utters his first outcry: ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε. Achilles then recognizes Athena and responds apropos to the situation by endeavoring to divine the reason for

¹¹⁸ Achilles first 'predicts' that Agamemnon's hubris will soon be the death of him (203-206), using the phrase τὸ δὲ καὶ τελέεσθαι οἶω perhaps even in ironic emulation of prophecy. Athena then goes on to reveal to him what will really happen, echoing his prophetic jargon with the more certain τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται (212-214). With assurances that Agamemnon will pay and indication that this conforms to the gods' will, Achilles stays his wrath—that is, with a deeper understanding of reality, he changes his behavior.

¹¹⁹ 7.14 ff. with the dramatic reveal occurring at 7.143.

her epiphany.¹²⁰ Theoklumenos likewise seems to recognize the situation. For him, it is one necessitating his divinatory performance immediately. In fact, in the same line as his emotional exclamation, he begins to translate for his audience what his affected state has laid before his eyes. Whereas the affected state Athena instills upon Achilles composes him after the initial strike of wonder, she entirely unsettles Theoklumenos. Thus, the exceptionality of his affected state is represented by that initial divergence from his normal, professional, rational comportment with an irrational and emotional outburst that neither clearly points out his divinatory signifier nor provides usable information on its meaning; it is simply an impulsive response expressing his own internal experience.

Once affected, the mortals influenced by Athena engage in uncharacteristic behavior—Achilles participates in a (moderately) cool-headed conversation about the future with tones of prophecy, while Theoklumenos abandons his formal, formulaic explicative approach to omens in favor of something markedly more descriptive. In fact, the *mantis* performs his *manteia* in a highly poetic manner, but with the inverse, narrative effect to what the narrator-text provides. As mentioned above, the narrator brings the scene to life, while Theoklumenos pauses it and brings its details into high relief.¹²¹ The reality he is preserving, however, is being disclosed before him so rapidly that he cannot compose a collected, sequential, and narratively cogent description and the second half of his performance tumbles unanchored through time and space.¹²²

Theoklumenos has not heretofore acted as an expositional device; he did not provide an

¹²⁰ Above, lines 199-200 have Achilles immediately recognizing Athena once he turns around and it is he who first addresses her, not the other way around at 201 and following.

¹²¹ And, in fact, is very much focused not on life but death. See above in 3.5 for the epitaph metaphor that I employ. See Chapter One in 1.3 and 1.4 for an account of the narrator-role and the epic genre's foremost qualities, which include exposition, especially lively, vivid exposition.

¹²² Again, see above, particularly on the effect of the verbs, elided and otherwise, and their tenses in lines 355-357. Gero and Stechow 2002 have an enlightening discussion of the use of the perfect tense, in Homeric texts in particular, and the aspect that they bring to the language.

illustrative or descriptive commentary on earlier omens, but an interpretative one. Coupled with the highly symbolic subject matter, Theoklumenos' narration of the omen is inherently colored with a poetic flair.¹²³ Like Helen's use of an epic simile in her divinatory performance, this poetic quality further draws the comparison between the narrator-text's contribution to the omen-scene and Theoklumenos', and especially between the different effects of the two types of divine interaction informing each medium's narration.¹²⁴

Finally, Theoklumenos' performance further emulates poetic performance and style by managing to encapsulate all of time as well as reality into his words; that is, like a narrator employing his omniscient perspective, Theoklumenos discloses the reality behind appearances—the doom of the suitors signified by their wantonness and their possession by Athena—in a bout of foreshadowing that comments on an event in the present and its impending repercussions. Bypassing the immediate sign of possession, the suitors' insane laughter, Theoklumenos spends his speech describing the fate that that sign entails in the coming scenes. While his internal audience would not have recognized this trope, Theoklumenos' external audience can easily hear the echoes between such a performance and a set-piece of the narrator's alluding to the plot denouement, of the sort that will follow and close out this book.¹²⁵ Thus, throughout the initial descriptive portions of the paired omen-narrations in this episode, the poet has managed to

¹²³ For the symbolism of the omen, see Russo 1988, 124-125. If not taken literally as the actual sight before Theoklumenos' affected mind's eye, his entire outburst is composed of metaphorical and ambiguous language of the sort that later would have been featured by oracles like the Pythia. As exemplified by later literary figures like Cassandra, presages of such disastrous fate are communicated obliquely and with colorful language that, like Theoklumenos' many symbols, allude to without explicitly describing the moment of death or the agent of it. Maurizio 1995, 85-86 raises this comparison between Cassandra and the Pythia. At *Agamemnon* 1256 ff. Cassandra's famous prophecy begins with an emotional outburst and then a long series of metaphors predicting the deaths to come at the climax of the play.

¹²⁴ Helen's epic simile: 15.174-177. My discussion on this can be found in Chapter Two 2.5.

¹²⁵ See lines 20.390-394 and Chapter Four.

refract his own mediation of divine-human communication through Theoklumenos and his *manteia* and, in doing so, to mirror the inherent qualities of the other.

The narrator performs more mantic behaviors and does so effectively. The *mantis*, on the other hand, performs more poetic behaviors, but with an inverted effect, stasis in place of ekphrasis. The result is a very particular metacommentative space, which reflects heavily on the medium's import, both as a vehicle for "truth" and as a force in society. Indeed, it is difficult to reflect on the epitaph of the suitors' doom so vividly preserved before the audience's eyes without realizing how catastrophically incorrect their reception-act turned out to be. Their error, which I will discuss further next chapter, is highlighted uniquely by the combined perspective on the omen provided through both the narrator- and character-text.

I conclude that it is the structural force of this paired narration that illustrates and underscores the individual contributions of each medium's focalization while simultaneously crafting the most inclusive description of the possession/omen-event possible via mantic speech. Through the combination of Theoklumenos' human-biased, effect-focused poetic *manteia* and the narrator's divine-biased, cause-focused mantic narration, the first half of Athena's intervention/omen is preserved as an exhaustive performance of a prophetic medium's potential in their mantic capacity. Unlike Helen's or Penelope's, who can neither perfectly balance control and perspective, Theoklumenos' performance encapsulates balanced authorship in coordination with his performance context. Thanks to the juxtaposition of the complementary narrator-text, he is shown neither to concede entirely his control over his actions nor supersede the circumstances, because he is not inspired nor possessed, but affected. Therefore, in tandem with said narrator-text, Theoklumenos does not stand as aberrant but rather participates in epitomizing the paradigm of mantic prophecy for the Homeric poet. Theoklumenos' earlier performances assert

his deftness as a primarily rational interpreter of the gods' signs. His final performance exhibits the force a medium can wield when perceiving and shaping reality in cooperation with a divine influencer. Theoklumenos' value is further brought to the fore when he is shown not only focalizing the omen but narrating its message along with the narrator. In the next chapter, I will continue expounding on Theoklumenos as the refraction of the poet, by discussing him as a *prophetes* capable not only of exercising his affected state for *manteia* but applying it in the act of interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERPRETATION, RECEPTION, AND EXEMPLA IN BOOK 20

4.1 The Moral of the Story: Comments from a Medium

Εὐρύμαχ', οὐ τί σ' ἄνωγα ἐμοὶ πομπῆας ὀπάζειν
εἰσί μοι ὀφθαλμοὶ τε καὶ οὐατα καὶ πόδες ἄμφω
καὶ νόος ἐν στήθεσσι τετυγμένος οὐδὲν ἀεικῆς.
τοῖς ἔξειμι θύραζε, ἐπεὶ νοέω κακὸν ὕμιν
ἐρχόμενον, τό κεν οὐ τις ὑπεκφύγοι οὐδ' ἀλέαιτο
μνηστήρων, οἳ δῶμα κάτ' ἀντιθέου Ὀδυσῆος
ἀνέρας ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάασθε.

Eurumachos, I've not at all bidden you to send
me off with escorts/ I have eyes and ears and
both feet/ And a mind in my chest made not at
all unsound./ With these I go out the door since
I perceive that evil comes/ Your way, which no
one may escape nor avoid/ Of the suitors, you
who throughout the house of godlike Odysseus/
Insulting men contrive reckless folly.

(20.364-370)

δεῖπνον μὲν γάρ τοί γε γελοίωντες τετύκοντο
ἦδ' ὃν τε καὶ μενοεικές, ἐπεὶ μάλα πόλλ' ἰέρευσαν·
δόρπου δ' οὐκ ἄν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο,
οἷον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερός ἀνήρ
θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο.

For, you know, a meal, while laughing, they
had prepared for themselves/ Both sweet and
suited to their tastes, since they slaughtered a
great many/ But, nothing else ever would be
more graceless than their supper/Just such a
one indeed the goddess and steadfast man were
soon/ going to serve; for they were first
contriving unseemly deeds.

(20.390-394)

In the first half of his final performance, the character of Theoklumenos is framed by the poet as a refraction of the narrator and their paired, complementary performances are crafted to contrast with the *Odyssey's* two other marked moments of *manteia*.¹ Beside the inspired/affected duality of Book 20's omen narration, Penelope's inspired—or, arguably, possessed—*manteia* and Helen's inspired interpretation each discretely represent the two halves of the narrator's role. Meanwhile, the poet complements Theoklumenos' complete performance of affected *manteia* and subsequent interpretation with the similarly complete performance of the narrator's inspired *manteia* and interpretation. This juxtaposition essentially acts as an in-story foil of the poet, a

¹ The character, Theoklumenos, refracts another of the poet's characters, the narrator. The narrator, of course, is a persona that the poet can be said to perform in the act of epic *poesis* and, therefore, is not so much a character in the traditional sense of an internal actor within the plot. Rather, the narrator-character allows the poet to perform his act of inspired divine-human communication in a formal setting and, moreover, allows him to create the metapoetic juxtaposition between mantis and singer within the very act of epic *poesis*.

narrative tool through which the poet can vividly illustrate the artistry that he demonstrates in the act of mediating divine-human communication and performing the epic. As a result, not Theoklumenos, the seer extraordinaire, but the poet is preserved for us in the *Odyssey* as the be-all and end-all of *prophetes*.²

Last chapter, we examined the first half of the poet's masterwork. Theoklumenos is presented as a consummate professional, a true craftsman and more than competent performer. Together with the narrator-text's inspired description, Theoklumenos is shown to perform a mantic prophecy of an omen that contrasts starkly with Penelope's lackluster inspired delivery from several hundred lines earlier.³ The affected state, which allows Theoklumenos his privileged perspective on the unfolding events, is illustrated as distinct from inspiration, of the sort under which Penelope toils and through which the poet excels. Moreover, his affected state provides a unique version of Athena's omen as a result of Theoklumenos' particular reaction and focalization. Alongside the narrator-text's inspired version, Theoklumenos' narration provides the external audience with a frame of reference on Athena's intervention-omen that spans the whole spectrum of perspectives—from the divine sphere's point of view to the human observer's—and provides a doubly enriched account of the moment that, while not absolutely complete, includes more than the usual narrator-text or character-text account, in isolation, would depict.

² In the same vein as Maurizio 1995, 70, I here use *prophetes* to mean 'one who speaks publicly' and therefore 'one who announces a divine message.' As is the case with her argument about the Pythia, I believe the distinction between *prophetes* and *mantis* arises from the emphasis each term places on the activation of particular aspects of the diviner's role without necessarily dividing the role of diviner into discrete functions and positions. Thus, as she argues in note 10, the label *mantis* emphasizes the medium's contact with the divine, while the label *prophetes* emphasizes the medium's role in announcing a divine message. Conveniently, these two labels neatly characterize the two portions of Theoklumenos and the narrator's contributions to Book 20's divination-scene. Last chapter, I addressed their contributions under their *mantis* label and, this chapter, I will address their contributions that fall under the *prophetes* label.

³ For Theoklumenos' mantic prophecy, see Chapter Three 3.5. For Penelope's imperfect inspired prophecy, see Chapter One 1.4; on *Odyssey* 19.535-553.

Furthermore, the poet also uses this doubled performance of divination metapoetically. In this regard, Theoklumenos, side-by-side with the narrator-text, refracts the poet's contribution as narrator by performing a similar but formally distinct act of *manteia* that does not directly reflect the narrator's performance but does comment upon it by echoing some aspects and diverging from others. Thus, while the narrator's performance of the divine intervention is the original unfiltered light, Theoklumenos' divinatory performance is the refracted light that has been filtered through the lens of the *mantis* in his affected state. The narrator-text captures the event through the omniscience of its inspired source in a single, unbroken narrative sequence, while Theoklumenos' character-texts provides an array of descriptions that detail the same event but through a more dissociated, even episodic, account. Theoklumenos' version of the omen does not immediately appear to be identical to the narrator's but it contains the same inherent content, just as prismatic light looks different to the eye from unfiltered light but is simply the same light refracted into a more visible array.

Penelope's dream omen, conversely, seems to be differentiated purposefully from Theoklumenos' performance; while Theoklumenos' scene captures a successful analogy of the poet's inspired mantic performance, Penelope's scene fails to mirror exactly the poet's contribution. Penelope does not perform her own version of the narrator's divination, but instead is made the imperfect stand-in for the narrator and, in doing so, therefore seems to provide a flawed version of inspired mantic performance. As I will argue below, the same comparison can be drawn between Helen's *oionomanteia* and the combined efforts of narrator and Theoklumenos to interpret the omen they each narrated. Penelope is contrasted with Theoklumenos in order to portray the professional seer in a more favorable light and, in turn, the narrator in the most favorable light. Likewise, Helen is positioned to contrast with Theoklumenos and the narrator

when each endeavor to perform the second half of the medium's role in divine-human communication: the exegesis of the initial message. Theoklumenos again becomes the point of reference while the poet demonstrates that his own narrator's inspired interpretation is the best instantiation of the inspired medium's performance.

After spotting the signs and describing the symbolism, the mediums turn next to interpretation in order to instill the message with actionable meaning for their audience. In this chapter, I will analyze the pair of divinatory interpretations provided for the *Odyssey's* audience in the wake of Book 20's paired *manteia* narrations. As in the case of last chapter's mantic prophecies, I will focus especially on the particular qualities of the interpretations that are brought into high relief when the poet juxtaposes the narrator's and Theoklumenos' refractive versions, as well as the effects which the inspired/affected states of each *manteia* send rippling through the rest of their respective performances. In doing so, I will evaluate the faculty that Theoklumenos and the narrator each employ to provide their enlightened understanding of the omen's message. In particular, I will examine the various stylistic and compositional techniques that narrator and character each use as they performatively exhibit their innate talent for divination.⁴ Furthermore, I will discuss how the suitors participate in a reception-act of Theoklumenos' *manteia* and how this reception-act is proffered, within its context of the overarching epic text, as a negative exemplum. Specifically, I will assert that the poet has fashioned the suitors and their actions in this scene so that their act of reception of Theoklumenos' divination is understood by the external audience to be not only unadvisable and taboo but downright dangerous.

⁴ *Iliad* 1.70-72: Calchas is described as having this innate capacity when he uses *manteia* bestowed upon him by Apollo to know the past, present, and future. In this characterization, one could argue that the *Iliad's* poet portrays Calchas as an inspired mantis because Apollo has instilled the seer with something akin to the singer's "paths of song" that serves as a matrix of information for Calchas's divination acts.

Finally, I will return to show how Theoklumenos is a character portrayed in a mediating performance, in order to reflect on the specific depictions of divine-human communication in the *Odyssey* and their effect on the external audience's appreciation of their own medium, the poet. Here, at last, I will ruminate on the fact that a perfect inspired mediation has been excluded from the world of the *Odyssey*.⁵ I will discuss the effects of such a deliberate exclusion, as well as the fact that the poet has innovated, more generally, traditional depictions of divine-human communication throughout the epic. But before I can speculate on the altered state of Odysseus, the story-teller, and the poet's purposeful distortion of Helen's abilities, let us take a closer look at the end of Book 20.

4.2 Critical Correction: Theoklumenos' Exegetical Warning

Theoklumenos' first outburst, his mantic performance of the omen, is initially spurned by the suitors through their spokesman, Eurumachos. Theoklumenos interjects his second speech in the face of their raucous laughter and the offhand scorn of the seer's speech.⁶ If it was not initially clear that Theoklumenos was affected during the first half of this scene, it is made glaringly obvious by the contrast with his cool, composed, and subtly scathing delivery in lines 364-370. His response contains no shouts of dismay or pity, no erratic cascade of verb tenses and freeze-frame imagery. Instead, Theoklumenos returns to his former format for divinatory responses with rational and clear-cut statements that are either presented as fact or are clearly flagged as predicative. In fact, he adheres so closely to his previous performance that this speech is structured in parallel to the prophecy that he delivered to Telemachos and Penelope in Book

⁵ Specifically, I will reflect on how the poet has depicted Theoklumenos performing the perfect affected mediation and not a perfect inspired mediation.

⁶ 20.358-362: ὡς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἠδὺ γέλασσαν./ τοῖσιν δ' Εὐρύμαχος, Πολύβου πάϊς, ἦρχ' ἀγορεύειν/ ἀφραίνει ξεῖνος νέον ἄλλοθεν εἰληλουθῶς./ ἀλλά μιν αἴψα, νέοι, δόμου ἐκπέμψασθε θύραζε/ εἰς ἀγορὴν ἔρχεσθαι, ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ εἴσκει. See below in 4.4 for my analysis of this reception act.

17. With this reassertion of a former pattern of performance, I assert, Theoklumenos is depicted as returning to his normative *modus operandi*, which contrasts both with his former mantic speech pattern and with the narrator's paired commentative statement to follow. This reversion to normative behavior, notably, follows the suitors' own reversion to their own sort of laughter—sweet as opposed to unquenchable—in line 358. It seems that the spell of affected states has broken almost simultaneously for all those under Athena's influence.⁷ It is the gifted, professional *mantis* alone, however, who still understands the significance of that affected state once it has faded. Thus, Theoklumenos is portrayed as enacting both halves of mediated divine-human communication in a way that emphasizes his individual contribution to both, as well as bringing the narrator's variation into high relief as the scene closes.

First, in contrast to the opening of his mantic prophecy, Theoklumenos composes his speech in such a way as to respond to and adhere to his performance context in tone and mood. Fueled not just by a reflexive need to react to his surroundings, he conforms to but also actively shapes his circumstances with his words. His purposeful choices are evident first and foremost, as mentioned above, in the echoes of his performance in Book 17. Both interpretative speeches begin by naming his audience—Penelope and Eurumachos—and addressing the divination specifically to them. There are, of course, pointed differences between his application of this conventional structural element. In this instance, the full-line, honorific address to his audience, which was used respectfully towards Penelope, is reduced to a single-word vocative.⁸ Next, Theoklumenos establishes his motivation for performance. In much the same manner as he based

⁷ As discussed last chapter in 3.4 the suitors also exhibit qualities of an affected state after Athena has knocked their thoughts off course, that is, after Athena has touched their minds and altered their consciousness. Russo describes the event as a “forceful intervention to control the suitors’ behavior...” and “outright possession.” Moreover, Russo re-emphasizes that after the event the suitors “have no awareness of the spell Athena cast on them and of the supernatural phenomena.” See Russo 1988, 124-125 for the entirety of the discussion regarding the seer’s participation in this scene.

⁸ Compare 17.153 ὃ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος, with the above one-word Εὐρύμαχ’.

his second performance on Proteus’s second-hand prophecy about Odysseus, Theoklumenos bases his response on a correction of a preceding assertion.⁹ Instead of updating a non-*mantis*’s account of a well-repudiated, divine prophet’s pronouncement, however, Theoklumenos is responding to Eurumachos’ reception of Theoklumenos’ preceding *manteia*.¹⁰ As such, Theoklumenos is not so mild as to simply undermine the former prophecy in favor of his own.¹¹ The declaration of intent in Book 17, “for I will prophesy to you precisely and not leave anything out,” is transformed in Book 20 into a point-blank assertion of his divinatory credentials, which are professed in direct response to Eurumachos’ derisive reception, as well as in indirect contrast to the suitors’ conditions.

Theoklumenos responds to Eurumachos’ botched interpretation of the omen-event by dismantling the suitor’s speech in its entirety with the very same kind of wordplay and glibness that marked Eurumachos’ speech. We saw in Book 17 that Theoklumenos echoed Proteus’s use of the verb ἐπικεύσω to slightly adjust and then build off of the former prophecy in a way that corrected and updated his audience’s understanding of the subject. In regards to Eurumachos, Theoklumenos’ word choice completely dismantles the suitor’s speech word by word in order to negate his conclusions. In this way, he rebuts Eurumachos with a touch of dramatic irony. “I’ve not at all bidden you to send me (off) with escorts,” he proclaims immediately following the address to Eurumachos (οὐ τί σ’ ἄνωγα ἐμοὶ πομπῆας ὀπάζειν).¹² This is stated clearly in

⁹ See Chapter Three 3.2.

¹⁰ 20.360-362. More on this below. For now, it is necessary to note that Eurumachos’ reception is comprised of three key assertions based on his own implicit interpretation. First, he disregards Theoklumenos’ affected state as witlessness. Second, he bids someone escort him out of the house; the implication there being that he cannot manage to leave on his own. Finally, he construes Theoklumenos’ omen-description of the falling night as a symptom of his witlessness, a hallucination.

¹¹ In Book 17 (ln.153), Theoklumenos says of Menelaos’ delivery of the divine message from Proteus that “you know, that one [Menelaos] at least doesn’t [see and therefore doesn’t] know clearly, but take in this account from me....”

¹² 20.364.

response to the derisive command from the suitor that Theoklumenos be shown the door—*ἀλλά μιν αἶψα, νέοι, δόμου ἐκπέμψασθε θύραζε/εἰς ἀγορὴν ἔρχεσθαι...*—at 361-2. Beyond obviously serving to contradict the suitor’s command, the noun *πομπῆας* (escorts) echoes etymologically Eurumachos’ verb *ἐκπέμψασθε*. It also turns on its ear the principal conclusion of Eurumachos’ interpretation—an escort was in no way solicited by Theoklumenos’ pronouncement of the omen.¹³ This logical correction extends to Eurumachos’ evidence for this conclusion, as will become more evident later in Theoklumenos’ response. Because Eurumachos misunderstood the motivation for Theoklumenos’ outburst, it can be deduced that he also misunderstood Theoklumenos’ reasoning for this motivation, which the suitor outlines in the causal clause that closed his speech, “since he deems these parts to be like night” (*ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ ἕσκει*). In other words, Theoklumenos is declaring that Eurumachos has completely misread, or misinterpreted, the message. Theoklumenos has not thus failed, however, and he demonstrates as much in the catalogue of functioning body parts that follows.

In fact, the list of his physical and mental faculties communicates several layers of meaning in answer to Eurumachos’ rebuke, which include his ability to execute the formulaic structure of a divination, and a subtext that contrasts his own wellness with Eurumachos’ (and by extension, the other suitors’) doom.¹⁴ Initially, Theoklumenos’ catalogue seems to be a straightforward, explanatory claim that he is a self-sufficient individual of sound body and mind who is capable of leaving the palace without escort. “I have eyes and ears and both feet,” he

¹³ De Jong 2001, 502: on 364-70 she notes that “[i]n his reaction, Theoklumenos counters Eurymachus’ claim that he is mad and the suggestion that he needs escorts to bring him outside (‘catch-word’ technique †: his *πομπῆας* picks up *ἐκπέμψατε*: 361, his *θύραζε* picks up that in 361).

¹⁴ Ibid., 501: “The narratees may note the grim dramatic irony † of the real fool calling the wise man a fool (cf. 9.273) and the real blind men calling the seeing man blind. Theoclymenus answers Eurymachus’ two points in inverted order †: ‘I have eyes, ears, and feet myself (i.e., he is not blind) and my mind is sound (i.e., he is not mad). With those I will myself go out’ (364-366).”

seems to say with umbrage; he is not an invalid, he can navigate the world independently.¹⁵ These attributes prove his bodily soundness but also help to reinforce his ability to fulfill his social role as an itinerant specialist, the *mantis*.¹⁶ His perceptive faculties specifically are attested to here, ὀφθαλμοί τε καὶ οὐατα, by which he makes his living observing the world around him, as well as his motor faculties, πόδες ἄμφω, by which he travels unimpeded and provides this service.¹⁷ Thus, Theoklumenos both counters Eurumachos' interpretation of his situation and asserts his capacity to provide the divinatory service that will follow. Furthermore, in coordination with the third line to follow, Theoklumenos poses a list of positive qualities, which he claims to possess, and, which he allusively contrasts with the array of faculties that the suitors possess for the time being and/or in the immediate future. As the lines that are to come will reveal, Theoklumenos understands the suitors' situation to be the exact inverse of his own—they do not have the perceptive ability to acknowledge the evil coming their way, nor do they have the capacity to move away and thereby escape its approach. Before he constructs this dichotomy, however, Theoklumenos uses a specific combination of modifiers to flag these opening lines as corrective of Eurumachos' inverse reading of the omen performance.

Theoklumenos possesses not only eyes, ears and both feet, but “also a mind in my chest rendered not at all unseemly” (καὶ νόος ἐν στήθεσσι τετυγμένος οὐδὲν ἀεικής). Line 366

¹⁵ 20.365.

¹⁶ For general qualities and characteristics of the seer, see Flower 2008, 22-23. In particular, he notes that “[t]hese *dēmioergoi* are socially mobile “public workers” who travel from one *demos* (village) to another, and are sought after because of their specialized skills.” Their mobility, therefore, was an inherent quality of the seer’s craft and one of the faculties that Theoklumenos is defending outright. On page 23, Flower lists a number of divinatory methods that seers were expected to perform, which principally require the abilities of sight and hearing; i.e. “interpretation of the movements, behavior, and cries of birds (augury) and the interpretation of dreams and of portents (such as lightning, thunder, earthquakes, eclipses, and any unusual occurrences).”

¹⁷ The commentaries are largely unconcerned with these lines—and the episode more generally—with Monro making note of 365-367 simply to discuss their style: “[t]he structure is paratactic: ‘I have eyes &c., with them I will go out,’ = ‘I will go out guided by the eyes &c. that I have.’” De Jong 2001, 501-502: across several notes she comments on the dramatic irony of the suitor’s derision and on Theoklumenos’ inverted point for point answer that he is not blind and he is not mad, but does not closely analyze the lines themselves.

contains what the former two lines by and large did not: descriptive modifiers. Aside from the adjective ἄμφω, which importantly indicates that Theoklumenos is not crippled, his opening lines have been plain statements of fact: ‘I did not do this, I do have these things’. Theoklumenos delves into further details when he makes his claim to soundness of mind and uses specifically marked modifiers in order to do so. A prepositional phrase and adjectival participial phrase both adorn the final attribute he lists, his mind. These phrases occupy the entire line, which signals the weight of its message. First and foremost, Theoklumenos is predominantly concerned with that fact, obviously, that he possesses a sane mind. Accordingly, his reply strongly counteracts Eurumachos’ opening and most offensive ridicule, that Theoklumenos was senseless—ἀφραίνει ξει̃νος νέον ἄλλοθεν εἰληλουθώς.¹⁸ Theoklumenos more than rebuts this charge and instead turns it on its ear, pointing the accusation back at the suitors themselves through the particular, marked words used to characterize his mind. Eschewing the corresponding φρήν, which is embedded etymologically in Eurumachos’ ἀφραίνει, Theoklumenos chooses to take account of and evaluate the qualities of his νόος. He has eyes and ears to perceive and also, specifically, has more than wits, but rather an organ that undertakes the particularly rational functions of perception and thinking.¹⁹

As can be seen in its verbalization, νοέω, there is a slight but important distinction between the properties of a νόος, which is more regularly conceived of as the seat of thought, and the φρήν and θυμός which, in general, are figured as two faculties of less restrictively

¹⁸ 20.360 for Eurumachos’ line.

¹⁹ Since I have thus far been evaluating the Homeric texts as if they were formed without interaction with early philosophical schools, I am not using philosophical conceptualizations of the mind/soul to differentiate between the different terms for mind and wits and senses. Instead, I am using the pure etymological distinctions alongside the Homeric use of each separate etymology’s matrix of meanings. For a full discussion of the different organs and faculties of the Homeric mind, see Bruno Snell. *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953, among others who followed in Snell’s footsteps and provided less psychoanalytical interpretations, e.g., Jahn 1987 and Clarke 1999.

objective mental processes like the senses and emotions.²⁰ The *vóος* uses logic and empirical thinking; it is the faculty that mortals employ in their deductive acts of divination, as opposed to the more intuitive or feeling-based acts of interpretation by an inspired figure.²¹ This contrast already has been established in Book 15 when the poet places in stark opposition the approaches of Menelaos and Helen, one who uses his *vóος* versus one who uses her *θυμός*.²² Theoklumenos is asserting not only that he is of sound mind, but that he has at his disposal the capacity for higher thought, by which he can observe and deduce intelligently. Precisely because of this faculty, Theoklumenos can adeptly provide conclusions about what appears before his senses, his *φρήν*, which are, obviously, also not impaired. Such a point also underlines the fact that Theoklumenos is not inspired and does not conceive of himself as inspired when he delivers his proclamations. Rather, his perceptive faculty is his operative tool in divination—even his mantic moments—and the alteration of it in divinatory performance does not render it unsound but affected. The choice of *vóος*, therefore, is doubly corrective of Eurumachos' assessment— not only was Theoklumenos not senseless during his performance, but he was not even experiencing the altered state of inspiration that Eurumachos assumed to be the case and has belittled as delirium. In fact, every descriptive modifier of *vóος* that follows underscores the fact that Theoklumenos was affected, rather than inspired.

Beyond its formulaic nature, the prepositional tag *ἐν στήθεσσι* “in my chest” locates Theoklumenos' mind and thoughts securely in the traditional seat for such things within the

²⁰ Compare *voéō* as the verbalization of *vóος* and meaning anything from ‘perceive’ or ‘consider’ to ‘deem’ or ‘intend,’ all verbal actions of the objective mind either through observation or judgment, versus verbal instantiations of *φρήν* and *θυμός*, e.g. the alpha privative *ἀφραίνω* discussed above and *θύω* meaning ‘rage’ or ‘have one’s spirit set on passionately’. See *LSJ*.

²¹ For the differentiation between logic and senses for *nous* and *thumos*, see Pelliccia, Hayden. “Mental Organs.” In *The Homer Encyclopedia*, edited by Margalit Finkelberg. Wiley, 2011, with bibliography.

²² 15.169-170: ...μερμήριξε δ’ ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος, ὅππως οἱ κατὰ μοῖραν ὑποκρίναιτο **νοήσας**... versus 15.172-173 in Helen’s own words: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι, ὡς ἐνὶ **θυμῷ**/ ἀθάνατοι βάλλουσι καὶ ὡς τελέεσθαι οἶω.

human body.²³ Moreover, it does so, I assert, in allusive contrast to the episode's last mention of mental faculties. I refer here to the narrator-text's description of Athena's possession-act from line 346, *παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα*, at which point the goddess smacked the suitors' thoughts off-course. The direct object of Athena's divine violence, *νόημα*, is the nominalized neuter substantive of the verbal process conveyed by *νοέω* and performed by the *νόος*. For an attentive external audience, thus, this *νόος ἐν στήθεσσι* rings with irony when they recall that they have just witnessed the dislodging of the suitors' thoughts and, presumably, also the unseating of their minds from their chests. Such a subtle nuance adds an extra implied facet to the simple three-word assertion: "[I have] a mind in my chest (where it belongs, as opposed to knocked out of place by a god) ...". In the context of Theoklumenos' affected state, the phrase also reveals how he himself conceives of his experience, in contrast to how he interprets the suitors' state to have been during the omen-episode.

Despite the fact that he never called attention to it during his omen-narration, the subtext in this comment indicates that he, now at least, understands that the suitors suffered an affected state during the event, but one distinct from his own in terms of the awareness and control available to each party. When Theoklumenos was affected, presumably by Athena's touch, the state rendered his mind capable of perceiving more of his reality than other mortals but without affecting his mental autonomy, specifically, his memory of the event. The suitors, on the other hand, when Athena effectively possessed them by knocking their wits off course, had neither control over their own actions nor any awareness of this possession after the fact. Theoklumenos indicates these differences by emphasizing that his *νόος* and its position in his chest remain unviolated. Thus, without directly addressing whether or not he was experiencing an affected

²³ For more on organs of thought and their locations in Homeric thought, see Shirley Sullivan. *Psychological Activity in Homer: A Study of Phrēn*. Ottawa, Ont: MQUP, 1988, esp. pgs. 21-29.

state in the moments before this statement, Theoklumenos firmly asserts that, because of its enduring position inside his chest, he has not ceded control over his mind. Indeed, I suggest that, by implicitly contrasting his own mental state with the suitors', Theoklumenos crafts a more significant nuance for the otherwise simple addendum to his list of faculties. Therefore, one could argue that Theoklumenos, here, already is interpreting his initial *manteia*, while still in the formal opening address of his performance, or, in the very least, is specifying that his *modus operandi* is an affected and not an inspired state.²⁴

Theoklumenos continues and reinforces these interpretative and commentative strategies through the use of the participial phrase that follows: *τετυγμένος οὐδὲν ἀεικίης*, “rendered not at all unseemly.” The phrase is densely packed with significance, particularly because it stands as a conductor of meaning intra-textually, between the narrator- and character-texts of this episode. In other words, it signals a conversation of sorts between the narrator-text and the character-text of Theoklumenos, which corroborate each other’s points using a common vocabulary. I will start by unpacking the participle itself, *τετυγμένος*, which so far I have translated in two different ways, as “made” and as “rendered.” This form is the perfect middle-passive participle of the verb *τεύχω*, for which there exists a number of translations related to the concept of building or fashioning or bringing about. For this reason, it is both a versatile descriptor and, depending on the context, a tag heavily steeped with meaning.²⁵ Regularly, due to the aspectual sense of the perfect, the participle *τετυγμένος* specifically comes to mean “well-wrought” and this very well may be the foremost sense conveyed here in Book 20.²⁶ However, I suggest that the other

²⁴ Reading between the lines, we can almost hear Theoklumenos answering his initial emotional question from line 351: the suitors were experiencing a divine influence on their consciousness like himself, but one that wrested control from them and signaled their doom.

²⁵ *LSJ* *τεύχω* I.1 and II.

²⁶ *Ibid.* I.2.

connotations of the verb can be felt in Theoklumenos' statement, particularly because of the use of the perfect in his initial mantic proclamation and in comparison to the very event that precipitated this whole interchange, when Athena intervened and possessed the suitors with a kind of temporary insanity.

Like the series of perfects in Theoklumenos' omen-narration, τετυγμένος leaves the object of the effect as the grammatical subject of the sentence, thereby making the effect or the state it expresses the focus. However, using "rendered" in place of another copulative verb of being conveys more than a simple statement of his mind's status. By choosing this word, Theoklumenos does not simply say that his *nous* is not unseemly but rather that his *nous* has not been made unseemly by some outside force. Thus, with this nuance, Theoklumenos alludes both generally to the agent behind the act of rendering and, alongside the possible reference to minds displaced from their seats, to Athena's specific participation in and orchestration of the event. Moreover, regardless of its implicit meaning, the choice of "rendered" carries allusions to Theoklumenos' affected state and the influence exerted on him to achieve its enhanced perspective. If νόος ἐν στήθεσσι associatively contrasts with Athena's possession of the suitors, this perfect middle-passive participle similarly reinforces this association by presenting a reversal of the effects that he and the suitors have been made to experience in this scene. Theoklumenos' mind has been rendered one way and the suitors' another, a dichotomy rhetorically highlighted by the litotes that τετυγμένος governs: οὐδὲν ἀεικίης.

As I will expand upon below, τετυγμένος also becomes a catch-word that the narrator-text will recycle in the commentary to follow Theoklumenos' interpretative performance in line 390's τετύκοντο.²⁷ "Render" thus becomes a word used by the narrator to correlate and contrast

²⁷ De Jong 2001 xii: "'catch-word' technique: when a character echoes, often at the beginning of his speech, a word or expression from his interlocutor's speech, often with a different tone or meaning." I am, obviously, expanding

his and the seer's contributions to the episode. Theoklumenos' use of ἀεικής operates similarly, but alludes to other uses on two separate levels of intra-textuality. On one level, Theoklumenos deploys ἀεικής to further correct Eurumachos' interpretation. On a metanarrative level, Theoklumenos prepares another flagged descriptor that can and will be employed by the narrator-text to follow as another catch-word.

Thus far, Theoklumenos has rebutted Eurumachos by answering accusation with negation and deflecting criticisms with etymologically resonant terms. In other words, Theoklumenos has been responding word for word. However, as we recall, Eurumachos defamed Theoklumenos specifically by accusing him of insanity, first and foremost by claiming that he was devoid of his wits, or completely senseless, as communicated in the alpha-privative ἀφραίνει.²⁸ Theoklumenos corrects, part-for-part, by exchanging φρήν for νόος and insisting that his mind is not absent but still in his chest, and then he continues with an additional descriptive phrase that does not correct Eurumachos. Eurumachos did not comment on the quality of the seer's mental faculty, other than by describing it as altogether absent, and yet Theoklumenos asserts that his *nous* is where it belongs and has not at all been made unseemly. This addendum may seem like a natural expansion in defense of Theoklumenos' competence—the seer's mind is not only present, but it is also in good working order.²⁹ However, I suggest that, in this context, ἀεικής specifically brings significant additional implications, which point towards Theoklumenos choosing the word more for its allusive resonance than for its denotation.

upon the application of this term to include narrator and character as interlocutors in a dialogue composing a kind of call and response divinatory performance. See Chapter 3 3.1 and 3.5 for my defense of this structure and the ring composition of the entire episode.

²⁸ 20.360: ἀφραίνει ξεῖνος νέον ἄλλοθεν εἰληλουθώς.

²⁹ On expansion in Homeric composition, see Martin 1989.

First, like a skilled professional performer, Theoklumenos composes in response to his performance context. Once again in this moment, he has adjusted his diction to respond to and revise the prior interpretative performance, but ἀεικής corrects a different portion of the speech, the moment in which Eurumachos uses the verb ἔϊσκει (line 362: ...ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ ἔϊσκει). With the words' loosely related stems, Theoklumenos may be making an aural reference and using the catch-word technique to reconstrue their shared root's meaning in order to represent the situation more accurately.³⁰ With the catch-word ἀεικής, Theoklumenos implies that, rather than resulting from his own ability to perceive the situation, the cause for scorn in this scene results from an unseemliness. He pointedly attaches the quality of unseemliness to his *nous* because his mental faculties were the target of the suitor's defamatory attacks and it serves as the foremost vehicle for his particular set of practices. The litotes, οὐδὲν ἀεικής, thereby further corrects Eurumachos' misdirected assessment of the circumstances overall and indirectly transfers those sublimated conclusions onto the proper responsible parties, the suitors. In other words, Theoklumenos responds to the other defamation of his mind, by repurposing the idea of 'seeming' into a more appropriate application for the context. Thus, "I have a mind...not at all rendered unseemly," carries the subtext, "I have not ludicrously deemed the situation to be something that it is not. If unseemliness is to be scorned here, it is your minds that have been rendered unseemly, not mine."

Theoklumenos already has alluded in this line to the fact that the suitors' minds were unseated from their chests; he closes the line by alluding to the fact that they instead should be

³⁰ ἔϊσκει vs. ἀεικής, which would have aural resonance with one another, but which are also morphologically related, the former being derived from ἴσχω, 'make like' and the transitive verb for the action of the latter's verbal version, εἴκω, 'be like' or 'seem likely'. Both share the root notion of likeness or semblance inherent in the noun εἰκών. The final lines of the episode, to be discussed further below, contain two echoes of this word choice, both in reference to the suitors' situation and fate: μενοεικέες at 20.391 and ἀεικέα at 394.

the targets of scorn. Like the rest of Eurumachos' speech, Theoklumenos flips his words to reflect negatively on the suitors. Although Eurumachos dismisses Theoklumenos as unfit and contemptible, Theoklumenos inverts his claim and turns it into an implicit accusation that Eurumachos and the suitors are not only tragically deluded and contemptible but also damnably contemptuous. Indeed, from the forty-eight attested Homeric uses of the adjective, ἀεικής and its various inflections impart three different connotations, all of which reflect exceedingly poorly upon the suitors as the redirected objects of the modifier. The first connotation derives from its use to modify πότμος, λογός and στόνος, “fate,” “ruin” and “death rattle” respectively, where it means unseemly in the sense of unbecoming; the fate or ruin or death groan is indecent and undignified.³¹ Similarly, the second connotation is found with the adjective modifying ἔργον, or used as a substantive, and refers to “unseemly deed(s)” or “unseemly thing(s)” when a character's actions bring some disgrace down upon them.³² Thus, the adjective takes on its “shameful” connotation, particularly when used to modify a noun such as λώβη, “outrage,” wherein it brings the indecent quality of the outrage done to the fore.³³ The final connotation originates from the uses of the adjective to qualify things like wages, wallets, and appearances, all with the nuance of “meagre” or “wretched” in the sense that they are not up to standards, are mean, or are despicable in their lack of quality.³⁴ All uses gravitate around the rewarding—or

³¹ *Concordance to the Homeric Poems* “ἀεικέα” “ἀεικέες” “ἀεικέεσσι” “ἀεικής”; modifying πότμος: *Iliad* 4.396, *Odyssey* 2.250, 4.339, 4.340, 17.130, 17.131, 19.550, 22.416; λογός: *Iliad* 1.97, 1.341, 1.398, 1.456, 9.491, 16.32; modifying στόνος: *Iliad* 10.483, 21.20, *Odyssey* 22.308, 24.184; all variations of the same line κτεῖνε δ' ἐπιστροφάδην· τῶν δὲ στόνος ὄρνυτ' ἀεικής. Alternatively, the nuance “unfair” may be read, which if this connotation is presumed to be understood, Theoklumenos' use becomes doubly odd. When the death rattle of the suitors is described, however, I will insist that the connotation “unfair” is explicitly not being used, but rather “undignified” because of the moralizing work the epic has undertaken regarding the suitors' fate.

³² *Ibid.*, ἔργα: *Iliad* 22.395, 23.24, 24.733, *Odyssey* 4.694, 19.107, 20.317; ἔργον: *Iliad* 14.13, 19.133, *Odyssey* 3.265, 11.429, 15.236, 23.222; substantive: *Odyssey* 4.533, 20.394, 22.432

³³ *Ibid.* *Iliad* 11.142.

³⁴ *Ibid.* μισθόν *Iliad* 12.435; ἄποινα 24.594; πῆρην *Odyssey* 17.197, 18.108; πληγή *Iliad* 2.264; appearance: *Odyssey* 16.199.

deprivation—of appropriateness or suitability, with the driving sense rooted in the concept of shame.

The actions, qualities, or situations so described by ἀεικής are outward and external demonstrations of the person upon whom the judgment of “unseemly” is brought through association with those actions, qualities or situations. In this respect, Theoklumenos’ use of it is unusual because his application of ἀεικής uniquely modifies an internal quality, his νόος, which is responsible for his actions and is, thus, represented by those actions but is not itself immediately observable in the external reality where others deem things unseemly or shameful.³⁵ For this reason, I submit that Theoklumenos is applying this adjective in response to the pointed insult delivered to him by Eurumachos regarding his sanity and the shame brought with it by the suitors’ scornful laughter and mockery. Theoklumenos, thereby, is using his *nous* to represent his entire participation in the episode. Thus, his actions are not undignified, shameful, despicable, or any way out of place. Instead, as the narrator will soon explicitly reiterate, those accusations should be more accurately levied against the suitors themselves.

In sum, Theoklumenos uses pointed diction in his opening lines not only to rebut Eurumachos but also to reinterpret the entire situation. Thus, the suitors have completely and ruinously misunderstood the moment but Theoklumenos sees the truth of it with absolute clarity. Not his φρήν but his νόος has been affected. Furthermore, his mind has not been displaced but still remains where it belongs in his chest. And finally, the influence he has experienced has not at all rendered his mind unseemly. I have underlined these pronouns because, I believe, the

³⁵ Other qualifiers used in Homeric epic for this type of inability could include ἄφρων “insane” and a direct contradiction of Eurumachos’s initial insult or ἀμήχανος “helpless” or “without means” which would answer Eurumachos’s insistence on his need for an escort. If the nuance is “unfair” and thereby that his mind is not in coordination with the normal order of things, the same conclusions can be drawn. The use is a strained one—in that it is difficult to imagine a mind being unfair—but the application performs its purpose, drawing attention to the word, and therefore, its consonance with the narrator’s comments and creating a commentary for Theoklumenos’ entire participation in the moment.

diction in Theoklumenos' *apologia* underscores this juxtaposition. In other words, Theoklumenos implies that those very accusations were inappropriate for him and rather simply misplaced. The suitors were described as delusional by the narrator-text just twenty lines ago. The suitors are the ones who are not equipped to understand and navigate their circumstances. As a result, it will be the suitors who are eventually escorted from the palace, but by Hermes and to the underworld.³⁶ The impetus for this fate, moreover, is specifically the suitors' unseemly behavior.³⁷ Thus, this use of ἀεικής is the last of Theoklumenos' critical corrections and, like the other instances of his pointed diction, it is flagged to be used easily and allusively in composition afterwards, whether by the same performer or another performing in response. In this regard, ἀεικής prefigures and is recycled in both Theoklumenos' prophecy proper and the narrator-text's prolepsis to follow. Furthermore, as we will see below, this same catch-word is employed by the subsequent narrator-text as a point of comparison between the interpretative acts of the character-text and the narrator-text.

While Theoklumenos exchanges ἀτάσθαλα for ἀεικέα in his concluding lines, the narrator accuses the suitors of unseemly things when predicting the doom soon to befall them. Theoklumenos and the narrator, in fact, bandy back and forth terms like ἀεικής throughout their interpretative performances and, in doing so, reveal the overarching intelligence responsible for orchestrating both roles. In the performance of Book 20's divination episode in particular, the poet's *mimeses* of the character-medium, Theoklumenos, and the narrator-medium bleed together, especially with their shared language of prediction. Furthermore, once Theoklumenos has completed his retrospective and prognostic preface, the poet more blatantly coordinates of

³⁶ 24.1 ff.

³⁷ 20.394 names their crimes ἀεικέα, and we will see more on this below. In addition, the narrator will employ, I believe pointedly, the formulaic use of ἀεικής to describe their death groan in Book 22 at line 308.

the structures and diction of his character-text and narrator-text. Theoklumenos' three-line, tongue in cheek, opening constitutes two aspects of his prophetic template simultaneously—the assertion (or defense) of his fitness as an autonomous (individual and) seer and his undermining of his competitor's (Eurumachos) interpretation in favor of his own. While the subtext of Theoklumenos' preface refigures Eurumachos' interpretation implicitly, in the lines that follow he answers it with an explicit correction and explanation of the omen that he had previously described.³⁸

τοῖς ἔξειμι θύραζε, ἐπεὶ νοέω κακὸν ὑμῖν
 ἐρχόμενον, τό κεν οὔ τις ὑπεκφύγοι οὐδ' ἀλέαιτο
 μνηστήρων, οἳ δῶμα κάτ' ἀντιθέου Ὀδυσῆος
 ἀνέρας ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάασθε.

With these I go out the door since I perceive that evil comes
 Your way, which no one may escape nor avoid
 Of the suitors, you who throughout the house of godlike Odysseus
 Insulting men contrive reckless folly. (20.367-370)

As can be plainly heard in lines 367-370, Theoklumenos abandons the double-talk and coded language that layered his previous address and credentials in favor of structural echoes that refute Eurumachos' attempt at interpretation. The allusive corrections he employs refer back to the syntax of Eurumachos' reception speech and correct his statements with more explicit language. "With these I will go out the door," he declares, the pronoun referring back to his functioning eyes, ears, feet, and mind as the instruments he will employ to leave the palace—again, in place of Eurumachos' recommended escorts.³⁹ Furthermore, here he explicitly recycles

³⁸ As de Jong 2001 notes at 502, these lines serve as the seer's second, direct warning.

³⁹ Russo 1988, 125. He agrees that the pronoun τοῖς must refer back to all the faculties that have been listed out in the two former lines.

the adverb θύραζε from the suitor’s speech and replaces ἐκπέμπω with ἔξειμι one-to-one.⁴⁰

Eurumachos was correct about one thing—Theoklumenos is going to leave the palace.

Nor will he leave for the reason they presume, as Theoklumenos reveals with his own causal clause, which echoes Eurumachos’ wrong-headed explanation. “Since I perceive [and know] that evil/ is coming to you all...” he explains, the ἐπεὶ νοέω κακὸν ὑμῖν almost directly replacing Eurumachos’s explanatory clause, ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ ἔϊσκει. Building off the dichotomy he introduced with his assertion of sound mindedness in the previous line, Theoklumenos purposefully replaces the loosely sense-based verb of perception, ἔϊσκει, with the specifically rational and logic-driven verb, νοέω, that both reinforces his claims for mental fitness and defines his divinatory ability. It is the action he completes with his νόος, which he has just proclaimed is his operative faculty and is sound and functional. Along with the enjambed ἐρχόμενον of the next line, the clause firmly corrects the internal mental process Eurumachos presumed to understand. Theoklumenos does not simply deem their surroundings to be like night; the vision is not a symptom of witlessness or a random hallucination. Rather, he has perceived and now understands rationally that evil is on its way to the suitors. Moreover, by reorienting Eurumachos’ reading of the night he described, Theoklumenos is also transitioning into directly interpreting the omen he narrated. The metaphorical night is translated into real-world evil as Theoklumenos shifts from the purely sensory description (or sensory indirect discourse as in the case of Eurumachos’s failed interpretation with ἔϊσκει) in his expositional *manteia* to indirect discourse that relies upon his capacity for observation and understanding, and details facts through his explicit focalization. Theoklumenos has adjusted, as it were, to his

⁴⁰ Compare Eurumachos’ speech at 20.360-362: ἀφραίνει ξεῖνος νέον ἄλλοθεν εἰληλουθῶς./ ἀλλά μιν αἶψα, νέοι, δόμου ἐκπέμψασθε θύραζε/ εἰς ἀγορὴν ἔρχεσθαι, ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ ἔϊσκει. At 502, de Jong 2001 notes that θύραζε is a catch-word.

affected state and can now translate the enhanced perspective it provides into a logical matrix that his mortal audience can understand. In other words, he is interpreting the darkness and night, and implicitly the other symbols, to be indicative of the doom closing in on the suitors and provides those divine signs as the impetus for his departure.⁴¹ Thus, Theoklumenos commandeers a negative reception of his initial *manteia* and refashions it to provide the accurate interpretation.

His interpretation does not stop there, moreover, and continues on to include a proper prophetic prediction about the evil that Theoklumenos so definitively perceives to be coming the suitors' way. Although the foreboding details that follow impart the same air of finality upon the fate of the suitors, Theoklumenos does not continue to use the plain and simple indicative of his initial prediction all the way through it. In fact, the prophecy "I know that evil comes your way" subtly sidesteps literal finality by not speaking directly of the evil's impact. Instead, the statement remains explicitly a real-time warning of its imminence, while only implicitly indicating that the evil will befall them eventually. In other words, he marks that the evil is coming; he does not directly mention how it will befall the suitors or with what consequences. For some reason, in this performance Theoklumenos eschews the standard future-tense type of prediction in favor of phraseology that communicates essentially the same message without outright saying as much. I assert that this formal change is an adjustment to adapt to the pressures of his performance context, made in an attempt to avert further contumely from his hostile mortal audience. Theoklumenos has been made well aware of the fact that the suitors are an adverse audience and, perhaps as a reaction to their initial, skeptical reception, he has crafted

⁴¹ Russo 1988, 124-125 details the universality of the motifs used in Theoklumenos' *manteia*, all of which symbolize death and doom. Additionally, de Jong 2001 at 502 notes that the image of night covering one's eyes is indicative of death. Theoklumenos is providing a standard exegesis of his signs.

a perspective on the omen that is more palatable to such an audience. Now that he is phrasing himself out of his affected state, the mindset of absolutes and utter certainty, attributes of the divine perspective, are no longer appropriate and can be replaced with phraseology that better suits his audience.

Using the relative clause modifying “the evil”, nonetheless, Theoklumenos manages to construe his statement with both deferential unreality and also the implications of a factual statement, because it is framed as a kind of litotes-style potential statement: ...τό κεν οὔ τις ὑπεκφύγοι οὐδ’ ἀλέαιτο/μνηστήρων.⁴² Theoklumenos qualifies the coming evil as something that “not one of the suitors would escape out from under or avoid...” using the potential particle of Homeric epic, κεν, alongside two aorist optatives, ὑπεκφύγοι and ἀλέαιτο, and creating one of two—or both—implications for the relative clause semantically. Theoklumenos could be referring to the ineluctable ruin descending upon the suitors in a roundabout manner by characterizing it through negation; it is something all-encompassing and absolutely destined. In this case, without the implications of verbal irony, Theoklumenos frames the qualities of the doom not from the divine perspective looking down with unwavering knowledge, but from the human perspective. Thus, the effect is presented as it would affect the non-omniscient human participants who would, presumably, view a catastrophic event of this nature as something they would want to escape if they perceived its approach. The potential optative, therefore, renders the hypothetical “one of the suitors” as theoretically unable to escape out from under and to avoid this evil, and this situation as only a remotely relevant possibility. This is a quintessentially rational, human evaluation of the possible ramifications of the evil he knows to be coming,

⁴² 20.368-369. Once again, I have come across a lack of conversation concerning the language of this passage, in this instance Theoklumenos’ employment of the optative mood. As a result, I have undertaken an interpretation of the mood’s significance here.

because it remains well within the bounds of qualified mortal understanding and the deductions achievable by a human perspective on the observable world. It is not definitive, it is potential. However, if the relative clause is viewed as an emphatic understatement, Theoklumenos is using the unreal mood of the optative and the negative οὐ τις elliptically in order to proclaim that every one of the suitors will absolutely be destroyed by the evil.

On the other hand, Theoklumenos may have elided more than an authoritative assertion of the future with this potential relative clause. He also may have reproached the suitors again implicitly with an unstated protasis for this unlikely future condition. Through the dependency of his statements, Theoklumenos could be implying the suitors' failure to ascertain their own doom through the use of these potential optatives, which could serve to complete an understood protasis that would have echoed his assertions about his own fitness and understanding. The potential future statement "which no one of the suitors would escape out from under nor avoid" therefore could be supplemented by a conditional clause that contains "if you all should" and any of the predicates of the former statements: "if you all should perceive and know the evil coming your way" and/or "if you all were to leave out the door" and/or "if you all should have eyes and ears and both feet and a mind in your chest not at all rendered unseemly." The optative is not coupled with any indicative that balances out its unreality or meaning, however, and consequently continues to hang in the air as an implausible event. The suitors, even if they were in the same state as Theoklumenos, could not escape nor avoid the evil descending upon them.

In the process of alluding to as much, moreover, Theoklumenos uses that negation and ellipsis to reinforce indirectly the impact of his initial mantic prophecy: even if they were to do any or all of these things—and they will not—they will die. Theoklumenos reiterates the symbolic death, which he saw descending down over their heads and prophesized for the suitors

in his omen-narration, particularly clearly with the verb ὑπεκφύγοι because its prefixes and tense connote a more complex idea than fleeing. Through the aspect of the aorist, Theoklumenos instead expresses the simple end result of fleeing, escape. A conceptual direction to that act of escape is expressed with the combination of ὑπο- and ἐκ- to mean “out from under.”⁴³ Thus, the act of fleeing, which they would not be able to achieve, is in response to something from above that they would be trying to avoid falling down onto their heads. According to the first half of his prophetic performance, night has already fallen down around the suitors’ heads and has veiled them; the evil mist has already been spread over. The specific choice of ὑπεκφύγοι—and the failure to escape out from under that it signifies—refers back to this symbolism and reinforces its meaning. Theoklumenos can be understood, by the external audience, to communicate these conclusions without saying so outright. The closing statement of his interpretation, however, appears to be straightforward and unambiguous. While the other corrective explications of his initial mantic proclamation have been implicit or deferred into non-indicative referential assertions, Theoklumenos uses the final relative clause, which specifies the subjects and audience of his interpretation (and mantic omen-narration), to accuse them pointedly and with particular details that the poet has thematically established as the basis for Odysseus’s revenge.⁴⁴

Although the actual details of Theoklumenos’ accusation do not, themselves, provide any evidence of his divinatory skill, the context and the logical connection by which Theoklumenos brings up their crimes are prophetically charged. Indeed, Theoklumenos has witnessed firsthand the outrage of the suitors and has heard secondhand of the plots they have contrived and,

⁴³ Alternatively, the ἐκ- could intensify the completive aspect of the aorist.

⁴⁴ The same line ἀνέρας ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάασθε is spoken by Eumaios in regards to the suitors at 17.588. Odysseus in his beggar guise similarly alludes to their atasthala at 18.143 and 20.170. As can be seen from the proem, and the poet’s own thematic preface to the possession omen (see *Od.* 20.284 ff. and in 3.2), this habit of insulting others and devising wicked acts is framed by the poet as a clear justification for the climax of Odysseus’s *nostos* arc.

therefore, the seer may have learned this information via any number of mortal sources.⁴⁵ It is, however, significant that he raises the topic of their hubris and *atasthala* in the context of providing further specificity to his implicit prediction of doom. In other words, Theoklumenos does not substantially perform an affected or inspired state to provide extra-human insight in his act of interpretation, but he does exhibit enhanced overall understanding of the situation by referring to the cause of the suitors' doom while intimating knowledge about the effect. In particular, he includes details in the second relative clause that provide circumstantial elaboration on the allusively damning description of the coming evil.⁴⁶ Unlike the evasive optatives, the relative clause of lines 368-70 describes the suitors in the indicative with factual portrayals of their character and crimes, which in turn provides justification for the damning prediction upon which the clause depends. The unreal clause predicts their fate and the indicative clause names, without uncertainty, the cause for that fate. They would not escape the coming evil because they have insulted men and contrived reckless folly.

In sum, because of his incorrigible internal audience, Theoklumenos provides an extensive exegesis on his mantic performance that responds competitively to Eurumachos' interpretation without using explicit or definite language to communicate his own prophetic interpretation of the omen. Theoklumenos' speech explicitly answers both aspects of Eurumachos' speech-act, which rejects the seer's *manteia* and which provides a satirical 'interpretation' of the omen, and insinuates the remainder of his exegesis into allusive subtext. Despite eschewing the unambiguous language of prediction, Theoklumenos nonetheless

⁴⁵ Theoklumenos was made privy to the ill-will between the suitors and Telemachos from the prince himself at 15.513 ff. and heard from him his concern about being murdered by the suitors at 17.77 ff., after which he called out the evil deeds of the suitors in his second divinatory performance at 17.157 ff. for Telemachos and Penelope.

⁴⁶ The second relative clause is grammatically subordinate to and logically dependent upon the first relative clause because it is connected to the preceding relative clause by the enjambed *μνηστήρων*, both in the of sense carrying the force of the line into the next and formally as the second relative pronoun's antecedent.

conforms to the structure of a standard divinatory performance and formats his speech to include an address, a claim to ability, an explanation of the omen, and an interpretation.⁴⁷ I argue that Theoklumenos has no reason to adhere to the standard structure for the sake of his internal audience, who already have rejected him as a *mantis* and therefore would not appreciate the formal composition. Instead, I submit that the poet has had Theoklumenos compose his interpretation such that the external audience notes that, like his *manteia*, his second speech is juxtaposed to and coordinates with the narrator's paired exegetical commentary on the episode.

4.3 Complementary Commentary: Auto-Mimetic Exegesis in the Narrator-Text

Subtlety and tact characterize Theoklumenos' interpretative prophecy, the qualities of a skilled craftsman and, indeed, poetic qualities expected of a singer fashioning an epic performance. The greater part of his interpretation is delivered through literary devices, like allusion and irony, or through the prudent choice of symbolic words, all of which are able to be appreciated fully only by the external audience. His skill and insight, thus, demonstrate a level of awareness and understanding that surpasses normal human limitations for knowledge and, although not imparted by inspiration, indicates that Theoklumenos has been instilled with an enhanced perspective on events comparable to the divine inspiration employed by the poet. Much like the storied Calchas, who had seen and therefore come to know the past, present, and future through the gift of divination bestowed upon him by Apollo, Theoklumenos has an innate faculty for understanding and translating the signs and messages that appear to him in his affected state.⁴⁸ In this respect, again, Theoklumenos bears a resemblance to the archetypal inspired poet who, as we will see below with the claims of the singer Phemios, exercises an

⁴⁷ Address: 364; claim to ability: 365-366; explanation and interpretation of omen: 367-370; see Chapters Two 2.5 and Three 3.2 for standard divinatory performance structure.

⁴⁸ Iliad 1.70-72: Κάλχας Θεστορίδης οἰωνοπόλων ὄχ' ἄριστος,/ ὃς ἤδη τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα,/... ἦν διὰ μαντοσύνην, τήν οἱ πόρε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

innate talent during their performance that is strengthened by training.⁴⁹ The gods place the paths of song within the poet and, during his performance, he is inspired by the Muses to deliver his omniscient tale; in other words, the poet has the gift of song bestowed upon him and also enters an altered state of consciousness, inspiration, to perform his role. While Theoklumenos seems to exit or lessen his affected state in order to perform his exegesis, the poet presumably performs his narrative and commentative capacities without leaving his inspired state. Thus, Theoklumenos is similar to the poet, when the latter uses the narrator-text to perform a divinatory speech-act, but the two are not quite identical in regards to their abilities as mediums.

All the same, on an internal, story level, Theoklumenos aptly performs his role for his audience; the suitors' insults are answered rationally and they are, therefore, further demonstrated to be repugnant. Additionally, another auspicious omen is provided to encourage Odysseus in his plan and to complete the final iteration of that thematic cycle.⁵⁰ As in the case of the omen narrations, Theoklumenos' carefully composed second speech resonates strongly with the narrator's own commentary on the scene to the effect that they operate as complementary medium performances of prophetic exegesis. Alongside the closing commentary provided by the narrator-text at lines 390-394, Theoklumenos' interpretative prophecy demonstrates the extent of skill and insight that a professional medium can contribute to a moment of divine-human communication, as well as emphasizing the value that should be placed on such commentary during the act of reception.

After Theoklumenos' final speech, the narrator-text resumes to detail the repercussions of the whole intervention/prophesy event. Theoklumenos is described in his departure and said,

⁴⁹ See below at 4.4 Phemios claims at 22.347-8: αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί, θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἴμας/ παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν.

⁵⁰ See above in 4.2.

pointedly, to be received graciously as a guest at the house of Peiraios.⁵¹ This is placed in direct contrast with the continuation of the suitors' contempt for *xenia* as they ridicule Telemachos for his bad luck in guests, naming him *κακοξενιώτερος*, and suggest other ways to insult those visiting his household.⁵² The motif of laughter is revisited and, finally, the narrator apprises his external audience of the results that this interaction has had on the main characters—Telemachos is holding his peace and awaiting the signal from his father and Penelope has heard all of these things.⁵³ Because the narrator specifically mentions that Penelope witnesses these events, it is ensured that she is present for the coming events, in order to transition into and narratively motivate the opening of the next episode, at which point Athena directly inspires her to begin the contest of the bow. The poet, however, digresses momentarily before embarking on this path to the story's denouement and reflects once more on the scene that has just been performed.

The final five lines bear a moralizing tone that, as commentators have noted, points towards the 'just desserts' trope in Odysseus's revenge plot.⁵⁴ By revisiting the wantonness of the suitors and their flagrant outrage against customs, the poet seems to emphasize their role in their own death and, therefore, to justify the brutal slaughter of them by Odysseus in his halls. And indeed, the lines smack of retribution as they savor the irony of the suitors' enjoying their

⁵¹ 20.371-372: ἵκετο δ' ἐς Πείραιον, ὃ μιν **πρόφρων ὑπέδεκτο**. De Jong 2001, 502-503.

⁵² 20.373-383. Notably, in their mockery of Theoklumenos, in particular, the unnamed suitor describes him as a person who stood up to prophesy, using the present infinitive alongside the main finite verb, *ἀνέστη* in the intransitive, and therefore in the final sense of the infinitive denoting purpose. Such a rendering may be said to give the sense of intention behind Theoklumenos' speech without admitting its success. In other words, he stood up (with the intention) to prophecy (but was not successful), and in this manner the unnamed suitor further mocks Theoklumenos and Telemachos as his host.

⁵³ 20.374 for laughter; Telemachos and Penelope are mentioned at 385-389.

⁵⁴ Russo 1988, 127: "The poet deliberately concludes the scene with an emphasis on the suitors' role in causing their own death." Additionally, in his note on this episode, pg. 119, Russo comments: "[t]he poet feels the need to revive here the picture of the suitors' murderous intent, so as to show that the murderous wishes of Odysseus and his friends are fully justified. As the great slaughter draws near, Homer is conspicuous in his efforts to introduce enough negative elements into the suitors' behaviour to allow us to view their wholesale murder as an act of *justice*." De Jong 2001, 503: "Once more, the narrator takes care to justify—this time, in *propria persona*—the Suitors' upcoming punishment, by dismissing their behaviour as 'wrongdoing', lit. 'unseemly deeds' (**ἀεκέα*), and stressing that they began (cf. the stress on the beginning of hostilities by Paris in *Il.* 3.100 and 22.116)."

meal when a cold dish of revenge will be served them so soon by Odysseus and Athena.⁵⁵

However, the retrospection on the scene highlights more than the moral issues at play.

Commentary on the etiquette of performance reception can be found alongside those comments about affronts to *xenia* and improper dining, with the notes of irony serving as literary foreshadowing and also, more metapoetically, as the narrator's own interpretative act of prophecy.⁵⁶ The poet formally indicates for his discerning audience that the narrator-text is being used to expand upon and revisit the interpretation of Theoklumenos by repeating certain significant words and phrasing of the seer's and by imitating the syntactic structure of his interpretative prophecy.

δειπνον μὲν γάρ τοί γε γελοίωντες **τετύκοντο**
ἦδὺ τε καὶ μενοεικές, ἐπεὶ μάλα πόλλ' ἰέρευσαν·
δόρπου δ' οὐκ ἄν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο,
οἶον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερὸς ἀνήρ
θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ **ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο.**

For, you know, a meal, while laughing, they had prepared
both sweet and suited to their tastes, since they had slaughtered very many
but, nothing else ever would be more graceless than their supper
just such a one indeed the goddess and steadfast man were soon going
to serve; for they were first contriving unseemly deeds. (20.390-394)

The narrator underscores Theoklumenos' implicit message when he repeats the word ἀεικέα in the closing line of the episode. 'Unseemly' is not the only 'catch-word' echoed from Theoklumenos' second speech, however; its implications are felt in the vestiges of morphological relation in the adjective μενοεικές (with irony alongside ἦδύ), while the whispers of an external, influencing agent can be heard in the verb τετύκοντο that has been recycled as a

⁵⁵ De Jong 2001, 503 on lines 392-4.

⁵⁶ De Jong (Ibid.) call this "an unusually emphatic narratorial *prolepsis † of the Suitors' death, containing the typical *proleptic μέλλω."

finite verb from Theoklumenos' usage *τετυγμένος*.⁵⁷ Moreover, the poet reaffirms Theoklumenos' final, most declarative comment, with a repetition of the verb *μηχανάομαι*, this time modifying not the proem's motif of choice, *atasthala*, but the topically significant substantive *ἄεικέα*. In doing so, the narrator-text is used, most basically, to stress the moral conclusions of Theoklumenos—that the suitors' have earned the retribution Odysseus will visit upon them. Much as these specific 'catch-words' have been connotatively loaded by Theoklumenos' speech, that same exegetical overtone resounds in these metapoetically loaded echoes of the narrator-text to solidify further the structural symmetry between the narrator's own and Theoklumenos' interpretative prophecies on the episode.

The mimesis is continued in the performative and syntactic structure of the narrator-text's commentary. While the narrator-text does not formally begin this interpretation with an address to the external audience, it does provide a kind of corrective focalization on the events that just transpired. By directing their gaze over the suitors' behavior and the other active characters of the scene, the narrator points out Telemachos' intentions, who is looking to his father for the cue to begin, but it is upon Penelope that the narrator's attention finally falls.⁵⁸ Not Odysseus, but Penelope will be the one to spur the denouement, and the driving force behind her as a catalyst is Athena, which the opening of the next episode will make clear.⁵⁹ Just as Theoklumenos corrects Eurumachos' and the suitors' understanding of his faculties, the narrator-text corrects the external audience's point of focalization by aiming their attention on Penelope and the suitors who motivate her actions.

⁵⁷ De Jong 2001, xii: "'catch-word' technique: when a character echoes, often at the beginning of his speech, a word or expression from his interlocutor's speech, often with a different tone or meaning." Here, of course, *τετύκοντο*, used in the middle voice, carries a different literal, though related, meaning.

⁵⁸ 20.384-389.

⁵⁹ De Jong 2001, 503 on 387-391 marks this as an "abrupt change of scene †, from the *megaron* to Penelope's upper room. The narrator leads on to the 'Penelope' scene of 21.1-358, but not before feasting his eyes one last time on the merry Suitors."

Reframed in this regard, the narrator-text then executes the same sequence as that which is used by Theoklumenos, down to the use of certain clauses, figures of speech, and verbal moods. It begins by imitating the seer's remarks on his fitness, immediate plans, and the causal clause 'catch-word' technique, all of which he employed while allusively explaining his corrections. While Theoklumenos' irony-laden words contrast his own fitness and future with the suitors' and push against their understanding of the possession-event, the narrator-text explains, through exposition, the object of Penelope's attention and the significance of her attention in the advancement of Athena and Odysseus's plans.⁶⁰ Unmoved by the divine sign and continuing in their irreverence, the suitors are described as further enforcing the judgment of the prophecy and drawing the ire of Athena and Odysseus. The fact that Penelope witnesses this behavior provides the traditional dual motivation for the announcement of the contest of the bow to follow.⁶¹ Both Penelope and Athena have witnessed the peak of the suitors' misbehavior and are ready to resolve the stasis that has allowed it to persist and worsen.

Moreover, in the narrator-text's description, the explanation for the attention resonates with the same pointed wording as Theoklumenos' explanatory description of his faculties. Again, the narrator-text highlights the salient, unseemly qualities of the suitors' behavior; they are pictured laughing, *γελοῖοντες*, and having prepared a meal that is sweet, *ἡδύ*, and suited to their tastes, *μενοεικές*, despite the fact that the attending circumstances have marked the moment as untimely and ill-omened. The narrator peppers these lines with allusive diction to the effect that

⁶⁰ Above, 20.390-391.

⁶¹ De Jong 2001, 505 on "a split instance of double motivation". See Chapter One 1.2 for a more detailed discussion of the stasis in Ithaka and Penelope and Athena's parts in orchestrating it.

he underlines the enforcement of the motifs and the irony of the moment, particularly with the use of τετύκοντο and μενοεικέζ.⁶²

Furthermore, the narrator includes a string of emphatic causal particles to provide a reason for the preceding mention of Penelope, placed in contrast with the clauses that are to follow. “For, you know, a meal,” the narrator declares and, turning now to this external audience in his own voice, especially emphasizes the importance of the meal by setting δεῖπνον in first position and separating it from the rest of the clause by the particle string μὲν γάρ τοί γε. The μὲν alerts his audience to listen for a δέ, either in coordination or contrast, and the γάρ colors the remaining particles with a causal or explanatory sense.⁶³ The ethical sense of τοί makes the statement particularly audience-directed, as if the performer were ruminating on the fact in a kind of performative dialogue with his audience. Finally, γε caps off the string and additionally strengthens the explanatory γάρ, as well as the importance of and emphasis on “a meal.” “For, you know, a meal, while laughing, they had prepared/ both sweet and suited to their tastes...” Reflecting back on their mockery of Theoklumenos, the suitors are said to have had prepared a meal while they were laughing—as the external audience already knows; they were made witness to the derision and sweet laughter back in lines 374-383—and this concurrence was observed by Penelope.

⁶² Ibid., 503; de Jong notes that the ominous language plays off, “the meal which the Suitors are enjoying at this moment, and the many other meals which they have had in the course of the narrative: soon they will be served an entirely different and most unpleasant ‘meal’. We are dealing with an instance of the *‘disturbed meal’ motif. The metaphoric use of ‘meal’ will be continued in 21.428-430.”

⁶³ An answering δέ will follow in 392, and will create a contrast between δεῖπνον and δόρπου, meal and supper, two synonyms that commentators like Russo (1988, 127) have understood to be used in figurative contrast as the meal they literally prepare to eat and the ‘supper’ they never literally eat but metaphorically are served by Odysseus in the form of revenge. I believe, as discussed here, both usages may also be considered metaphorical and the contrast arises from the agency behind each iteration of the metaphor. The ‘meal’ the suitors prepare for themselves, while the ‘supper’ is the serving of that meal that is doled out by Odysseus and Athena. For the senses of the particles, see *LSJ*’s respective entries.

Employing a multivalent, sub-textual approach in the same performative vein as Theoklumenos, the narrator may have used an allusive trope with this mildly redundant description. In other words, the narrator is speaking both literally and figuratively and is exploiting the actual events just witnessed as an allegory. First, if understood as a metaphor, δεῖπνον may refer further back not just to the literal feast that the suitors ordered the servants to prepare while they derided Theoklumenos, but also may refer to the meal mentioned during the narrator-text's account of the possession-event.⁶⁴ Next, the present participle of γελοῖοντες acts circumstantially here, providing a simultaneous temporal sense to their laughter as occurring at the same time as the middle aorist verb, τετύκοντο, they had prepared (for themselves). This verb is, of course, the same used by Theoklumenos, τεύχω, and, while in common usage in the middle voice it indicates the act of having a meal prepared, it may also carry the connotation of Theoklumenos' τετυγμένος: "rendered" or "caused to happen."⁶⁵ If the same connotation may be applied to this line, the statement could carry two levels of damnation. First: "for, you know, a 'meal' they had prepared for themselves...;" or: "for, you know, doom they brought on themselves..."⁶⁶ With either, the present participle may more significantly align with the causal particle string and, thus all together, the line could read: "for, you know, a 'meal' they brought on themselves by laughing, one sweet and suiting the μένος."⁶⁷ In this sense, the line could be read with the same degree of moral judgment as the modern idiom, "you have made your bed, now lie in it."

⁶⁴ The blood-spattered meat of 20.348: αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἦσθιον, which is symbolic of both their crimes and their imminent slaughter and shares, as de Jong notes on 502, thematic values with the dooming meal of the crew of Odysseus on the Island of the Sun.

⁶⁵ *LSJ* A I; A II.

⁶⁶ From here on out, 'meal' when it is written in single quotation marks indicates the ironic emphasis that italics provide.

⁶⁷ For μενοεικής, I am here employing the etymologically strict meaning of μένος + εἰκός/ἔοικα, like or befitting the spirit/passion/intent.

Here, the narrator provides qualities of the ‘meal’ not through the internal focalization of the suitors, but from the perspective of the rest of the internal audience and the external audience. Specifically, the narrator is capitalizing upon the focalization he presented to the external audience by shifting their focus to Penelope’s perspective in the lines preceding. Consequently, the μένος or spirit, the mental quality responsible for rage and other emotions of intent, to which the ‘meal’ is suited could also be one focused not on the pleasant qualities of the food but the righteousness of the retribution that the ‘meal’ will represent.⁶⁸ This is the μένος of Athena or Odysseus that will realize the ominous image of blood-spattered meat and walls that the suitors have prepared or brought to pass for themselves by laughing. In the same way that the recycling of τεύχω brings to mind a cascade of additional meanings, the specific choice of μενοεικές adds to the description a nuance that is supplementary to the literal meaning of the line.

Additionally, with the other nuances of μενοεικές, the narrator can use the otherwise simply expository line to further flesh out the symbolic omen-narration that had opened this episode. In this vein, the narrator-text can be seen to reassert the efficacy of Athena’s possession-event. She willed the suitors to exacerbate their *atasthala* through possessed laughter, which avalanched into more laughter, this time of their own accord and indicative of their wantonness. Thereby, the suitors served themselves their own just desserts, which will be sweet to the goddess and satiate her μένος, as well as that of her champion and her vessel, Odysseus and Penelope, and the omen of the narrator-text is shown to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus, the narrator has employed the same style of double-talk as his internal narrator, the *mantis*, in order to reinforce, with the same formal approach, the legitimacy of his own earlier *manteia*.

⁶⁸ For more on *menos*, see Jahn 1987.

To close the descriptive portion of the explanation, the narrator-text echoes Theoklumenos' causal clause structure and provides a reason for why, presumably, the 'meal' will be sweet and *μενοεικές*. The narrator elaborates "...since they slaughtered very many [of the household's livestock]" reusing the conjunction *ἐπεὶ* and using a curious verb, *ἱέρευσαν*. Although the general meaning of "slaughter" could carry through with the verb *ἱερεύω*, the more literal, specific meaning of "sacrifice" or "consecrate to a god" is felt nonetheless due to the very essence of the verb, its stem. Sharing a root with words such as *ἱερός*, *ἱερεύω* inevitably reflects its cognates and renders their root concept of "holy" as a verb—thus, "do the holy thing" or "make holy," i.e. quite literally "sacrifice." Alongside the suitors' irreverent laughter and disregard for the gods' signs—as well as in view of their consistent negligence of usual dedicatory practices around meal time, like libations, and of *xenia*—the narrator creates a kind of dissonance by describing their excessive slaughter for their feast with the verb for sacrificing to a god.

However, if the unspecified accusative of *πόλλ'* can be understood to stand in for not just livestock as offerings but also for the suitors themselves, then the verbal choice represents another instance of double-talk in the narrator-text's rumination on the event. Thus, further explaining why the 'meal' is so sweet and suited to wrath, having been brought upon by them laughing, this causal clause notes that the suitors dedicated many to the slaughter, to the 'meal.' Moreover, among those many are the suitors themselves, who were marked for slaughter by every action they took that was unseemly or *atasthala*. In this regard, the many sacrifices could also simultaneously refer to the exorbitant amount of livestock slaughtered over the course of their courtship of Penelope, acts that with every reiteration further marked them for retribution. As he portrayed Theoklumenos doing so before, the narrator enfolds several layers of meaning

into his interpretation by carefully selecting words that have a broad semantic spectrum or that can be used with enough vagueness that their exact meaning is left open to interpretation by the external audience. Accordingly, the sentence could read: “[f]or, you know, as they laughed, they had prepared a ‘meal’/ sweet and suited to the *menos*, since they had consecrated for slaughter very many, both the cattle that they immoderately ate up and themselves with their *ἀεικέα*.”

Thus, just as Theoklumenos was able to allusively interpret his omen-narration through an act of ostensible exposition, the narrator-text further elaborates upon the significance of his narrated scene through a multifaceted description that simultaneously conveys multiple messages. The poet does not endorse either meaning as the more correct reading, but proffers both alternatives, apparently, to be understood at the external audience’s discretion, dependent upon their work as attentive audiences in the act of reception. Indeed, both the literal and metaphorical messages of the lines apply to the situation and the understanding of both only adds to the richness of the expositional passage. In this regard, the narrator delivers his performance and resigns its success to the whim of the receiving audience in the manner of a divinatory performer. The fact that his speech includes space for both alternatives represents a continuation of the poet’s claim that his inspired performance as the narrator and the affected performance of Theoklumenos as a *mantis* are structurally parallel acts.

δόρπου δ’ οὐκ ἄν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο,
οἷον δὴ τάχ’ ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερός ἀνήρ
θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ **ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο**.

But nothing else ever would be more graceless than their supper
just such a one indeed the goddess and steadfast man were soon going
to serve; for they were first **contriving unseemly deeds**. (20.392-394)

The narrator continues the parallelisms to reflect on the irony of the suitors’ merriment in line 392 and following. First, he employs a litotes-style potential clause to further expound on the meal the suitors are destined to be served. “But, nothing else ever would be more graceless

than their supper...” the narrator predicts, foreshadowing the horror that the meal they had prepared will bring in a negated comparative and in the same elliptical style as Theoklumenos’ description of ‘the coming evil’.⁶⁹ As the epic narrator reperforming an established storyline, the poet is not constrained, presumably, by any extenuating circumstances from the performance context that would require the elusive understatement to allay his audience’s negative reaction to such foreshadowing. Indeed, I suggest that the figure of speech is here employed in explicit emulation of Theoklumenos’ speech pattern so as to create an equivalence between his prophesized coming evil and the narrator’s metaphorical meal.

The suitors have unknowingly prepared this meal for themselves and Theoklumenos presciently saw the results of it being served, all of which the narrator underscores with the coordination of the δεῖπνον and δόρπου in his contrasting descriptive and predictive clauses.⁷⁰ Outwardly, the first gives a declarative account of an observable fact but it is layered with subtext illustrating the suitors’ misunderstanding of and culpability in their situation; it is both a meal and a ‘meal’ just as Theoklumenos’ claims of fitness bolster his reputation and undermine the suitors’. The second clause is less enigmatic but renders its true meaning through a figurative and contrary comparison; it turns the (just reflected upon) perspective of the suitors on its head and features a future prediction as an inverted potentiality. Both the δεῖπνον and the δόρπου ultimately refer to the same eventuality—the slaughter of the suitors. That said, the narrator has framed them through structural symmetry with his character analog, Theoklumenos, so that the

⁶⁹ Again, an aorist optative, γένοιτο, is employed along with its potential particle ἄν and the negative adverb οὐκ, which makes the point that the meal to be served to the suitors will be the most ungracious, with the least amount of χάρις, without directly saying as much. The commentaries are silent on these lines outside of consistently noting that the meal or dinner is a metaphor for the suitors’ death; Russo 1988, 127 and de Jong 2001, 503. The extrapolations on grammar that follow are, therefore, my own.

⁷⁰ Russo 1988, 127: “δεῖπνον μὲν... δόρπου δ’: the poet points a sharp contrast between their ‘dinner’, which is described with words denoting delight (γελοῖωντες, ἠδύ, μενοιεκές), and their ‘supper’, which they never literally will have, and which is instead made into a metaphor for the death that Athena and Odysseus will ‘set’ (θησέμεναι) for them.”

first mention of this meal is an ironic quip and the second is a straightforward metaphor of their doom.

However, just as the complementary characteristics of the narrator- and character-text's versions of *manteia* highlighted the individual contributions of each medium and specifically embellished the superiority of the poet's inspired involvement, the interpretative prophecies of each contrast significantly. While the seer renders his understanding of the future through a perspective-bias attuned to his mortal audience, the narrator provides the other half of the spectrum of perspectives on the event. He can refer to the coming evil as a meal, with ironic savor, by capitalizing on the suitors' tragic misunderstanding and the unmitigated knowledge of his divine source. Moreover, that meal can be described in an understatement, not so as to comply with extenuating performance circumstances, but to create an absolute statement on existential matters of which only a god could conceive. The divine perspective looks down on the suitors readying for the feast and sees the irony, that what they will actually experience will be the most unwelcomed, unpleasant, ungenerous to them, that it will answer part for part the disregard for *χάρις* that the suitors have so exemplified. As a result, when the narrator answers Theoklumenos' second elaboration on the prophecy—the relative clause specifying the identity and guilt of the suitors as recipients of the coming evil—the poetic medium's account is unimpeded by the restrictions of performance context and exercises the divine omniscience at the narrator's disposal. Theoklumenos' interpretation is, thus, revealed to be a refraction of the narrator's more expansive commentary on events.

In the narrator's interpretation, the previously mentioned clause, which expounds upon the aforementioned *δόρπου*, is a qualitative one and is concluded with a categorical explanatory statement: οἶον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερὸς ἀνήρ/ θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα

μηχανόωντο. Just as Theoklumenos' damning description of the suitors abandons the unreality of the optative mood for the factual indicative, the narrator's expansion upon the true nature of the suitors' evening meal utilizes the indicative with a "typical proleptic μέλλω," ἔμελλε.⁷¹ Further, and more explicitly than the seer, the narrator transposes the unreal implication of the first descriptive clause into real assertions. Theoklumenos is able to correlate the targets of the evil with the real, observably deviant behavior of the suitors in his final statement but does not expand further on the nature of the coming evil. His internal prolepsis is restricted to the facts of the past and present being referentially connected to a potential (though, rhetorically, made strongly probable and predictive) future. The narrator treats both topics, the suitors and their just desserts, with strong indicative assertions throughout time. Indeed, the prediction that the qualitative relative clause entails is an instance of explicit foreshadowing, even down to the temporal proximity of the future event: "just such a one indeed the goddess and steadfast man **were soon going** to serve..." οἷον δὴ **τάχ' ἔμελλε** θεὰ καὶ καρτερός ἀνὴρ/θησέμεναι.

The narrator does not, like Theoklumenos, carefully skirt around hard and fast facts about the doom approaching the suitors, which he has just described hyperbolically through an indirect figure of speech. He predicts forthrightly. In other words, he declares that, unbeknownst to the clueless suitors, their meal was steeped in doom and would prove to be the most noxious and pernicious experience of their lives, because this very fate Athena and Odysseus were just about to bring down upon their heads. No equivocating, no mitigating, the narrator's interpretation of the omen cuts to the point and foretells the doom of the suitors', allowing just the figurative dissemblance of a metaphor to intervene between his prediction and a straightforward declaration that they will be slaughtered in their cups before the day's end.

⁷¹ De Jong 2001, 503.

The evil predicted by Theoklumenos is imminent, it is coming and ineluctable; the narrator's is so close he can taste it and, to prove as much, he teases its arrival with its source and setting again. Reinforcing the expositional preparation at the beginning of the episode, the narrator reiterates that Athena sanctioned and abetted the 'meal' being served by referring to her agency first.⁷² This logically positions her as the motivating force, the initial and principal subject of the verb ἔμελλε, and foremost in the sequence of agents executing the action, just as she was shown to be the catalyst responsible for the entire omen-scene.⁷³ When the narrator-text tacks on Odysseus as the second subject, this addition hierarchically figures him as subordinate to the goddess. He is still made nominative and a subject of ἔμελλε, but only after the goddess, a ranking which formally reflects that his agency in the revenge scheme is dependent upon and subsequent to Athena's and that he is the mortal instrument of her will. Athena's role in the precipitation of the suitors' last meal has been fully fleshed out in this episode, but Odysseus's has not been yet acted out. Therefore, in this prolepsis, the narrator ties Athena, as the past and present cause of the entire revenge scheme and the omen episode that triggers it, to the future agent of its effects, Odysseus.

The operative difference between how the narrator- and character-text handle the interpretation of the omen again derives from the respective medium's individual qualities that influence their approaches to understanding the event, or their perspective-biases. The narrator's prediction focalizes the same future event as Theoklumenos' but does so through the divine-perspective-bias. As noted above, in order to successfully perform his role and deliver an interpretation of the omen that will be understood (and will be more likely to be believed) by his

⁷² Line 393 uses the word order ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ to describe Athena and Odysseus's future actions. See Chapter Two 2.2 for more on authorship and narrative sequence.

⁷³ See Chapter Three 3.3 for an analysis of Athena's precedence in initiating and participating in the omen-scene.

internal audience, Theoklumenos must render death and doom through the restricted human view point of the suitors. On the other hand, the poet does not have to expend as much effort to comply with the expectations of his external audience. The conventional standards of the epic narrator assume that the insight of the divine perspective contributes inherently to his exposition of events, and the narrator-text provides this narrative account as expected.⁷⁴

In fact, the narrator's final comment on the episode fulfills his traditional role of validating the impact of character-speeches.⁷⁵ By echoing the explanatory justification of Theoklumenos and by re-performing the conclusion Theoklumenos had arrived at earlier, *ἀνέρας ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάασθε*, with the more definitive causal clause, *πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο*, the narrator confirms his internal narrator's conclusion that all this has been caused by the suitors' own actions—"for, they were the first contriving unseemly deeds"—and, thereby, endorses Theoklumenos' entire interpretation. Thus, the narrator's emulation of Theoklumenos' performance in style and structure both coordinates them as an analogous pair and frames the contributions of both to complement one another.

Alongside the seer's commentary on the episode, the narrator provides the missing information from Theoklumenos' interpretation of the omen and reiterates the most salient points verbatim or with allusive diction in order to corroborate the seer's statements. What Theoklumenos cannot provide because of the extenuating circumstances of his performance context, the narrator can supplement. On the other hand, what the narrator does not traditionally expisit because of genre conventions, Theoklumenos verbalizes. As a performer embodying both roles, moreover, the inspired poet is shown through this act of auto-mimesis to be capable

⁷⁴ See Ford 1992 for a discussion of the interplay between the poet's limited knowledge and the Muses' exhaustive insight on epic events.

⁷⁵ See Chapter One 1.3 for the effect of character-text that is not supported by corroborating narrator-text. See de Jong 1987 for the overall mechanics of narrator-text and character-text.

of completely executing the spectrum of interpretative prophecy. In other words, I assert that this careful and conscientious stylization of Book 20's omen episode frames the roles of both seer and narrator for further consideration metapoetically.

Instead of contradicting or redundant renditions of the same scene, the pair of mantic and interpretative performances illustrates the full spectrum of expertise that a professional medium can contribute to a moment of divine-human communication. Theoklumenos, mildly handicapped by the hostile performance circumstances, performs to the fullest extent of his ability and provides an interpretation of his omen-narration with which few could find fault. All the same, his interpretation is out-classed by the reimagining and reperformance that the narrator provides, unrestricted by convention or irreverent audiences or by the inconvenience of navigating an affected state. The flawless but extenuated mantic performance of Theoklumenos is, thus, rounded out by the narrator's supportive and elaborative, faultless and uninhibited performance of an inspired divinatory act. Together, the dual performances stand as the epitome of divine-human communication in the epic. All the same, the internal audience rejects Theoklumenos and his superlative performance. For this reason, I assert that the poet has crafted Book 20's closing set-piece in order to challenge the external audience either to repeat the undeniable failures of the internal reception or to emulate instead the other didactic moments of divinatory reception that have been subtly demonstrated by the protagonists earlier in the poem.

4.4 Performing to Influence Reception

As can be seen from the above analysis, both Theoklumenos and the narrator perform their interpretations in order to reveal that, on a story-level, the suitors deeply and ironically misunderstand their circumstances, both present and future. On this internal level, Theoklumenos' interpretative prophecy is portrayed as a successful act of divination not despite

but because of the suitors' negative reception of its message. His episode is opposed to other moments of divine-human communication that are rendered incomplete and imperfect through the stylized equivocation of the either absent or modified narrator-text and that therefore are left to be evaluated for their efficacy solely through the internal audience's acts of reception.⁷⁶ Conversely, Theoklumenos' scene is bolstered and explicated by a supporting, complementary narrator-text. The blatantly incorrect rejection of its message, therefore, is depicted as a failure on the part of the parties responsible for the reception of the divine-human communication and is shown to contribute to the overall goal of the epic protagonists. In other words, Theoklumenos is portrayed as an exemplum of a professional medium, specifically in contrast to the suitors in their failed execution of a reception-act.

Unlike other moments of mediated divine-human communication, this episode places a special degree of import on the final contribution to such a performance, on the responsibility that the audience must assume in ultimately determining the success of the performer's pronouncement.⁷⁷ Because the suitors are the archetypal bad participants in social and communal acts, they stand, in the poet's collective representation of inspired and affected performances, as the ideal foil for the exemplary (and underappreciated) medium.⁷⁸ Only amongst irreverent and impious perpetrators of *atasthala* can a consummately professional performance of the likes of Theoklumenos' still be rejected and, importantly for the metapoetic commentary that the poet has fostered around such moments, can the consequences of undervaluing the performer's contribution be so clearly illustrated in coordination with thematic narrative threads.

⁷⁶ E.g. Penelope's and Helen's divinatory moments; see Chapters One and Two.

⁷⁷ Flower 2008, 58 highlights how divinatory performances were always up for interpretation by the audiences. Collins 2002 provides a full argument on the relationship between a diviner's performance and his audience reception.

⁷⁸ See Loudon 1999 for more on the suitors' thematic roles.

The suitors' fate is never in question. Illustrating them as irreverent towards a mouthpiece for the divine and his respected profession only adds to their long list of crimes. As the concluding contribution to the last and most intricate episode of divine-human communication via an influenced medium, the suitors' reception-act stands out in its infamy and in its connection with their doom.⁷⁹ The suitors' derision of Theoklymenos is, thus, another iteration of their outrageousness. Additionally, the narrator also fashions this particular unseemly act so that it looms large, highlighted alongside their brutal retribution by another mouthpiece for a god, Odysseus, and therefore inextricably links it with their justified slaughter. The suitors are the exemplum that warns against many abuses in the *Odyssey*, including the comportment of an audience towards a medium of the gods. The poet embeds his didactic message, which cautions his external audience not to fall into step with the suitors' behavior, both through the contrasting composition of Eurymachos' reception-act and inside the referential comments in the character- and narrator-text, which respond to the suitor's remarks.

When the narrator-text resumes at line 371, the suitors are still laughing, as they were in the possession moment, but they do so sweetly, ἠδύ. Presumably, this laughter is done of their own volition and without the contrary internal emotions of the possessed laughter, which also filled them with the urge to weep.⁸⁰ Thus, the narrator has made it clear that the reception-act of the suitors is separate from the rest of their behavior during the omen-scene and, therefore, that it demonstrates their *atasthalia* yet again, independent of Athena's manipulations. At this point, Eurymachos is described as speaking out, nominally as their spokesman for the moment.

⁷⁹ "Influenced" will serve as the catch-all term for mediums who are operating with an external force acting upon their consciousness, regardless of whether that influence results in an inspired or affected state.

⁸⁰ Russo: "The suitors regard the seer as a madman and laugh at him because they have no awareness of the spell Athena cast on them and of the supernatural phenomena." De Jong: "Reacting to Theoclymenus' speech, Eurymachus does not address the seer but talks about him to the other Suitors; an instance of—contemptuous—indirect dialogue †, which also makes clear that they do not take his warning seriously."

ἀφραίνει ξεῖνος νέον ἄλλοθεν εἰληλουθῶς.
ἀλλά μιν αἴψα, νέοι, δόμου ἐκπέμψασθε θύραζε
εἰς ἀγορὴν ἔρχεσθαι, ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ εἴσκει.

The stranger, newly come from elsewhere, has lost his senses
But quickly, young men, escort him on his way out of the house
To go to the agora, since he deems these parts are like night. (20.360-362)

In continuation of the suitors' *atasthala*, Eurumachos' response appears to do exactly the opposite of cultural norms for divination by disparaging both the sign and its messenger. Such hubristic folly is part and parcel for the suitors' behavior and should come as no surprise for the external audience. Neither should their ironic misunderstanding of the sign that erroneously assigns to Theoklumenos the very affliction that the suitors themselves have just experienced. The suitors have been characterized fastidiously as incompetent in all components of civilized life and, true to form, also fail at participating in another conventionally communal act, divination.⁸¹ Beside the blatant irony of Eurumachos' scornful response, his three-line reception-act stands out as transgressive next to the other responses to Theoklumenos' divination. These speeches are delivered by Telemachos and Penelope earlier in the poem and paint the suitors' reply in a particularly bad light because, even though they are uttered amidst hopelessness and cynicism, Telemachos and Penelope still do not treat the god-like seer with contumely or disregard. Thus, even next to reception-acts colored by despondency, the suitors' reception of Theoklumenos looms with glaring unseemliness.

As noted in previous chapters, thus far in the *Odyssey*, the internal audiences of divinatory performances have largely created an atmosphere of wariness and skepticism towards divine-human communication.⁸² Aside from the interactions featuring Odysseus himself, the mortal receivers of divine messages have repeatedly accepted those signs with a grain of salt and

⁸¹ See Flower 2008 for the social function of divination and its communal aspects.

⁸² Chapter One 1.2 and Chapter Two 2.3.

an air of caution. Unlike an outwardly receptive acceptance of an augury of the likes that Kalchas received in the *Iliad* from Odysseus (albeit after the fact at 2.321-330), diviners in the *Odyssey* have been greeted with formulaic wish responses, which frame the audience's reception of the divination to be as non-real and potential as they perceive the prediction's validity to be. In other words, although audiences like Telemachos and Penelope have repeatedly received auspicious omens, which they personally are not wholly convinced to be accurate, they have not rejected them wholesale. Instead, they have conditionally received them as a happy possibility, which they, in turn, frame to be entirely dependent upon some divine will. They neither reject them as false nor accept them as valid, but hedge their bets, as it were, with a respectfully inconclusive response that saves them simultaneously from an insult against the gods and from over-investing in what may prove to be a fabricated prophecy.

This circumspect, noncommittal reception type is performed through the use of the optative mood in place of the indicative and, in the other two performances of Theoklymenos, an almost formulized wish statement: αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος **τετελεσμένον εἶη**, “would that his word, stranger, be fulfilled.”⁸³ Even the other, non-formulaic expressions with the optative, such as Telemachos's response to Helen, οὕτω νῦν Ζεὺς **θείη**... τῷ κέν τοι καὶ κεῖθι θεῶ ὧς **εὐχετοφύμην**, and Penelope's response to the meaning of her own dream prophecy, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν [διὰ ξεστῶν κεράων] ὄϊομαι αἰνὸν ὄνειρον/ἐλθέμεν· ἧ κ' ἀσπαστὸν ἐμοὶ καὶ παιδὶ **γένοιτο**, maintain the same potential sense in regards to the fate of things that their mortal understanding cannot definitively know.⁸⁴ Telemachos' reaction is simply another form of a wish

⁸³ *Odyssey* 15.536 and 17.163. Russo 1988 on pg. 26 notes that these lines are repeated in Book 15, 17, and 19 with increasing dramatic irony and with significance beyond the functional convenience of formulation repetition. At pg. 414, de Jong 2001 observes about Penelope's response, “[h]er hopeful reaction is the same as that of Telemachos when Theoclymenus explained the ‘bird’ omen to him (163–5: 15.536–8). The narratees are never told that her promise of gifts should his prophecy be fulfilled is carried out; this is a loose end, just as the whole further history of Theoclymenus is an open end (cf. 20.371–2n.).”

⁸⁴ 15.180-181 and 17.568-569.

with a vow promised in answer to its fulfillment. Penelope's, the least hopeful of them all, still renders her reading of its likelihood as dependent upon her own interpretation, ὄϊομαι above, and admits in an unreal statement, ἀσπαστὸν... γένοιτο, that she would welcome that prophesied future.

It may well be that such 'may x happen' wish responses to divination—and, less specifically, the reflex to switch into the optative mood—are a stylized reaction, spoken in answer to statements made in the indicative that the speaker, in turn, views as uncertain and non-real.⁸⁵ Thus, I suggest that, just as divinatory performers like Helen and Theoklumenos exhibited certain behaviors and performed certain expressions to code their station, their usual audiences behave reciprocally with socially sanctioned responses, which includes a paradigm for non-positive reception acts that allows leeway for doubt without showing contempt.⁸⁶ It is this normative reception that the suitors so aberrantly flout when they ridicule, as well as unequivocally rejecting, Theoklumenos' mantic performance.

While mantic behavior is inherently dependent upon the understanding that the performer is acting outside of their normal frame of mind, we have already seen that, when

⁸⁵ Potentially, this reaction is against jinxing. For scholarship on Homeric jinxing, see: Austin 2009. By moving the actions of these prophecies into an unreal mood, the speaker, like a modern-day person knocking on wood, is acting to avoid the superstitious belief that the gods may become envious of that predicted fortune and overturn it out of spite. With the specific phrasing of fulfillment, which ties its completion to the gods' will and invites a concept of reciprocity, the superstitious wish statement acts as a kind of insurance policy. That is, the predicted events are protected by the proper acknowledgement of their divine benefactor and by making the prophecy a part of a (sacred) pact.

⁸⁶ Note the negative reception Agamemnon gives to Calchas in *Iliad* 1.106-108 as another exemplum of contempt for a diviner resulting in ruin. Compare μάντι κακῶν οὐ πώ ποτέ μοι τὸ κρήγυον εἶπας·αἰεὶ τοι τὰ κάκ' ἐστὶ φίλα φρεσὶ μαντεύεσθαι./έσθλὸν δ' οὐτέ τί πω εἶπας ἔπος οὐτ' ἐτέλεσσας. These lines do not cast aspersions on Calchas's ability and legitimacy as a diviner, but instead express Agamemnon's frustration with the constantly inauspicious tidings that the seer brings, as if he could mediate the type of augury he performed. In fact, as can be seen from his diction, Agamemnon very clearly conceives of Calchas as a seer and assigns to him the proper title and technical verb for that role with the vocative μάντι and the infinitive μαντεύεσθαι respectively. In Eurymachos' address, there is no use nor even an untarnished allusion to these specialist terms, the closest being his verb ἀφραίνει, which, as discussed above, only satirically alludes to the altered state of consciousness in inspiration by calling him senseless, as opposed to possessed. Thus, Eurymachos neglects normative responses to divination in his reception.

Eurumachos responds to Theoklumenos' *manteia*, he does not allude to inspired mania, but rather indicates that he considers Theoklumenos to be acting foolishly.⁸⁷ Indeed, he further belittles the seer's position and credibility among them by naming him a ξεῖνος, not in the sense of a guest of the palace—the address given by Telemachos and Penelope in their reception-acts without offense and with the implication of engaging in *xenia* with him—but rather a stranger.⁸⁸ He emphasizes Theoklumenos' foreignness by tagging him with the epithet “one newly arrived from somewhere else,” in place of other descriptors, the implication being that Theoklumenos is not welcomed to remain and receive hospitality. Indeed, this sentiment is made explicit by Eurumachos' ensuing command to have the stranger escorted from the palace. In other (modern) words, Eurumachos is essentially saying: he is new here, he does not understand what is going on, we do not know anything about him or if we can trust him; get rid of him, do not include him.

Finally, Eurumachos mocks a specific portion of Theoklumenos' prophecy when he recommends that they eject him from the palace and effectively rescind the *xenia* offered to him by the royal family. As his satiric rationale for escorting the seer out and breaking a sacred social pact, Eurumachos cites the symbolic darkness of the omen by referring to what he infers to be Theoklumenos' insanity: ἐπεὶ τὰδε νυκτὶ ἔϊσκει, “since he deems these here parts are like night.”⁸⁹ Here, Eurumachos performs his own bit of telling focalization and betrays his narratological bias with the choice of ἔϊσκει to describe Theoklumenos' internal mental processes. As a verb of perception, ἔϊσκω entails an action of observation but also judgment; one

⁸⁷ As used in *Iliad* 2.258 and 7.109; see also Nagy 1990, 60 for a discussion of the mental faculty inherently believed to be affected with a mantic event and compare this to the connotation and Homeric employment of the term φρήν. For an anthropological approach to performing divinatory behavior, see Maurizio 1995.

⁸⁸ On the terms *xeinos* and the concept of *xenia*, see Reece 1993. Again, de Jong 2001 at 502 points out that by talking about him and not to him, Eurumachos treats Theoklumenos contemptuously and disregards his warning.

⁸⁹ 20.362.

perceives something and judges it to be like something else, or in a more active sense, likens one thing to another.⁹⁰ As we have already examined above, such a mental process is a mortal, rational function of a mind, a φρήν, one which Eurumachos has already presumed to be unwell. If he has understood Theoklumenos' speech to be metaphorical and symbolic, he clearly does not believe that that poeticism is the result of a divine gift, but rather the ravings of mental instability. If not, the verb choice is another pointedly derisive jab at Theoklumenos' performance, mocking specifically the language of metaphor that appears throughout.

In either case, Eurumachos does not eschew decisive language or attempt to allay the inauspicious prophecy's warnings by imploring to the gods. No specialized language is used to indicate a wish nor does the optative mood appear in his reception-act. In fact, Eurumachos maintains, aside from the imperative command to his fellows, the indicative mood throughout his response, which indicates that he has rejected Theoklumenos' prophecy outright and firmly believes that he correctly understands the reality of his situation. Thus, in three lines, Eurumachos has embodied the most outrightly dismissive, negative reception-act because, first, he fails to conform to the respectful and pious non-positive reception type, and second, he undermines Theoklumenos' social position as a *mantis*. The latter is achieved initially by refusing to acknowledge any of his actions as mantic and then by dismissing them instead as the actions of an insane and untrustworthy foreigner, who is so unwell that he must be helped on his way out of the palace. Eurumachos' accusations are, as we have seen, rife with dramatic irony and themselves hearken to his final trip from the palace, led away by the *psychopomp*, Hermes (who may also be loosely alluded to as well in the reference to the agora).⁹¹ Therefore, alongside

⁹⁰ Monro 1901, 196 specifically denotes this verb to be transitive.

⁹¹ See Russo 1988, 358 on lines 1-4 and Hermes' role here. Allusion is possible from Hermes' role in presiding over all things commercial, as seen in the epithet Hermes Agoraios.

Theoklumenos and the narrator's interpretative corrections, the suitors' collective reception-act is construed as unseemly folly, the final nail in their coffin, as it were.

I conclude, therefore, that the entire scene of divination is further instilled with significance because the poet has so directly contrasted the suitors' and Theoklumenos' participation. The suitors absolutely fail to participate appropriately in the performance, while Theoklumenos executes his role alongside them in a manner that is entirely unrivaled by other internal mediums. Considered alongside the other metapoetically charged scenes of performing divine-human communication, Theoklumenos' divination for the suitors thus stands not as an aberration of its type, but as a paradigm.

CONCLUSION: INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION IN *POESIS*

C.1 Synopsis

It was the aim of this project to prove that Penelope's dream and Theoklumenos' final divination are both scenes that deserve to be categorized as examples of narrative innovation, alongside Odysseus' extraordinary feats of story-telling. Furthermore, I wanted to support the idea that this category of narrative innovations demonstrates a self-aware and self-referential culture of epic performance, because the metapoetic gestures that are made in such scenes are specifically reflective of a reception culture that elicited defensive poetics. In other words, in the final stages of the *Odyssey*'s existence as a fluid oral text before it was canonized, because of an atmosphere that somehow contributed to epic performers feeling as though their contribution to their poetry was undervalued or discredited, the poem was adapted to feature characters and scenes that promoted the import of the individual upon his performance. Specifically, the outstanding qualities of Penelope's and Theoklumenos' divination scenes were included by the poet to draw attention to these episodes and, especially, to the import of each medium's individual contributions to his/her performance.

I have argued that the poet composes his metapoetic commentary by circumventing or inverting narrative convention. Penelope's dream-scene derives the majority of its idiosyncrasy from the fact that it is almost entirely devoid of expository narrator-text. Theoklumenos' final act of prophecy is rendered unconventional by the doubling of *manteia* and interpretation in both the narrator- and character-text. The poet capitalizes upon the narrative conventions of the sung epic poem in order to fashion both scenes into expressions of self-reflection. Otherwise, neither scene necessarily needs to be an exceptional narrative moment—Penelope's dream is, after all, essentially still a traditional Homeric dream that conveys a message to the dreamer, while Theoklumenos' omen is not inherently aberrant but, instead, follows the conventional structure

of other omen prophecies that he is shown executing earlier in the epic, as is Helen in Book 15. Indeed, both episodes are fashioned through the careful employment of focalization and narration to render the divination moments in an exceptional manner, with the result that space is created to reflect upon the influence that each individual medium has on the final product of their divine-human communication.

To address Penelope's scene specifically, I have parsed the entire episode that closes Book 19 and have identified two salient points that have been left, by and large, unaddressed formally by other scholars. First, the divine contribution to the episode has been obfuscated from the external audience's viewpoint by the abandonment of the narrator's omniscience and its traditionally biased perspective towards the divine's contribution. Second, Penelope has been conscripted into the role of sole medium and narrator for her dream, a role which she has also been handicapped from properly performing by the nature of her manipulation-turned-inspiration by Athena. As a result of this characterization and narrative presentation of the dream, the external audience is left with the same uncertainty as Penelope about the meaning of the dream and, moreover, is encouraged to appreciate the role of an experienced medium and narrator when dealing with moments of divine-human communication.

In order to emphasize the pointed compositional choices that were made in Penelope's dream-scene, I have compared her dream with Agamemnon's in *Iliad* 2 and Helen's *oionomanteia* in *Odyssey* 15. Such a comparison demonstrates that the conventional presentations of divine-human communication not only privilege the divine role in events but is normally so biased towards the divine that it exhibits the explicit preference for the gods' perspective in epic story-telling. Thus, Penelope's dream-scene is made exceptional initially because of the structural inversion of this divine perspective-bias in the presentation of the dream

on a story- and a text-level. Furthermore, the thematically analogous scenes, featuring Helen interpreting a bird omen and Penelope presenting her bird dream, when compared, demonstrate that they were presented as in dialogue with one another and that both were toying with the conventions of narrative perspective-biases. The lack of a divine perspective-bias sets up both women as the substitute narrator in mediation of a divine communication that they were not prepared to execute on completely. Thus, each queen embodies a component of an inspired performance but their characteristics and skill level impede their ability to stand in for the epic narrator with the same efficacy. Consequently, I set forth their divinatory episodes as contrasting in a didactic manner with the following and final scene of character-text divination in the *Odyssey*, Theoklumenos' Book 20 prophecy.

In order to contrast all three episodes, I divided my approach to Theoklumenos' scene according to the two separate divinatory performances that he provides. Through this division, I analyzed first the *manteia* portion of the episode, marking it as analogous to Penelope's version of divination, and highlighted the performative choices that the poet makes for his narrator and character. By comparing this speech with his two former performances and the narrator's account of the divine intervention that instigated the speech, we saw that Theoklumenos' apparently ecstatic outburst does not deviate from normative behaviors for descriptive mantic performance, but rather follows the same formal structure as his other performances, as well as the narrator's description. Moreover, the episode includes an omen, which the narrator portrays as an intervention by Athena that elicits insane laughter from the suitors and which Theoklumenos reacts to and, in doing so, provides an initial, descriptive pronouncement of the omen that calls the onlookers attention to the omen and verbalizes it.

Furthermore, I offered the alternative to inspiration, an affected state, as the altered mental state that Theoklumenos is made to perform and as the aspect to his *manteia* that marks the performance as extraordinary and, importantly, formally distinct from the inspired *manteia* that the narrator-text includes. In doing so, I distinguished yet another characteristic of the internal medium that the poet marks metapoetically; in this case, the affected state, which Theoklumenos exercises in order to provide his *manteia*, is portrayed as similar to the narrator's inspired state because it is an effective tool in the fulfillment of his role as medium, unlike Helen's and Penelope's uses of inspiration. On the other hand, the affected state is depicted explicitly as distinct from the poet's own inspired performance, which is portrayed as superior in its capacity for conveying a complete account of the omen event, because of its individual approach to presenting insight on the situation. Moreover, the narrator and Theoklumenos' combined *manteia* is presented by the poet as a vignette that displays the full potential of a professional medium and specifically values the contribution of the inspired medium in divine-human communication when compared to the inadequate performance Penelope provides.

Turning to the second half of the divination performance, I analyzed the interpretative prophecies provided by Theoklumenos and the narrator in exegesis of the omen and its context. The parallel structure and echoed composition of both prophecies continue the comparison that the poet started in the paired mantic speeches, which emphasize the expertise of Theoklumenos against Helen's earlier performance, but also highlight the superiority of the poet's inspired approach. The poet particularly highlights this point with the performative tags that mark each exegetical speech as superior to the suitors' own interpretation of the divinatory moment in its entirety. Thus, the poet directs the full brunt of his contrastive depiction against the suitors' and their failure to receive the message of the divination.

Finally, by addressing the internal audience of Theoklumenos' divinatory episode, I delved into the metanarrative theme that the poet deploys, when variously depicting imperfect and expert mediums of divine-human communication. By manipulating the narrative norms in Helen, Penelope, and finally, Theoklumenos' scenes, the poet fashions an atmosphere surrounding divinatory performers that is uniquely sensitive to the intrinsic value behind the skill and command that each individual medium brought to a performance. Specifically illuminating to this end is the effect that the poet elicits by making the suitors the internal audience to the divination that Theoklumenos expertly performed, which portrays their derisive response to the prophecy not only as another instantiation of their reckless folly but also as a negative exemplum for an external audience.

C.2 Theoklumenos, a Retrospective

In order to most completely appreciate the *metapoesis* of the *Odyssey*, the modern audience must understand Theoklumenos. So far, we have seen that Theoklumenos has not only been fastidiously characterized through his first two performances as a paragon for a professional diviner, but the entirety of the Book 20 episode is structurally composed to execute all of the qualities and aspects of a 'correct' enactment of divine-human communication via an altered state of consciousness. Set against the tableaux of omen-pronouncements and interpretations, which were purposefully framed throughout the epic's text-level to be varying degrees of inadequate, the thorough, coordinated efforts of narrator- and character-text, mantic and interpretative prophecies, visual and message components result in the most comprehensive and all-inclusive representation of a medium's role available in the *Odyssey*.

This set-piece is additionally notable because it has been crafted within an epic that seems to have been finely tuned by a guiding force that was interested in more than simply

reciting a traditional tale of wandering and *nostos*. Instead, the *Odyssey* is the product of a line of singers who were increasingly fascinated with the innovative role of their performative contributions to the poetics of their art and its place in their community.¹ Thus, Theoklumenos' eerie but compelling scene is not aberrant. Quite to the contrary, it has been crafted, like a manifesto, to be the epitome of its type and, consequently, stands out among its peers because of the innovative approach to illustrating the import of professional mediums that the poet has undertaken throughout the epic.

As noted previously, through the combination of the narrator and Theoklumenos' prophecies, the Book 20 episode represents a consummately encyclopedic illustration of a divine-human communication. The irregularity of the scene's descriptive and apparently redundant qualities, thus, derives from the unusually detailed—to the point of overstepping genre conventions—representation of the process of mediated divination. Moreover, the actual divinatory act is not itself particularly aberrant from the normative type of divine-human communication expressed in epic—omens that must be interpreted either through traditional logical matrices or divine inspiration, or some combination thereof. Book 20's divination episode is simply an omen-scene—the possession event manifesting through the suitors' laughter—that is preserved through narratological stylization in complete detail, performatively illustrating every process of the divine-human communication event.

In scenes like Helen's reading of a bird omen or Penelope's description of her dream, the poet frames the information and the perception of events for the external audience in order to buffer the absolute revelation of the god's message and to emulate stylistically, to a degree, the reception-situation of the internal human characters. Theoklumenos' episode, on the other hand,

¹ For poetic innovation in the *Odyssey*, see the references provided in the Introduction I.3.

completely inverts this narratological approach. Instead, in a tour de force, the poet leaves no stone unturned, completely elaborates upon every detail of the omen-event, and underscores the showpiece quality of the exposition by heaping poetic tropes and interwoven motifs upon the coordinating performances that enact this episode. Conventional approaches to epic composition are employed, furthermore, alongside the literary devices that link and enhance Theoklumenos' and the narrator's contributions. As discussed previously, the narrator- and character-text components complement, supplement, and embellish the style and function of one another. Theoklumenos is made to shine in the role and, as a result, the poet is made to dazzle, his role both magnified and sharpened through its juxtaposition with the refraction that Theoklumenos' participation represents.

Theoklumenos' *manteia* outshone its foil, the lackluster passive prophecy of Penelope, and, in doing so, rendered the narrator's own *manteia* as the optimal version. If Theoklumenos' narration of a visual omen, uncorroborated by fellow, mortal witnesses and instigated by an unnamed divine source, was the most successful iteration of its type through the seer's affected state, the narrator's performance of divine inspiration, both corroborating and elaborating upon Theoklumenos' contribution, demonstrated exactly what Penelope's dream-narration could have achieved if executed by a capable performer—namely, a professional who knows how to balance the effects of an influenced (inspired or affected) state while collaborating with a divine informant. Theoklumenos succeeded in what the narrative denied Penelope. He verbalized the vision endowed to him in an affected state and then proceeded to correctly translate its message into meaningful human language, a task the poet constantly performs in singing his epic.

The superiority of Theoklumenos' performance, as compared to Penelope's, is substantiated importantly by both characterization and narratological presentation.

Theoklumenos is trained (as is the poet) in negotiating the perspective of an altered state and is a willing, complicit participant in the communion necessary for such a state, all qualities which Penelope cannot be said to hold. Meanwhile, the narratological feature that so distinctly marked Penelope's dream-narration, a lack of corroborating narrator-text, is entirely inverted for Theoklumenos. His *manteia* is so marked because it is supported by the narrator's account of the omen, which makes his narration both a double and a refraction, emphasizing the import of the narrator's perspective and focalization. Theoklumenos' passivity in experiencing his affected state does not mar his entire performance, as I have argued Penelope's has. Instead, it is appropriately employed in order to performatively signify Theoklumenos' entrance into his particular role as *mantis*. Overall, Theoklumenos succeeds pointedly where the poet made Penelope fail, and the same can be said of his interpretative prophecy when compared to the *oionomanteia* of Helen, which was itself proffered as an improvement upon Penelope's lay contribution.

If Penelope's dream-narration was an inspired *manteia* gone awry, Helen's omen-based prophecy was an inspired interpretation that fizzled with its audience. Penelope was too passive, Helen too aggressive. That said, Helen's performance was not that all-around flub that the Ithakan queen's was construed to be and, in its successes, offers additional points of comparison with Theoklumenos'. First of all, both Theoklumenos and Helen offer for their internal and external audiences a prophecy that is narratively supported and known by its external audience to be accurate. Helen delivers information that has already been revealed by the narrator, while Theoklumenos does likewise with the added benefit of substantiating preceding and succeeding narrator-text. In format, as well, the two performances align because the poet marks each of them with performative tags that depict them as especially mantic and inspired/affected. Helen goes so

far as to openly declare her inspiration and mantic purpose, compensating for the social parameters, which Theoklumenos meets, and to which she cannot or does not adhere.

Theoklumenos performs his altered state of consciousness with more normative behaviors, but those which express an affected and not inspired state. Theoklumenos' enhanced perspective, thus, is different from Helen's because of its point of origin. He is 'touched,' as it were, by a divine force and bestowed with god-like understanding of reality. Helen has regularly demonstrated an innate capacity to perform superhuman feats, so her dialogue with the divine sphere and its information seems to be natural and unobtrusive upon her autonomy.² In other words, like her command of magic, inspiration is experienced by Helen naturally and with complete control over her own participation. Her agency, in fact, is so active that it supersedes the circumstances of her performance, and hence her inadequacies emerge. Helen transgresses, in a number of ways, and in doing so always fosters a sense of otherness, which deters immediacy in communication and true understanding among other mortals. Theoklumenos, on the other hand, is—forgiving the pun—the happy medium of mediums, someone who bridges the mortal and divine divide without bringing too much of the incomprehensible, the sublime into his mortal audience's worldview.

That said, Helen's transgressively aggressive performance is still the one of the two that is met with a respectful optative wish statement. She cannot adhere to the performance context and oversteps the logical bounds of her internal audience, but still she is not treated with the kind of disdain and disrespect with which Theoklumenos' appropriate and conforming performance is received. Theoklumenos, as a professional diviner, has the proper performative credentials and

² E.g. Helen's ability to mimic with superhuman accuracy the voices of Achaian men's wives, as Menelaos recounts to Telemachos in *Odyssey* 4.276-290. See also Chapter Two 2.5 for Helen's nymph-like qualities that seem to portray her as familiar with the divine, if not divine-adjacent herself.

status, which Helen does not have or uphold as divine performer, and yet he is met with worse than the noncommittal indecision of a wishful response. The inversion of social norms that greets Theoklumenos is not created by him in his performance, however, as in the case of the transgressive Spartan queen, but by the receiving audience of suitors. Helen's *oinoiomanteia* doubly juxtaposes Theoklumenos' scene, in this respect, because her prophecy is correct but incomprehensible for its internal audience, and yet still is greeted by the correct and normative reception-act. On the other hand, her overactive command over her context is subtly improved upon by Theoklumenos' finesse when he reclaims control of the interpretation of the omen from Eurumachos. He interprets with tact and restraint to align with his performance circumstances, which Helen flouts in her own scene. In short, Theoklumenos' interpretative prophecy replicates Helen's successes and avoids her mistakes, so that it is unmistakable that the failures in his divination-scene are made not by him but by those responsible for the final portion of the divine-human communication, the suitors in their reception-act.

Thus, the poet's marked vignettes are answered in Theoklumenos' scene with improvements and, moreover, Theoklumenos' corrective divination serves, in turn, as a foil itself. Brought so much to the fore of the audience's attention, Theoklumenos' performance can also be considered alongside the narrator's contribution to the scene, which together create a ring structure of complementary divinatory speeches. The *manteia* portions fashion an ekphrasis of authorship and subjugation alongside a freeze-frame epitaph of the suitors. The paired interpretations that follow provide an exegesis on the verbal monument, which the omen-moment has created. Through both types of prophetic speeches, the narrator and character mediums are poised to exhibit their mediation skills in their capacity as a *mantis* and as a *prophetes*. In their moments of *manteia*, the narrator and seer both perform attributes of altered

consciousness to portray their performance as the result of some cooperation between their own selves and an external influencing force. In this initial mantic reaction, both mediums are portrayed specifically in an influenced state, but only Theoklumenos' is pointedly rendered as being activated externally. He exhibits symptoms of his mind's eye being touched, probably by Athena, but also potentially by the force of the possession-event which he is made to witness. The narrator, on the other hand, alters his performance style so as to emulate particularly mantic characteristics.

During their interpretative prophecies, however, both narrator and seer demonstrate their conscious manipulation of their specialized knowledge. Theoklumenos appears either to seize a more rational understanding of his previous affected perception on events, or to willingly activate his affected state to decipher the message of the omen. Similarly, the narrator continues his narration that is implicitly filtered through the usual, omniscient focalization on events, this time focusing not on the reality of the present event, but the impact that event will have upon the future. Finally, both performers exhibit the capacity for mantic and poetic performance with Theoklumenos performing particularly poetic feats of double talk and metaphor, while the narrator crafts his speech to adhere to the format and structure of a divinatory pronouncement.

All in all, Theoklumenos' two-part divination, nested within the narrator's formally analogous, halved divinatory speech, appears as a refraction of the narrator's contribution. It is both comparable and distinct, perfect and yet a failure within its own circumstances. As noted above, Theoklumenos is shown to perform his role as *mantis* without formal fault, in fact to perform with a finesse and competence that is unrivaled among his peers within the epic. He is able to accomplish, in one divided performance, precisely what neither Helen nor Penelope had the training or tact to execute. The difference that arises among these three scenes stands out

sharply in both the attitude and formal delivery of the reception-acts of the divination. It is against these distinct representations that the poet's challenge lies, I assert. If the top performing *mantis* of the *Odyssey* is so treated and the epic poet has proved that he is an even more expert performer, then would not any external audience who responds to the poet in a manner that is even comparable to the suitors' act of reception be daring to surpass the suitors in their legendary acts of audacity?

In support of an affirmative answer to this question, I submit the slaughter of the suitors as evidence. Specifically, the poet seems to promote that those who transgress will be punished, or, as Odysseus says to the singer and herald as he spares them, acts of kindness are always far better than wickedness.³ There is a complexity in that simple statement, the unusually abstract nominalizations *εὐεργεσίη* and *κακοεργίη* encapsulating a wide breadth of meanings.⁴ With the analysis of reception acts from Chapter Four in mind, I offer as one of the many operative meanings a modern idiom: "better safe than sorry." Instead of potentially angering a divine patron, Odysseus shows the singer and herald mercy. He is erring on the side of caution, an impulse followed by Telemachos and Penelope in their reception-acts and, clearly, a precaution the suitors should have taken.

Thus, although Odysseus's actions during the denouement of the epic can be read for a number of meanings, here I wish to focus on the extra time the poet devotes to the fates of Leodes, the suitors' diviner, and of Phemios and Medon, their singer and herald. All three of them are clearly marked mouthpieces of the gods and, therefore, resound with the metacommentary of the divination episode that ends Book 20. I will set aside Medon, as his

³ 22.374.

⁴ *εὐεργεσίη* appears only twice in the epics, both in *Odyssey* 22 (235, 274) while *κακοεργίη* is a *hapax legomenon*. Russo 1988, 284: "A rather banal apophthegm."

place as a *kerux* and that position's connections with Hermes are too complex for me to analyze in this space. Instead, I will point out that both Leodes and Phemios are professionals who purport to commune with the gods. Leodes is killed because he used his skills for ill, while Phemios is spared after his pleas of innocence and Telemachos' advocacy.⁵ The poet seems to linger on their fates, on Phemios's in particular, which includes, in his own words, an account of his professional skills and his innocence. The famous Homeric description of poetic inspiration appears here: αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί, θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἴμας/ παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν "I am self-taught and a god has planted in my mind all the paths of song." Leodes, though a diviner and spokesperson for the gods, has no moment of self-advertisement; his pleading focuses on his blamelessness among the other suitors' *atasthala*.⁶ It is the poet and singer alone who begs mercy with a claim to his position as a medium, a pointed vignette, I posit, in the wake of the final episode of Book 20. Respect is due to singers and Odysseus awards it, noting that kindness is a better choice than malice. Thus, not only in the manner of their life, but in the context of their death, the suitors are made to illustrate this lesson that warns against insulting a medium.

Extra care and attention have been devoted to moments of divine-human communication and to the mediums responsible for them throughout the *Odyssey*. It has been my argument throughout this project that the poet has crafted this pattern in a metacommentative fashion, to send a message across the story and text as a way of communicating with his external audience. The *metapoesis* of the *Odyssey*, in this regard, is an exercise in self-reflection and didactics. The poet is teaching his audience about his own skill set and about their responsibility in participating in his performance. As his own mediums in this coded communication, the poet has set forth

⁵ Odysseus surmises that Leodes's skills must have been put to use in hindering his *nostos*: 22.321-325. Phemios's apology appears at 344-353.

⁶ 22.310-320. Likewise, at 355-370, Medon beseeches Telemachos to spare his life and squelch his father's wrath.

Helen, Penelope, and Theoklumenos primarily, as well as the various other minor diviners and singers in a less outright manner. I say in a less outright manner, because the *Odyssey* has a curious dearth of famous diviners and singers who speak through the poet in their own voice. Teiresias and Demodokos appear, yes, but the seer only through the intervening narration of Odysseus.⁷ Leodes and Halitherses have their moments, but even Halitherses' sweeping foreshadowing of the entire epic is deferred mostly to the past tense, as a former prophecy he is repeating. Moreover, neither diviner is awarded a full episode of the likes that Theoklumenos is, or is marked by the narratological flagging that decorates Helen's and Penelope's scenes. The poet dotes upon these three characters, fashioning their depictions both to resonate with one another and with his own role. Theoklumenos' character, in particular, is made a token of the poet's pet project.

The character of Theoklumenos, in turn, instructs us to follow Odysseus' "better safe than sorry" policy. Theoklumenos was faultless and his insult fell in among the numerous causes for the suitors' fate. Thus, if the poet is demonstrably superior to Theoklumenos, the challenge—or warning that logically follows this demonstration is that an insult by the singer's audience would result in something comparable to, if not worse than, the suitors' fate. At least, that is the insinuation this series of analogies fosters. Good will is always far better than malice. A respectful if neutral reception of a performance is always better than an outright dismissive one. An inspired singer should always be graciously received—regardless of their apparent qualification, but especially if they are obviously a professional—just in case.

This sort of reminder smacks of other folklore tropes that operate on the premise that any unassuming old man, or more usually, woman could be a divinity in disguise, or something just

⁷ Teiresias's scene is given in book 11 (90 ff.), within Odysseus's narration. Demodocus's performance has received treatment as *metapoiesis* already: Nagy 1979 and references; also, Alden 2017 treats his songs as 'para-narratives'.

short of a divinity.⁸ The *Odyssey* has already executed on this motif with the disguising of Odysseus as a hapless, old beggar. Theoklumenos' dismissal as a crazy stranger aligns with and enforces this thematic message; both he and Odysseus have the favor of a god, after all. The poet, likewise, presents himself as an individual with unproven potential for this patronage and protection, even when (or arguably especially when) his behavior appears aberrant. Just as the suitors dismiss both Odysseus and Theoklumenos as odd strangers, the poet's performance of the *Odyssey* could have had the potential to be marked and mark the poet as aberrant. I speak here principally of the innovation to the genre that the poem exhibits throughout, diverging from and, arguably, improving upon the standards and conventions seen in the *Iliad*.

The *Odyssey* is rife with narrative, narratological, and performative experimentation.⁹ Consequently, I submit that the adjustments to and reimagining of mediums in the poem developed as a performative response to negative acts of reception that followed the early innovations to the Odyssean canon by its performers. Enacting and commentating upon the issue at hand, the poet crafted Helen's, Penelope's, and Theoklumenos' scenes to reverberate with his convention-sensitive audience and to send a message about his own craft and its methodology, and, let us not forget, to also send a thinly veiled threat. In early Greek literature, the seer is never wrong, no matter how much his words are questioned, and the dismissal of their warnings inevitably results in a moralizing outcome.¹⁰ The same seems to be held true by the poet about singers, who, he demonstrates, are analogous but superior to the best *mantis* in the epic. When it comes to mediated performances, the poet shows us that one should err on the side of caution,

⁸ E.g. *Hom. Hymn Dem.* featuring Demeter in the guise of an old hand servant; or *Hebrews* 13:2 warning against foregoing hospitality in case the stranger is an angel in disguise. For more on Theoxeny, see Kearns 1982 and Loudon 1999.

⁹ See my discussion and references in the Introduction I.1 and I.3.

¹⁰ E.g. Teiresias in tragedy as Flower 2008 treats the topic, pgs. 204-210, and, of course, both Homeric epics.

because even the inexpert can be made to deliver a divine message, and, as Penelope's scene proves, they may not even know the truth of the message they bear. On the other hand, one's feckless stranger could be a Theoklumenos, or worse, an Odysseus. Most of all, though, compared to Helen and Penelope, the external audience would be lucky to have someone of the likes of Theoklumenos, much less the poet, mediating a message from the gods for them. They should receive their performance accordingly.

In conclusion, throughout this project, I endeavored to provide a metapoetic explanation for the irregular portrayals of focalization and narration in Penelope's and Theoklumenos' scenes and, in doing so, I suggested that the poet innovated these depictions so that his external audience would understand the metacommentary behind the suitor's disastrous misunderstanding of Theoklumenos' professional divination. I posited that, throughout the contrasting depictions of inspired and affected mediums, the poet has instructed his external audience about the abilities that they should value in divinatory or poetic mediums and has demonstrated precisely how not to behave in response to an inspired or affected performance. Ultimately, I have awarded to Penelope's and Theoklumenos' episodes the labels of narrative innovation and *metapoesis* in place of treating them, as scholars usually do, as aberrative depictions of divination.

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