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cicada song and the analogous swallow song (χελιδονισμό) have the same context and function as the “extrapolated” ancient songs and that the personae and symbolic roles of the τέττιξ and the χελιδών (cf. *carm. pop.* 848 *PMG*) are also similar, and therefore must represent a continuing tradition (which does not mean continuous preservation) from antiquity. The uncanny resemblances in style, theme, and even vocabulary are thus more a product of similar patterns of farming life and the parallel symbolic functions of the songs than of direct transmission.

To set the background, Petropoulos provides brief sketches of the (non-mechanized) modern wheat harvest (June) and the threshing (July; both occur about two weeks earlier in Hesiod’s calendar), the procedures and stresses of which closely parallel those of antiquity. The cicada and the swallow function as seasonal “signposts,” which cue humans to the actions appropriate to that time. The χελιδονισμάτα herald the arrival of spring (March), the beginning of the “new year,” a liminal and therefore hopeful and anxious time; hence the merriment, the bands of begging boys, and the mock curses. The modern *tzitzikas*-song is connected to the cereal harvest, the most grueling task of the farmer’s year. The indolent, begging, irresponsible cicada (cf. Aesop, *Fable* 373 Perry) is a warning to the lazy farmer.

Assuming that the ancient τέττιξ-song was sung at harvest time would explain men’s midsummer exhaustion. Less convincing are the hypotheses that the extreme wantonness of women at that time refers to the wives’ frustration at the harvesters’ month-long absence from home, or else to a more complicated male psychological reaction to the “lopsided distribution of labor between the sexes at this pivotal season.” Students and seasoned scholars alike will enjoy this joyful exercise in the comparative method.

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WALTER DONLAN

Nancy Felson-Rubin. *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 215. \$35.00. ISBN 0-691-03228-9.

This well-conceived book achieves much more than its (punning) main title implies. Felson-Rubin in fact provides shrewd interpretation of several major characters and plot lines in the *Odyssey*—seen *sub specie Penelopes*. Further, she proposes original ways of understanding audience response to the epic.

The theoretical catalyst for the critical and metacritical arguments in the book is the narratological concept of focalization (in old-fashioned parlance, perspective). The guiding proposition is that “Penelope . . . functions both as a subject weaving her own plot and as an object constituted by the gazes of various male characters. The perspectives on Penelope as object create multiple images of her for the listener. . . .”

After an initial chapter laying theoretical groundwork, Felson-Rubin analyzes the contingencies, potentials, and calculated ambiguities implicit in Penelope’s own perspective on herself and her predicament. Homer uses Penelope’s intuitive self-scrutiny to manipulate audience reaction: “By showing her as she contemplates her actions, . . . [Homer] makes Penelope his accomplice in weaving plots and subterfuges.”

Chapter 3, exploring Odysseus' interactions with his wife, demonstrates how their congruent personalities allow a distinctive interchangeability of roles during their second, mutual wooing. Odysseus constructs images of Penelope, without reaching certainty until the reunion in Book 23: "as he gazes on Penelope, [he] struggles to fathom what she knows." Concomitantly, the reader, deliberately kept in suspense, struggles to know what latent hypothetical plot type(s) will emerge.

Succeeding chapters are devoted to Telemakhos, Agamemnon, and the suitors. Their focalizations of Penelope are conditioned by their own stages of maturation and their life experiences with Penelope or other women (mothers, wives, lovers, *inter alias*). A final chapter returns to the issue of poetics, especially the role of the reader as collaborator with the poet in an aesthetically pleasurable "co-constructing" of meaning in the text. The operative metaphor is quasi-erotic "playful sparring with the poet, a courtship dance."

Felson-Rubin has packed her book with innovative and acute explanations of the *Odyssey* by highlighting, à la current narratological theory, the element of perspective. Her privileging of Penelope as center of focus is incisive and critically most instructive.

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Elsie P. Garrison. *Groaning Tears: Ethical and Dramatic Aspects of Suicide in Greek Tragedy*. Mnemosyne Supp. 147. New York and Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995. Pp. x, 210, incl. 1 b/w figure. \$63.00. ISBN 90-04-10241-8.

Garrison examines suicides in Greek tragedy to see what light they shed on Greek ethical views (particularly on shame and honor) and on the organization of Greek society. Greek society determined the bounds which, if overstepped, led to shame and decided the honor merited by actions. Garrison also focuses on the relative roles that the household (*οἶκος*) and the state (*πόλις*) played in the regulation of people's lives.

For a suicidological theory to assist her in understanding the suicides, Garrison chose Durkheim's classic theory, that the levels of social integration and social regulation in a society determined its suicide rate, suicide being more common when either of these two social characteristics was extreme (too low or too high). Her choice is odd since there have been no efforts by suicidologists to explore whether Durkheim's theory applies to individual cases of suicide as well as to societies. Despite restricting herself by choosing this particular theoretical basis, Garrison elucidates well the motives of the suicides in the plays. Indeed, without citing any relevant psychological theorists (for example, no reference to Freud), Garrison covers the psychodynamic (and, in particular, psychoanalytic) implications of the suicidal behavior of the characters. Her lack of awareness of the suicidological literature, however, means that she fails to capture completely the quality of the deaths. For example, Antigone is clearly a *victim-precipitated homicide*, and Creon a *castrating father*, committing *psychic homicide*, but these concepts are not presented and explored.

Garrison identifies four motivations for these suicides: to avoid disgrace, to preserve a reputation, to sacrifice oneself for a greater good, and to