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Which Homeric character moves you? (I love Diomedes.) *How* does Homeric poetry make its oversized, foreign, and flawed figures appealing? Homeric characterization was a hot topic last century when scholars debated whether (and how much) Homer's heroes could be differentiated through speeches (e.g. Parry 1956 and 1972; Friedrich and Redfield 1978; Griffin 1986). Achilles received the most attention in this debate, but others were attended as well (especially in Martin 1989; Mackie 1996; Redfield 1975 for Hektor). Of late, there have been few studies in the characterization of individual heroes.

Lynn Kozak—who admits to an overwhelming emotional response to Hektor despite, initially, “little insight into his character” (21)—has written a stimulating book to fill this gap. As Kozak explains in her preface, her “primary goal” is to push the study of “Homeric poetics beyond oral poetry” by considering the aesthetics and methods of serial narrative (xv). Thus, in exploring Homeric characterization, Kozak also contemplates narrative, building upon the work of narratologists like Irene J. F. de Jong.

Kozak starts by introducing terminology from the criticism of serial television narrative. Her combination of a personal confessional tone with a brief survey of relevant scholarship makes for an easy and interesting read. Most important for Kozak's investigation are models of audience engagement that encourage “recognition, alignment, and allegiance with characters” (5) drawn from studies in film and television. Readers unfamiliar with this corner of academic theory are treated to a fast but clear presentation of a range of authors working from different points of view. A lasting lesson from this overview is that *time* is a necessary ingredient in developing audience attachment for a character.

In the rest of the introduction, Kozak outlines concepts that structure her investigation: “beats” (the “smallest structural unit of serial television,” 6), “episodes” (which are made up of beats, “balancing closure and aperture” within the narrative structure, 11) and “arcs” (narrative patterns for individual characters which can

provide “an illusion of continuity between disjointed beats and episodes,” 14). Such descriptive units are useful in a structural analysis of a work as complex as the *Iliad*. Kozak next argues that this structuration facilitates the presentation and understanding of character development. Especially enlightening is Kozak’s assertion that our prior experience of a character can create tension as characters change. This is why, for example, our sympathy for *Breaking Bad*’s Walter White persists even as he commits terrible acts. Our attachments to characters help us justify their actions. As Kozak smartly puts it—drawing on studies in cognition and memory—our judgment of character privileges coherence over consistency.

On its own, the introduction is a satisfying *prolegomenon* to the study of Greek epic through the lens of contemporary serial narrative. The chapters follow every mention of Hektor, analyzed as the development of a character in a serial narrative. Such a structure is more conducive toward a ‘reading with’ as one returns to the *Iliad* or a sampling in the consideration of a single passage or a particular arc. Since Kozak’s critical eye is trained on Hektor in particular, her comments are sharpest and most engaging when discussing him. Some of the analysis is enlightening; some of it reads like a live-blogged response to a television broadcast. Each chapter also offers comparisons to contemporary serial narratives (e.g. *X-Files*, *Alias*, *Lost*, *Game of Thrones*, *Dexter*). The combination of television references and deep affection for the epic may limit this book’s appeal to varied audiences. (And the references will likely become dated quickly.) An ideal reader of this book is probably between 30 and 45, has watched a lot of serial television over the past 20 years, and has read the *Iliad* a half dozen times. So, I owe a special thanks to Kozak for writing a book for *me*.

Chapter 1 (“Enter Hektor”) examines the *Iliad*’s first quarter as ‘episodes’ that help its audience anticipate and identify with Hektor. Most effective in this opening chapter is the point that even in his absence the narrative builds a sense of anxiety and doom surrounding Hektor. In short, we are primed for a strong emotional response based on what *others* say about him. Chapter 2 (“Killing Time”) deals with the problem of narrative “middles”—how, once the boundary of a serial narrative is set, the tale must slow down and expand its narrative world. Thus, the epic’s middle books (6–15) build upon Hektor’s introduction “in building investment in him before unleashing him on the battlefield” (145). The emphasis on shifting “alignment” for audience interest is effective; to my taste Hektor’s interaction with Polydamas is insufficiently examined (to contrast with fine comments on the conversations between Hektor and Paris).

Chapter 3 turns to the closing of narrative arcs beginning in book 16 with the deaths of Sarpedon and Patroclus—the last third of the epic both races toward and

forestalls Hektor's death. The short conclusion, returning to the author's own emotional involvement with Hektor, is, upon reaching it, less impactful. Kozak asserts that reading the *Iliad* in this way makes "it feel more and more like television" (231). She qualifies this somewhat circuitous comment by turning back to the Homeric tradition and considering how it may have developed "transmedially", that is, with audience members eventually becoming performers and contributing to the evolution or adaptation of its tales.

Kozak may have missed an opportunity to make a greater splash in Homeric studies and literary studies in general. Her analysis of characterization uses as its model modern binge-watching or the experience of a series in a discrete amount of time. Repetition and durative time, however, may have different effects (as she notes in her conclusion). In part, where Kozak wants to move a bit *away* from oral poetry, the insights of serial narrative might be even more beneficial in an oral performative context.

First, ancient audiences experienced 'Homeric characters' episodically, transgenerically, and throughout their lives. The durative exposure to multiple iterations of characters likely built deeper identifications that changed alongside life experiences. Ancient audiences heard about Homeric characters in symposia, in contest performances, in lyric, epinician, and tragic poetry. And they saw them in sculpture and painting. Such immanence has a better modern parallel with the Harry Potter phenomenon: someone engaged with that narrative world had books that took years to read, movie versions that reinterpreted the books and fleshed out their visual apparatus, fan fiction, new spinoffs in film, short story and stage, immersive entertainment spectacles (Universal Studios), and now (gulp), for more mature interests, Harry Potter-themed lingerie. Fans of Harry Potter have *grown up* with the books' characters and have a complex emotional and intellectual engagement with them that changes as their lives change. Ancient audiences would have started hearing about Homeric heroes at a young age—their prejudices and prior experiences of a character would become part of their response to each new telling just as their life stages would re-condition their responses to moments like book 6 when Hektor laughs at his doomed son.

Second, and perhaps no less important, *performance* shapes reception. Experiencing narrative *with others* amplifies the emotional response and sharpens opportunities for identification. When a television serial becomes "water-cooler" material, the way we view it, talk about it, and read about it adds intensity and duration to the narrative experience. Where and how the Homeric epics were performed, especially

when repeated over a lifetime, has a significant impact on the strength of their comparison to modern serial narratives.

If I have been critical of some of the details of this book, this is proof of how engaging I found it. In general, Kozak's approach is refreshing and exemplary. Although she does not specifically frame her work in this way, Kozak's investigation is a species of Homeric reception that helps us address the perennial question, "Why Homer?" By comparing Homeric techniques to those of modern narrative art forms, Kozak has provided us another way to think about artistic and cultural continuities (and discontinuities). The comparison, of course, works in both directions: "why Homer" can easily turn into "why *Breaking Bad*"? And questions about audience investment in Walter White or Hektor Priamidês yield answers that enrich our understanding of the importance of narrative in human life. This is the proof as much of good scholarship as a good story.

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