Off-Stage Groups in Attic Drama



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Abstract

This thesis discusses the off-stage assemblies, populations, armies and other groups found in extant Athenian drama. It argues that such groups are often depicted as holding considerable power over events on stage. It demonstrates that extant plays take advantage of the fact that off-stage groups can only be depicted from the viewpoints of on-stage characters by portraying groups and their psychology in highly nuanced fashion. In this regard, plays often undercut the stereotypes used in Athenian prose texts to depict the psychology of groups in political contexts.

The introduction explains this thesis' methodology and position relative to existing scholarship and explains how groups are defined. Chapter 1 surveys the stereotypical tropes which are used to portray group activity and thought in fifth- and fourth-century Athenian prose texts. Chapter 2 uses the assembly scenes in Euripides' *Suppliants*, Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes* to discuss the portrayal of off-stage group decision-making in Attic tragedy. Chapter 3 analyses off-stage group decision-making as portrayed in Aristophanic comedy, covering *Knights* and *Assembly-Women* before applying these findings to *Birds*. Chapter 4 discusses amorphous groups whose role is not clearly defined in plot terms, focusing on Sophocles' plays, and argues that such populations are made deliberately difficult for on-stage characters to read. Chapter 5 demonstrates how Euripides' 'Trojan' plays and Sophocles' *Ajax* encourage us to view the Achaean army as a shifting combination of democratic *polis* and menacing collective. Finally, Chapter 6 argues that groups of women in *Bacchae*, *Hecuba*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Lysistrata* are designed to resist straightforward categorisation.

Introduction

Section A: Introducing Off-Stage Groups

No comprehensive study yet exists of off-stage groups in Attic drama. This thesis seeks to rectify that omission. Off-stage groups have a powerful presence in several plays, which makes them eminently worthy of study in their own right. In some plays, off-stage assemblies make decisions which affect the entire plot, and much of the on-stage action revolves around anticipating the group's decision or dealing with its consequences. Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, Euripides' *Orestes* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants* are all examples of this phenomenon. Not all off-stage groups are assemblies or juries convened for decision-making purposes, though. In other plays, especially tragedies with plots drawn from the Troy myth, the action takes place with an Achaean army in the background, watching as Polyxena is sacrificed to Achilles' shade (*Hecuba*), making assembly-style decisions about the women's fate (*Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*) or threatening to kill Achilles if he refuses to sacrifice Iphigenia (*Iphigenia at Aulis*). The bacchants' power in *Bacchae* reveals itself off-stage, as with the captive women who unite to blind Polymestor and slaughter his children in *Hecuba*. Even where off-stage groups of people do not carry out actions or make decisions which affect the play's plot, their inherent agency is still demonstrated by the ways in which on-stage characters engage with them. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the off-stage population of Thebes is understood to be watching proceedings from an early stage in the tragedy, and the characters explicitly respond to their presence in different ways. In *Antigone*, characters frequently observe, engage with and struggle to interpret the population's wishes. The off-stage groups that appear in the background of Attic tragedy and comedy, then, are as varied as they are many. Some are decision-making bodies in positions of power, others marginalised groups seeking redress. Some have no particular role other than being the population which exists in the play's setting, but are nevertheless fronted in the discourse of on-stage characters; others can affect on-stage

action. All are addressed, discussed and imagined in different ways by on-stage individuals. As such, an account which discusses and compares them is long overdue.

The challenge of studying off-stage groups is fascinatingly complex. By definition, we can only learn about them through the ways characters depict them; the lens we analyse them through, therefore, is twofold (their portrayal by the author, and by the characters who describe them). This enables us to read these groups through the wide array of different perceptions which Attic drama offers. In Aristophanic comedy, we view groups as depicted by Aristophanes' protagonists, often sharp-witted citizens who wish to redefine the way a collective operates for their own advantage (Dicaeopolis, Pisthetaerus).[1] In tragedy, we see off-stage groups from the viewpoint of elite individuals who nominally hold power over them (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, the Achaean armies depicted by Euripides), but also elite or marginalised individuals who are at the group's mercy (*Orestes*, *Trojan Women*). Though the majority of characters in tragedy tend to be drawn from elite backgrounds, they are often vulnerable before the off-stage group. This is particularly powerful when the events are set at Troy (*Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*), with a victorious and vindictive army looming off stage; however, even characters who theoretically command the Achaean army are often vulnerable before them (Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iphigenia at Aulis*), while characters who are otherwise vulnerable and marginalised may be able to draw strength from off-stage groups (Hecuba in *Hecuba*, arguably Antigone). As such, Attic drama offers us many varied perceptions of off-stage groups. On one level, we have the playwrights' own portrayals of these groups. On another level, we can analyse how groups are perceived by characters on stage. These characters depict groups from perspectives which may be either elite or marginalised, biased for or biased against certain actions or characters, sharing their identity with members of the

[1] For the classic treatment of such "comic heroes", cf. Whitman (1964). Some potential problems with Whitman's approach are highlighted in the review by Herington (1965).

group or not. Contemporary Athenian spectators might recognise characters' visions of off-stage groups as either matching or diverging from their own opinions or experiences.[2]

This thesis argues the following:

- In fifth-century Athens, there was an established way to think about groups, which is demonstrated by consistent tropes used to depict groups in fifth- and early fourth-century BC prose texts. I chart these tropes in Chapter 1. These tropes had considerable influence over the depiction of groups in fifth-century Athenian drama. Furthermore, the norm in in fifth-century Athenian prose discourse was to consider groups as if they operated as a single collective psychological unit, which also influences contemporary drama.
- Off-stage groups in tragedy have great influence over events on stage, and characters are frequently forced to consider how best to negotiate groups' influence. This often means that groups can resist characters' abilities to manipulate or control them. In *Orestes*, the menacing power of the Argive population encourages us to look beyond characters' claims that they will manipulate the *dêmos* in *Orestes*' trial. The sheer off-stage power of the Achaean army turns Agamemnon from a commander into a nervous, paranoid politician. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, although the off-stage population does not demonstrate agency, its presence is enough to make characters acutely and explicitly aware of their watching eyes. This influence can sometimes lead off-stage groups to overturn established power dynamics, as with the off-stage women in Euripides' *Hecuba*.
- Drama can often depict groups in mixed and nuanced fashion. In many of our prose texts, although it is not true that groups are always depicted negatively, the portrayal of

[2] See Section C for a brief summary of the potential and pitfalls in a historicist reading of off-stage groups in Attic drama, particularly relating to the study of ancient democracy.

groups tends to fall along relatively binary lines: a *dêmos*, for example, is either capable of idealised rational thought and able to govern, or stereotypically unable to make sensible decisions in assembly. Drama often explores a middle ground between these two perspectives. In *Assembly-Women*, our attention is drawn to the very different decision-making psychology which the *dêmos* collectively and the lone Blepyrus exhibit. In *Knights*, the off-stage *boulê* and on-stage personified Dêmos showcase a variety of different psychological levels on which political groups might engage with orators. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes*, we are encouraged to see how elite individuals might try to influence the *dêmos*' decisions and negotiate the unclear depiction of how successful their influence is.

- Off stage groups are remote, which sometimes makes it difficult to know what they want. This obscurity is often exploited in drama: characters disagree over how to interpret the off-stage population's wishes, which may undermine the decisions they make. This remoteness underpins several crucial misinterpretations of the group's wishes, such as in *Antigone* (by Creon) and in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (by Achilles). Remoteness is also what allows us to experience multiple different perspectives on an off-stage group. Because the Achaean army is off-stage, we understand them both as a pseudo-democratic *polis* (through Agamemnon's eyes) and as a potentially violent all-male mob (through female characters' eyes).

Section B: Existing Scholarship on Off-Stage Groups

This thesis rests on the foundations laid by earlier scholarship on groups in Attic drama. Important steps have been taken by studies such as Carter (2013) and Morwood (2009), which discuss several off-stage assemblies (Carter focuses on Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Orestes*; Morwood on Euripides' *Suppliants* and *Orestes*). I hope to extend this work onto a much more comprehensive level by including more plays. Furthermore, I build on

this work by expanding the focus beyond just the reported assembly-scene itself, to consider how these scenes affect the respective plays as a whole, and how characters in other scenes negotiate the assembly's presence and power. Carter productively analyses the army in *Hecuba* (107-143) as a reported assembly scene; I intend to compare the assembly scene in *Hecuba* to other depictions of armies which act in quasi-democratic fashion off stage (such as *Iphigenia at Aulis*). By doing this, I move beyond analysing the army as an assembly: I elucidate how an Achaean army forms a very different type of off-stage group to an Argive assembly, and what precisely is gained by analysing army-as-assembly. I intend to build, too, on the useful work conducted by extended discussions of a single off-stage group within a specific play, such as De Romilly (1972) on *Orestes*, or Burian (1974) on Aeschylus' *Suppliants*.

Existing scholarship also contains some broad surveys of groups present in Attic drama, which are a helpful starting point for my research. Carter (2010) has produced wide-ranging work which discusses the methods of representing large groups such as the *dêmos* on stage. His focus is primarily dramaturgical: he focuses on how Attic drama went about depicting an assembly or city (the methods include oblique reference to the spectators, messenger reporting, use of the chorus and even personification in *Knights*) rather than what is achieved by doing so. Further useful material can be found in the PhD thesis written by Schwab (2011), titled "The Birth of the Mob: Representations of Crowds in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature". Schwab carries out helpful quantitative work demonstrating the frequency with which different authors refer to groups, and the vocabulary (and sometimes imagery) which they use to do so. His work is particularly detailed on a specific type of group: the 'crowd' (ὄχλος, ὅμιλος, πλῆθος, although see Section D for some problems in this interpretation of these terms), a heterogeneous group of individuals all present collectively but not necessarily for a single purpose. Schwab deliberately excludes groups termed δῆμος.[3] My approach is, in a certain

[3] Schwab (2011: 32).

manner, less ambitious than that of Schwab's, who both surveys modern group psychology and discusses groups of people in Homer and all extant Attic drama: I discuss only drama, and my approach uses modern group psychology only tangentially (see Section C1 for more details). As such, I am able to cover more material relevant to drama. Schwab's observations on specific scenes sometimes go no further than noting the fact that an ὄχλος or πλῆθος is mentioned; I propose to build upon this by discussing how exactly these groups are portrayed. Furthermore, Schwab's survey is often limited by his vocabulary-oriented approach: it is possible to overlook noteworthy groups of people because they are not specifically labelled as a πλῆθος or ὅμιλος, for example.

I also hope to fill in the gaps between these pieces of scholarship by discussing some off-stage groups which have as yet escaped analysis, or been treated only briefly. The ever-watching population of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for example, has barely been mentioned; in *Knights*, the (understandable) focus on the individual character Dêmos has led to an off-stage *boulê* scene going undiscussed. Even in cases where groups have previously been discussed, though, this thesis sheds new light on them by comparing them with each other.

Section C: Methodology and Related Scholarship

This thesis draws on, and will likely be of interest to, several different areas of Classical scholarship, some of which are currently growing quickly. In this section, I discuss three specific areas which are related, in different ways, to this thesis.

C1: Groups in the Ancient World

Recently, groups in the ancient world have been the subject of a heightened focus, which is responsible for the studies on groups and assemblies in Attic drama cited in Section B.[4] This

[4] Cf. Holton (1978) for a survey of scholarship on groups in history, and some problems in the methodologies and classifications adopted over the twentieth century.

growing interest extends beyond Classical-period drama: for example, Haubold (2000) examines the poetic function of references to the λαός in Homeric epic. However, scholarship on groups in the ancient world has developed rapidly within the last five years, making it timely to revisit Athenian drama in light of this progress. Some recent research in ancient history has been influenced by the hypothesis that large groups acted as collective agents:[5] this underpins the wide-ranging collected volume Evans (2017), of which the chapters by Ober and Trundle are especially relevant. Collective social identity, meanwhile, is a focus of Romney's (2020) study of lyric poetry. Furthermore, several scholars have used contemporary social psychology to study groups in the ancient world, such as Fagan (2011) on the crowd in the Roman arena. Fagan's work falls within the wider growing trend of applying contemporary social science to the ancient world, exemplified by recent volumes on distributed cognition in classical antiquity and applying social science to ancient Greek history.[6]

The volumes cited above represent a large number of scholars. Their approaches draw on the full spectrum of modern social sciences and span Greek, Roman and late antique scholarship. As such, any attempt to generalise about methodological trends will inevitably be unsatisfactory. However, in general, many approaches begin with a modern theory and apply this theory to the ancient source material.[7] My thesis adopts a different (and, it is hoped, complementary) methodology. I begin with the ancient source material (specifically, with fifth- and fourth-century prose texts) and use them to gauge how a form of group psychology was constructed in the Classical period, and was applied to groups such as armies, cities' populations and *dêmoi*. In Chapter 1, I argue that many prose texts understood large groups as 'thinking' and making decisions as a collective: they were depicted as functioning as a single

[5] For a contrasting approach focusing on diversity of views and backgrounds among Athenian juries, cf. Carugati/Weingast (2018).
[6] Canevaro *et al*. (2018), Anderson *et al*. (2019).
[7] For an exception, cf. Canevaro (2018), who is guided primarily by ancient evidence concerning mechanisms of assembly decision-making.

psychological unit. Furthermore, there was a widespread belief that individuals thought differently when they were gathered in a large group. The guiding theoretical framework which I apply to Athenian drama, then, is ancient prose thought about groups, rather than modern group psychology. In this regard, my methodology is most similar to that of Hunter (1986, 1988) who discusses how Thucydides imagines group psychology and sociology. This pair of articles was ahead of their time; Chapter 1 demonstrates how we might widen their scope to include a larger variety of prose texts.

Although 21st-century social psychology does not form a core part of my methodology, some aspects of my research may well be of interest to those who do use modern social psychology. At times, the phenomena depicted in ancient Greek prose texts can best be described using modern psychological vocabulary. I identify several motifs which are recognisable using terms derived from social psychology today, such as the concept of contagion (emotions "spreading" through a group) and in-group favouritism/out-group derogation. Furthermore, social psychology has advanced considerably since Hunter's 1986 and 1988 articles: as such, the conceptual vocabulary we now use to discuss ancient depictions of group psychology is very different, even if the guiding theoretical framework is ancient rather than modern.

Furthermore, my aims are different from much of the recent psychological and sociological work on ancient groups. Recent work is often invested in drawing conclusions about historical reality: Fagan, for example, aims to establish what made Roman spectators watch gladiatorial fights, while Canevaro (2018) aims to establish whether assembly voting procedures were designed to result in consensus rather than simple majority. I do not necessarily claim that it is possible to elucidate the reality of how ancient group psychology worked using the accounts of group decision-making found, for example, in Thucydides. As such, I diverge from Ober's (1989) approach. Taking drama as a direct source for historical events or practices has long

been understood to be perilous.[8] Instead, I focus on how ancient prose authors *represented* group psychology, and how ancient drama reflects and refracts *that representation*. In this regard, my methodology is similar to that of Konstan (2019), who focuses on ancient representations of distributed cognition in depictions of friendship. However, a viable historical observation that can be made from my arguments is that typifying, stereotyping and otherwise exploring group activity was presumably a sufficiently important real-life concern for Athenians to recur across Attic drama, with a variety of different types of group portrayed in detail by different dramatists across different dramatic genres.[9]

C2: Athenian Drama and Democracy/Politics

This thesis lies adjacent to, and shares a lot of source material with, scholarship on the relationship between Athenian drama and democracy, as well as politics more broadly.[10] This is particularly true for depictions of off-stage assembly scenes and on-stage debates concerning democracy (such as Euripides' *Suppliants*): such depictions of democracy have often been read as commenting on the effectiveness of Athenian democracy, even in tragedies which are set in the mythic and pre-democratic past (as most of them are). Off-stage assemblies can be mapped onto Athenian democratic assemblies and juries through various implicit methods, such as language that evokes Athenian democratic formulae (e.g. ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ) or dialogue which reflects or questions aspects of democratic ideology, such as *parrhêsia* or *isonomia*.[11] Of course, such evocations are never certain and elements of a dramatic assembly or jury never

[8] E.g. Pelling (1997a: 215).
[9] For a discussion of the methodology of using a recurring motif to establish that this motif was an important concern, cf. Pelling (1997a: 215-19).
[10] Scholarship on the relationship between Athenian drama, democracy and politics is vast. My approach is only one of many possible approaches to this complex field and should not be pursued to the exclusion of all others. For approaches which highlight the mutual validity of multiple methodologies, cf. Hall (2006: 1-14), Griffith/Carter (2011).
[11] Burian (2011: 95, 100). For the idea of ideology as *question* (as opposed to ideology as statement of a city's values, or commands to uphold those values) cf. Pelling (1997a: 225-6).

correspond exactly to every element of an Athenian democratic institution.[12] Other scholars' discussion of depictions of democracy naturally entails some discussion of the effectiveness of group decision-making. As such, I draw on scholars who interpret off-stage assembly scenes as having implications for Athenian democracy, such as Mills (2020), Carter (2013), Morwood (2009), Michelini (1994) and, considerably earlier, Burian (1974).

My approach is also similar to scholars who read democratic undertones (or, more generally, political undertones) in Sophocles' and Euripides' depictions of the army: Scodel (2003), Rose (1995) and Morwood (2014) use methods similar to mine. Political analyses focusing on off-stage populations in Sophocles have less precedent, especially in *Oedipus Tyrannos*; however, I build on the long history of scholarship which discusses Creon's political relationship with Thebes (see, for example, Lane/Lane 1986, Holt 1999).[13] In considering how *Oedipus at Colonus* portrays both Athens and Thebes, I am influenced by Blundell (1989, 1993), Easterling (1997a) and Tzanetou (2012). Aristophanes' setting of plays in contemporary Athens poses different methodological issues: few would dispute that the depiction of the assembly in *Assembly-Women* or the *boulê* in *Knights* can be read as commenting on institutions of Athenian democracy. It is important that the groups discussed in this thesis span a variety of locations: Athens, Argos, Thebes, Troy, Aulis. I consider that geographical location has political implications which may explain some elements of consistency in the depictions of groups in Argos and Thebes. To a certain extent, this is influenced by Zeitlin's (1990a) interpretation of Thebes as anti-Athens in Athenian tragedy, as well as Easterling's (1989) important response to Zeitlin. However, my approach is much less focused on spatial and geographical features (both on-stage and off-stage) than that of Saïd (1993, 2011).

[12] In the case of *Orestes*, for example, Pelling (2000: 165) notes that many of the parallels are inexact and warns against overemphasising correspondences between Orestes' trial and Athenian assemblies.
[13] See Chapter 4 for a more detailed survey of relevant scholarship. For a recent summary of several pertinent issues, cf. Raaflaub (2012: 479-82).

Despite this, I am not setting out with the goal of drawing conclusions about politics or democracy: I focus on depictions of groups, although in some circumstances (especially when groups make decisions) these depictions have clear political and democratic implications.[14] This divergence can perhaps most clearly be seen in my handling of the most explicitly 'democratic' groups. Even when I interpret an off-stage group as evoking or explicitly representing a democratic assembly (which, in the case of *Assembly-Women*, it undoubtedly does), my approach is different to most existing analyses of these assembly scenes. Scholars who have analysed these scenes in depth (such as Carter and Morwood) tend to ask what they tell us about democracy. I ask primarily what they tell us about group decision-making, and any implications concerning democracy are secondary corollaries to this primary goal. As such, the guiding focus of this thesis is groups, not group politics. More broadly, I emphasise the importance of Athenian democracy and civic ideology (and especially the plays' festival context) considerably less than Goldhill (1990, 2000), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) and, in the case of comedy, Henderson (1990).[15]

I also resist positing direct historicising connections between off-stage groups and specific events or individuals in Athenian politics, in favour of drawing wider conclusions about how group decision-making is generally depicted. As such, even where such connections are broadly agreed (the Paphlagonian representing Cleon in *Knights*, for example), they do not form a core part of my reading.[16] In the case of tragedy, I do not consider how a group depicted

[14] Furthermore, to an extent, any depiction of group interactions automatically has 'political' implications by reflecting on what it means for individuals to coexist in a *polis* or similar-sized group: cf. Carter (2007: 4ff.). On the other hand, others (e.g. Griffin [1998, 1999]) have resoundingly attacked excessively political readings of Greek tragedy. Griffin's approach rests on an excessively narrow definition of "politics", as Allan/Kelly (2013: 5) indicate. Boedeker/Raaflaub (2005: esp. 111-14, 122-5) also respond to Griffin convincingly and give a useful survey of scholarship. For an excellent survey of developments in twentieth-century scholarship on the politics of tragedy, cf. Saïd (1998: 275-284).

[15] The relationship between drama and democracy has been discussed at great length. At one end of the spectrum, some (e.g. Goldhill [1990, 2000]) have viewed Athenian drama as firmly rooted in Athenian democratic ideology; for a very different methodology drawing on epigraphic evidence, cf. Wilson (2009). Henderson (2007) takes a more moderate line which still emphasises the importance of democracy.

[16] Historicist approaches need not focus on establishing parallels with specific events or people. For example, Imperio (2020) and Papathanasopoulou (2020) both exemplify historicist approaches which set Aristophanes in

with democratic overtones may reflect on a specific assembly's decision, or any identifiable political forces within specific years or decades: my approach, then, differs from that of Podlecki (1966).

The sheer variety of types of off-stage group motivates my reluctance to address this thesis in avowedly political or democratic terms: this thesis hopes to encompass different types of group which may not otherwise be incorporated within a single politics- or democracy-based methodology. A case in point is the collective vengeance carried out by the women in *Hecuba*, who do not embody any recognisable institution or collective in Athenian life. Some have argued that tragedy pushes the boundaries of democratic discourse by granting a voice to those (such as women) who lack a formal voice in Athenian politics,[17] and that one way in which tragedy can be political is by portraying Athens in relation to individuals and groups who are defined as other.[18] I am sympathetic to this methodology; however, this thesis does not draw on it, because the diverse variety of groups I discuss would not all be well served by the same type of political interpretation.

A degree of Athenocentrism is inherent to my approach.[19] My hope is that, by focusing on groups rather than politics or democracy, we can identify some ways in which groups are depicted as sharing certain characteristics regardless of their location. However, the majority of the groups depicted in the prose texts surveyed in Chapter 1 are located in Athens, and many of the motifs highlighted in this thesis may well have been designed to resonate with a primarily Athenian audience. Rhodes (2003) argues that many of tragedy's seemingly democratic

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the context of broader contemporary phenomena. My approach might be considered historicist, in the sense that group decision-making was a contemporary phenomenon in the democratic Athens or Aristophanes, but my approach to historical phenomena is still markedly less specific than the aforementioned studies.

[17] Burian (2011: 95).

[18] Hall (1989, 1997).

[19] More generally on Athenocentrism in drama, cf. Heath (2011: 165), Hall (1997: 100-103). Several arguments against viewing Athenian drama as Athenocentric have emphasised its exportability (Duncan [2011], Heath [2011]) and the heterogeneity of the audience in Athens (Roselli 2011: 5-12).

features were paralleled in non-democratic *poleis*, and cautions against over-reliance on specific 'democratic' terminology. However, I align myself more with approaches such as that articulated by Allan/Kelly (2013: 90-91), who (without going as far as Goldhill) point out that these plays were produced and performed in Athens. As such, they were likely tailored to an Athenian audience, and we should not be afraid to look for references which specifically evoke Athenian democracy, even if they are also relevant to other *poleis*.

As with off-stage assemblies, my approach to armies is that they evoke democratic assemblies if they form an assembly which votes on decisions or uses the formulaic language of the Athenian assembly. Beyond this, I interpret armies in a political light if they raise issues framed in ways that make these issues equally applicable to *poleis* (such as questions concerning social identity or hierarchies of leadership). My political interpretation of armies, then, is slightly different to other approaches which assume Athenian audiences would naturally have seen armies as political entities,[20] but complements rather than contradicts them. I argue that tragedy's consistent interest in depicting armies outside active campaign, or negotiating internal crises such as Ajax's madness (see Chapter 5), places more emphasis on their collective coexistence and activity as a group, which is also likely to lend more weight to readings which interpret the army as a political body.

C3: Choruses

Although this thesis is not about on-stage choruses, I draw on some aspects of scholarship on the dramatic chorus. As ever, choruses remain a fruitful area of study, and recent books on tragic choruses (Gagné/Hopman 2013), their reception (Billings *et al*. 2013), their roles in Euripides' later plays (Weiss 2018), their interactions with lyric poetry (Andújar *et al*. 2018,

[20] Sommerstein (1993: 14) suggests that tragedies set in a military camp may contain inherent political resonance for viewers, not least because many audience members would themselves have inhabited a military camp as soldiers.

Swift 2010), ritual approaches to them (Calame 2017) and fourth-century choruses (Jackson 2019) attest to the vibrant interest which they have attracted over the last decade. In some ways, this thesis is complementary to this scholarship: it shares their interest in tragic groups, while shifting this interest off stage.

Some analyses of politics within specific plays, especially *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, have focused on the chorus' response to ruling characters such as Creon and Theseus (e.g. Blundell 1993, Foley 1995). I build on these approaches, especially in considering the disjunct between Chorus and population in *Antigone*. Furthermore, several scholars have analysed the importance of choral identity (most prominently Foley 2003) and its relationship to the wider community: this influences my approach, because I also consider how the chorus' identity is set against that of the off-stage group. At times, the chorus is a specific subset within the wider group (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Ajax*). At other times, the chorus is more clearly separate from the off-stage group: as women, the Chorus of Argive maidens in *Orestes* would not participate in Orestes' trial, for example. Sometimes, the chorus is diametrically opposed to the off-stage group, such as the Chorus of *Trojan Women* silhouetted against the army which has destroyed their city. At other times, the relationship between Chorus and off-stage group is more complex still. The Danaids in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* depend on the Argive *dêmos* for their safety; the women in *Assembly-Women* criticise, but infiltrate and become part of, the off-stage assembly.

As the majority of the groups I discuss are located off stage, scholarship on the chorus' stage performance or ritual elements is not directly relevant to this thesis. However, there are some exceptions: Slater's (2002) discussion of Praxagora as metatheatrical *chorodidaskalos* is relevant to my approach, as it intersects with her depiction as a skilled orator and thus informs her relationship with the off-stage assembly. Furthermore, my discussion of off-stage female groups (some of which are contiguous with choruses) draws on the large body of scholarship

which discusses gender-related transgressions in Aristophanes: in particular, Zeitlin (1996), Foley (1982) and McClure (1999) are relevant here. Where choruses are relevant to this thesis, it focuses on their words and language (which can be compared to off-stage groups) rather than their movement (which cannot).

Choruses and off-stage groups function in very different ways; however, some elements of scholarship on choruses inform my treatment of off-stage groups. In turn, it is hoped that understanding off-stage groups will help us to understand choruses, by painting a more detailed picture of the community from which the chorus is drawn. In the conclusion (Section B), I indicate how this thesis delineates some aspects of relationships between choruses and off-stage groups, which may well offer a fruitful basis for future research.

Section D: Defining Groups

My choice of the English word 'group' is deliberate: it avoids the frequently pejorative nature of 'crowd' and stops short of assuming the unity implied by 'collective'.[21] The word 'group' covers a wide range of sizes, identities and compositions, and indeed there are large variations in the types of group discussed in this thesis (and the vocabulary used for them: see below). Some of the groups I study are relatively small. We are not given any specific number of the women who blind Polymestor and kill his children in *Hecuba*; however, given that they all fit inside a single closed space, they are presumably imagined to number in the tens rather than hundreds. Most of the groups discussed in this thesis, though, are large: typically, we imagine, they must number well over hundreds or thousands.[22] The jury in *Orestes* and the assemblies in multiple plays are imagined as being the entire male citizen population of the city. These groups are not fully homogeneous: they presumably include participants of various social classes. However, they are homogeneous to a certain extent: they are restricted to a certain

[21] For a prominent example of 'crowd' defined pejoratively, cf. Le Bon (1895).
[22] On the size of the *dêmos*, cf. Ober (1996: 117-18).

gender. More importantly, they are (by definition) capable of gathering in a single space to form a physical collective.

The same cannot be said of the entire population of a city. In *Antigone*, the population of Thebes does not gather into a single location, but its collective views are still adduced as justification and able to compel the actions of on-stage characters. In other plays, the population can exert power over individual characters by spreading rumours across the city: by definition, then, it is spread across a wide area. However, exceptions exist where the population can physically gather: in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, Oedipus utters his proclamation and curse in front of the entire population. Depictions of the Achaean army occupy a middle ground. Euripides' Achaeans are not in the middle of the Trojan War: they are either waiting to set out (as in *Iphigenia at Aulis*) or they have already conquered (*Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*). As such, they are in some ways an all-male analogue of the city's population: indeed, στρατός can be used to refer simply to a gathering of people (see below). When not gathered at the same location, an army can spread rumours freely at the expense of its individual commanders. The army is often depicted as analogous to a *dêmos* in assembly: it can gather to make collective decisions. The army's inherently greater potential for physical gatherings (compared to a city's population) can also make them threatening: in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, their imminent arrival is a direct threat to Achilles' life.

In Greek, the groups which this thesis discusses can be denoted using a variety of terms, which are listed below. Several of these terms will be discussed further as relevant to individual passages; the purpose of this list is to provide an overview, and a sense of the variety, of terms used to denote groups.

ὅμιλος refers to a large group of people gathered together, in any situation.[23] At times, it can connote disorder (e.g. Hdt. 9.59) but this needs to be indicated through context.

πλῆθος can refer to a very large group of gathered people (Eur. *Phoen*. 715). It can also denote large numbers who are not physically gathered, i.e. the population as a whole. Its meaning can be politically marked ('the common people', i.e. as opposed to an aristocratic or ruling class: Hdt. 3.81.1).[24] When politically marked, it may, but does not necessarily have to, be used pejoratively. πλῆθος does not always refer to people: it can also denote a large number of anything (e.g. ships, Hdt. 7.49.1) or mean 'the majority'.

λαός, λεώς (singular or plural) denotes a large group of people, most often not gathered together in the same space (e.g. Soph. *Ant*. 733). When they are gathered in the same physical space, this is typically indicated through an additional group-term (e.g. ὁ πολὺς λαῶν ὄχλος, Ar. *Ran*. 676). Λαός most often refers either to an entire army or to an entire population or race (Soph. *Phil*. 1243): it is politically unmarked and universal in nature.[25]

πόλις denotes a city-state, but may also be used as a short-hand to denote the entire population of a city-state (e.g. Soph. *Ant*. 693), which is the most relevant meaning for this thesis.[26] Unlike δῆμος, it does not imply the male citizen population only.

δῆμος, where it is not used to indicate a local deme, typically denotes the entire male citizen population, i.e. the people who would be enfranchised in a democracy. It often stands in for the assembly or the regime itself (e.g. Pl. *Resp*. 565b). Sometimes, it can be used to denote all the people who fall outside the aristocratic or ruling class (e.g. Hdt. 1.196.2).[27]

[23] LSJ, s.v. ὅμιλος.
[24] On the distinction between δῆμος and πλῆθος in Aristotle, cf. Parmentier-Morin (2004).
[25] Van Effenterre (1977), Haubold (2000: 2).
[26] For discussion of the wider possible meanings of *polis*, cf. Anderson (2009).
[27] For the Homeric meaning of *dêmos*, cf. Scheid-Tissinier (2002: 18-26). The adjective *dêmosios* has a slightly different meaning, and may not exclude aristocrats (Fouchard [1998]), although it is unclear whether Fouchard's findings are widely applicable beyond Sparta.

στρατός normally denotes an army, although it may simply designate a large body of people, in which case it is equivalent to λαός (e.g. Soph. *El*. 749, Aesch. *Eum*. 566, 683). They may or may not be gathered together physically.

πολλοί / πλεῖστοι can denote a large number of people in unmarked fashion. οἱ πολλοί can also denote all the people who fall outside the aristocratic or ruling class.[28] Both terms may also mean "the majority" of a certain group (either gathered or not physically gathered).[29]

ὄχλος has traditionally been interpreted with pejorative connotations: it can separately be used to mean "trouble" or "annoyance" (e.g. Hdt. 1.86.5, Eur. *Med*. 337).[30] When describing groups, it can often refer to massed disorder (e.g. Thuc. 1.49.3, 4.126.6, 6.17.2).[31] In political thought, it often denotes groups who are liable to being swayed by a manipulative orator (Pl. *Grg*. 454b6; Gorg. *Hel*. 13, *Pal*. 33),[32] and it can be used pejoratively while describing a lower-class group in drama too (Eur. *Hec*. 605-7). However, in *Trachiniae* 424, the ὄχλος is presented more positively as a source of community-wide information.[33] Roisman argues that Euripides' use of the word is typically neutral, not derogatory;[34] indeed, even the example which she singles out as "[t]he only possible derogatory use" in *Hippolytus* (213) does not strike me as obviously derogatory. I am sympathetic to the argument that ὄχλος in drama will contain at least a shadow of the pejorative meaning it tends to carry in prose texts: here, as elsewhere, the interaction between prose and drama on thought relating to groups is likely to make itself felt. This does not make it impossible for dramatists to use ὄχλος in a way that is not pejorative; however, in doing so, they are consciously *differing from* an existing default connotation.[35]

[28] LSJ s.v. πολύς II.3b.
[29] LSJ s.v. πλεῖστος A.2.
[30] LSJ s.v. ὄχλος II.
[31] Hunter (1988: 19n13), Zumbrunnen (2008: 33).
[32] Hunter (1988: 20n16).
[33] Schwab (2011: 67).
[34] Roisman (1999: 143), who quite rightly rebuts Walker (1995: 113-25).
[35] For a thorough lexical treatment, cf. Karpyuk (2000: 81-94).

At its heart, this thesis discusses how groups are portrayed, not what precisely these group-related terms can mean. I therefore avoid the methodology of sorting material by specific group terms such as ὄχλος, partly because these terms' meanings vary. Hunter surveys the issues involved in attempting to define several key crowd-terms in Thucydides: though ὅμιλος and ὄχλος both imply undifferentiated heterogeneity, they can be used to describe a *dêmos* (which to a certain extent is homogeneous) or the even more homogeneous assembly of sailors at Samos.[36] Furthermore, Schwab (2011) has already used a terminology and word-occurrence-based approach to study groups in Homeric epic and Attic drama.

Section E: Division of Material

This thesis must negotiate a substantial body of evidence. Its scope will be limited to drama from the Classical period (i.e. extant works by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes). I divide this body of evidence into chapters thematically. In doing so, I will elide important and noteworthy distinctions which result from the relative chronology of works being discussed. Though approximately 60 years separates the initial productions of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes*, the detailed messenger-speeches sketching off-stage assembly scenes in these two plays means that they have a considerable amount in common, which it is productive to discuss fully. Similarly, the "military" plays of Euripides show striking similarities (and equally fascinating contrasts) with Sophocles' *Ajax*, meaning that much can be gained from treating the plays which portray off-stage armies in the same chapter, rather than discussing Sophocles and Euripides separately. Therefore, I avoid dividing subject matter either chronologically (although some observations about chronological trajectories will be made in the conclusion) or by playwright: instead, I approach the evidence

[36] Hunter (1988: 17-21) suggests that this has the derogatory effect of implying that they acted in disorder, as if they were a completely heterogeneous rabble of disconnected people.

thematically in order to draw comparisons and elucidate differences which have not yet come to light.

In doing so, this thesis will inevitably minimise certain fascinating axes along which evidence tellingly differs. It would be interesting to see more sharply how Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes differ in their portrayal of off-stage groups, for example. Given the political resonance which much group activity holds, it would be fascinating to compare variations in dramatic portrayals of off-stage group activity with alterations in the political soundscape of Athens during the fifth and early fourth centuries. It is worth noting, though, that some individual tragedies have already been discussed in this fashion.[37] This thesis hopes to break newer ground by analysing groups sorted by type; in doing so, moreover, it hopes to avoid the potential pitfalls of excessive reliance either on direct historicism which reads off-stage groups against specific political events, or on reading the author's mind.

Section F: Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 sets out the portrayal of groups in prose texts, contemporary or near-contemporary with Attic drama. This chapter surveys the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, the Attic orators, Plato and the Old Oligarch to compile an overall picture of the motifs typically associated with groups. It establishes, firstly, that groups are often thought of as collective psychological units in fifth-century Greek prose; furthermore, it charts the various stereotypical tropes which are used to portray group thought as different to individual thought. In assembling this survey, Chapter 1 aims to contribute to the study of groups in Attic prose, which (it is hoped) will be of interest to the study of Athenian democracy and its contemporary perception more generally.

[37] An example is Podlecki's (1966: 42-62) directly historicist approach to Aeschylus' *Suppliants*; for a useful summary of the advantages and dangers of this approach, cf. Carter (2007: 24-7).

Chapter 2 discusses the portrayal of off-stage group decision-making in Attic tragedy, using the assembly scenes in Euripides' *Suppliants*, Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes*. These plays explore group decision-making with considerable nuance, demonstrating the complex middle ground between idealised rational decision-making and stereotyped demagogic persuasion; furthermore, they surround the assembly scene with individual characters' discourse on how to persuade the *dêmos*. I posit that setting plays in Argos enabled democratic assemblies to be probed and problematised more freely than setting them in Athens, comparing the assembly scenes in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes* with Euripides' *Suppliants*.

Chapter 3 analyses off-stage group decision-making as portrayed in Aristophanic comedy, discussing the assembly scenes in *Knights* and *Assembly-Women*. It reveals Aristophanes' pervasive interest in depicting and exploring the processes of group decision-making: he frequently echoes the stereotypes surrounding group decisions found in prose texts. However, Aristophanes also develops a unique range of vocabulary which he applies specifically to group activity. Furthermore, both off-stage assemblies are followed by the appearance of individual characters who represent these groups, allowing us to understand how Aristophanes imagines group and individual decision-making differing. This chapter finishes by demonstrating how these conclusions can shed light on other Aristophanic works, by applying them to the Chorus of *Birds*.

Having explored groups which are convened for formal decision-making purposes, Chapter 4 discusses amorphous groups whose role is not clearly defined in plot terms ("populations"). It argues that, even when the off-stage population does not make decisions which concretely change the course of events, characters are often acutely aware of the population's watchful presence, demonstrated especially by a study of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. On other occasions, the off-stage population's influence resists identification in pointed and self-conscious fashion.

Analysis of *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus* demonstrates the various ways in which characters' claims about the population are undermined: the plays exploit the difficulty of verifying claims made about a population which we cannot see. This chapter closes by discussing how an off-stage population's absence may itself contribute to a tragedy's political landscape: both *Persians* and *Agamemnon* create a backdrop of political dysfunction in which elite individuals are not held accountable.

In Euripides' works, the amorphous off-stage population is often replaced with an Achaean army. Such armies occupy various different types of group identity: they are, in effect, the population of the army camp (or indeed the ruins of Troy); they often participate in assemblies; they contain an inherent potential for destruction. Chapter 5 argues that Euripides' 'Trojan' plays (and, to a lesser extent, Sophocles' *Ajax*) encourage us to view the Achaean army in terms of a democratic *polis*. However, the army is also cast as a menacing off-stage collective which particularly threatens female characters, starkly emphasising their all-male gender. As such, the army may allow darker elements of democratic power to be explored. Furthermore, the political recasting of the army affects the depiction of Homeric characters, aligning them with stereotyped fifth-century politicians. The army's shifting identity in *Iphigenia at Aulis* is a particular focus of this chapter.

The majority of this thesis discusses groups in a default position of power; by contrast, Chapter 6 discusses female groups, who tend to be cast as marginal by default. Chapter 6 discusses the groups of women in *Bacchae*, *Hecuba*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Lysistrata*. The women's nature and identity is made deliberately uncertain by evoking and then defying a number of stereotypes of female transgression. To varying extents, we are encouraged to view the women as bacchant revellers, groups of violent man-slaying foreign women, military gatherings, or even democratic assemblies, yet the validity of all these categories is consistently undercut.

Not only are off-stage groups of women granted a threatening level of power, but their power is made undefinable and incomprehensible to male characters.

Chapter 1: Motifs of Group Psychology in Classical Attic Prose

Section A: Introduction

This chapter discusses the intellectual background to portrayals of groups in Athenian drama by surveying contemporary and near-contemporary Attic prose texts. The texts discussed fall under three broad genres: oratory (the Attic orators), historiography (Herodotus and Thucydides) and political thought (Plato, the Old Oligarch). This chapter demonstrates that several motifs recur in these texts' portrayals of groups. The fact that I analyse a wide range of sources drawn from different prose genres is important: it aims to demonstrate that certain motifs were broadly established as ways of thinking about groups in the intellectual climate of fifth- to early fourth-century Athens. For this reason, Aristotle is generally omitted: this chapter discusses only texts that are either contemporary to fifth-century Athenian drama, or near-contemporary enough to reflect ideas that would have been circulating in fifth-century Athens.[38]

In doing so, this chapter begins to rectify an omission in scholarship to date. There are many book-length studies on Athenian democracy, adjacent topics such as rhetoric, and portrayals of democracy from its prose critics' viewpoints. However, existing studies do not focus on the portrayal of groups within democracy, or discuss what prose sources on democracy tell us about how groups were understood to act and think. Furthermore, they devote little attention to non-political groups, or features shared between political and non-political groups. Studies on groups within individual authors or texts do exist: Virginia Hunter's 1986 and 1988 articles offer important discussions of group psychology and sociology in Thucydides, as does the

[38] This is not an uncontroversial statement for fourth-century orators (most prominently Demosthenes and Aeschines), although I contend that the tropes they use are often conventional for the genre and shared by earlier orators such as Lysias. In the case of Plato, I assume that his political thought concerning the behaviour of groups reflects certain strands of contemporary discourse, an assumption which is justified by some of the shared motifs charted in this chapter. I acknowledge that this is not a straightforward assumption, and the motifs discussed in this chapter do not depend heavily on evidence drawn from Plato. For similar approaches which treat Plato as interacting with (amongst others) Thucydides, cf. Monoson (2000).

second chapter of Visvardi (2015). The strength of Hunter's analysis lies in analysing several scenes in Thucydides in great depth; this chapter builds on her work by extending the tropes she discusses to a wider range of prose texts. Book-length studies on democracy often divide different genres and authors into different chapters;[39] this chapter advances a step further by surveying a variety of different prose genres in close proximity to each other, establishing the common tropes they use to depict groups. It is difficult to fully separate the study of groups in classical Athens from the study of Athenian democracy,[40] and indeed part of the attraction of studying groups in classical Athens lies in the perspectives it can offer on democracy.

A single chapter can only be so long; a longer study might hope to chart variations in the portrayal of groups with greater subtlety and delicacy. It would be fruitful, for example, to chart the variations in the portrayal of groups against time, as the Greek political landscape alters and the Athenian democracy itself declines, according a greater role to Aristotle's works in the process. Classical Athens experienced rapid political change across the fifth and fourth centuries: it is uncomfortable, therefore, to assume implicitly that Thucydides and Plato inhabited the same political world,[41] and there are inevitably important diachronic differences which this chapter elides. Furthermore, a more diachronic approach might demonstrate how the authors discussed in this chapter helped to *shape* political thought on group decision-making, rather than (as this chapter does) approaching them only as *reflections* of widespread political motifs. It would equally be fascinating to delve more deeply into how individual authors' portrayals of groups vary.

This chapter is organised thematically, in order to demonstrate more forcefully how certain group-related motifs transcend genre; however, it aims to engage with rather than elide

[39] E.g. Saxonhouse (1996), Yunis (1996).
[40] However, groups can be studied without exclusively working through the medium of democracy: e.g. Budelmann (2019).
[41] *Pace* Yunis (1996: 21).

contrasts in the way different genres and different authors present these themes, and take due account of generic demand and authorial agenda. Oratorical texts, for example, were often written to be addressed (or imagined as addressed) to the groups whose decisions they meant to influence. Furthermore, this chapter does not seek to compare portrayal with reality, and does not attempt to judge (for example) the extent to which Thucydides' presentation of a given assembly scene provides a fair and accurate account of the *dêmos*' decision-making.[42] Instead, I aim to establish how prose texts *imagine* groups, for the purposes of comparison with the fictive worlds imagined in Attic drama. In rhetorical texts, for example, it is likely that some of these tropes exist for persuasive reasons.[43] Nevertheless, it is striking that some motifs (such as group anger and scapegoating: see Section C2-3) are repeated by multiple authors in different genres, not all of whom approach groups from an anti-democratic viewpoint.

This chapter surveys motifs which fall under the following broad areas:

1) Section B: Attic prose frequently imagines groups as psychological units. This is often explicit: there are references to groups making decisions with a single mind, and "single-mindedness" seems to be considered a vital concept in group (especially political) decision-making. Furthermore, certain authors claim that groups have certain psychological traits, which implies that groups are imagined as psychological units. However, this should not elide the fact that individual minds are also operating within group decisions, and several authors explore the extent to which individual motivations coalesce to form group decisions, or group decisions compel individual conformity.
2) Section C: A consistent trope depicts groups as ill-suited to decision-making. This is often attributed to specific emotions which sway their decisions. In particular, the idea

[42] Both Thucydides and Plato have been viewed as misrepresenting Athenian democracy: cf. Yunis (1996: 24). It is broadly well-established that the speeches themselves are likely to be primarily fictional: cf. Hornblower (1987: 45-72) for a summary; Finley (1985: 12-15); Yunis (1996: 61-63).
[43] More generally, on taking tropes used by Attic orators as indications of broader morality rather than truthful accounts of specific factual events, cf. Dover (1974: 13-14).

of group decisions being conducted through anger recurs frequently; the idea of group fear is another common trope, although not as frequent as group anger. The stereotype that groups are eager to find undeserving individual scapegoats seems to be underpinned by the motif of group anger.

3) Section D: Another recurring trope in prose discourse is the idea that groups are vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous orators; this has its roots in the trope of group decisions being influenced by emotions. Unscrupulous orators are often imagined using flattery or bribery as elements of their manipulative rhetoric.
4) Section E: Other recurring motifs concern groups' communication channels, broadly defined. *Thorubos* is frequently mentioned as a means for groups to interact with individual speakers in political contexts: it enables them to hold speakers accountable and make groups' views heard. However, *thorubos* is often associated with groups being liable to emotional manipulation, and often foreshadows outbreaks of group violence; furthermore, it naturally implies the inability to speak coherently as an individual would. This section also discusses the motif of collective common knowledge, which is underpinned by the swift passage of rumour and also enables groups to hold individuals to account by spreading information about them.

Though this is a preliminary chapter, it hopes to make several additions to existing scholarship on the portrayal of groups in Attic prose. It identifies certain rarely-discussed motifs whose presence across multiple genres has not yet been analysed in depth (such as group anger). Where this chapter discusses areas which have been widely analysed already (such as groups' poor decision-making abilities or vulnerability to manipulation by orators), it hopes to chart subtle variations and complications in these motifs, which often escape the notice of existing scholarship. Finally, it extends tropes which are widely associated with the *dêmos* into other areas such as city-wide populations and armies.

Section B: Groups as Psychological Units

This section surveys the evidence for a conception of groups as having collective psychology in classical or near-classical Athenian prose works. This evidence will be presented in two strands: explicit and implicit. Explicit evidence takes the form of statements that depict groups, explicitly, as having a single mind; implicit evidence takes the form of claims that *imply* a conception of groups as having a single mind (such as "large crowds get angry very easily").[44]

Saxonhouse states dismissively that "despite personifications of […] the *dēmos*, despite the phrase *edokei dēmoi* […] it is no more likely that the sovereign people of Athens had a single will than that such a thing exists today".[45] However, the contemporary *perception* of the *dêmos* (and other groups) having a single will runs deep. There is a body of references to groups (most prominently, although not exclusively,[46] the Athenian *dêmos*) making decisions μιᾷ γνώμῃ ("with one judgement"), which explicitly suggests that groups can possess a single collective "group mind". More generally, references to groups making decisions (such as "the Spartans decided" or "the *dêmos* decided") implies collective agency, although less strongly. Furthermore, certain sources take the explicit idea of a single collective γνώμη further, stating that the reason the Athenian democracy can exist is *because* the *dêmos* can make collective decisions μιᾷ γνώμῃ: hence, a collective mind can be depicted as a necessary precondition for collective decision-making.

There is also a body of implicit references to groups being understood as psychological units. Several sources, especially Thucydides, identify psychological tropes as being typical of

[44] The idea that cognition can be shared, to varying extents, has been current in social psychology since Le Bon (1895: 31-2); Wilson/Theiner (2013) offer an example of the different levels on which a shared cognition might be said to operate. Equally, others have argued that the concept of group cognition is simply a metaphor used to demystify group agency (Wilson 2005: 235) and that group-wide judgements can be explained as the aggregation of individual judgements (e.g. Huebner [2014]). For a book-length survey on scholarship concerning shared group agency, cf. Tollefsen (2015).
[45] Saxonhouse (1996: 33).
[46] In *Thuc*. 1.122.2, μιᾷ γνώμῃ is used of an alliance of *poleis*.

groups, using formulations such as οἷον ὄχλος φιλεῖ ποιεῖν (4.28.3). Comments such as these rest on an implicit assumption that groups can have measurable psychological tendencies. This section also presents occasions on which authors acknowledge how individuals can think differently due to being in a group, which is also a fundamental principle within group psychology. The idea of a collective mind and collective agency does not preclude the understanding of groups as composed of many individual cognitions; indeed, several authors engage with the interplay between group and individual decision-making, which underlines how group psychology unites individual agents into a collective.

B1. Explicit Evidence for Groups as Psychological Units

In the *Republic,* Socrates imagines an ideal city being so unified that every inhabitant feels pain when one of them injures their finger (*Resp*. 462C-D).[47] Attic prose, then, could imagine a hypothetical city-wide population with a collective cognition, even down to the basic cognitive process of feeling pain. This section charts such instances of groups being explicitly imagined as possessing collective psychology in Attic prose: how often were real, non-hypothetical cities treated in similar fashion?

On an implicit level, prose texts routinely depict entire civic populations thinking or acting as a body. Demosthenes attributes collective desires and intentions to the *dêmos* when he states that they desired glory above all (Dem. 22.76). In particular, Thucydides frequently states that "the Spartans" took a certain action or believed a certain thing to be true. This may be interpreted as shorthand for an action or decision underwritten by the Spartan government, or by prominent individuals; however, patterns in Thucydides' usage suggest that these collectives may well reflect a genuine conception of (for example) the Spartans as a single

[47] Saxonhouse (1996: 69).

collective agent.[48] However, the vocabulary used to describe collective decisions is often much more explicit. Diodotus' speech at the Mytilene debate implies that cities can make decisions due to a collectively-held belief (3.45.2) and states memorably that πεφύκασί τε ἅπαντες **καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ** ἁμαρτάνειν (3.45.3).[49] In Herodotus, the fact that a decision has been made by a group can be used to absolve the individuals concerned of responsibility: σὺν γὰρ τῷ κοινῷ καὶ ἐμηδίσαμεν οὐδὲ μοῦνοι ἡμεῖς (9.87). Thucydides states that ἐν μὲν γὰρ εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀγαθοῖς πράγμασιν αἵ τε πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀμείνους τὰς γνώμας ἔχουσι (3.82.2), suggesting that both a collective *polis* and an individual citizen can be thought of as having a γνώμη.

Broadly, the groups which are relevant in Attic prose fall under three main types: armies, *poleis* and political decision-making groups (juries or the *dêmos* in assembly).[50] These groups can all be depicted as a collective operating with shared agency in Attic prose. However, this is particularly common of political decision-making groups: the very fact that they are present collectively with the power to make a legal or political decision grants them collective agency.[51] In ancient sources, there is evidence that the Athenian *dêmos* was imagined as having collective nature beyond that of, say, an army or any other *polis*. To an extent, they were interpreted as not only demonstrating but *requiring* collective cognition (Lys. 2.17-18):

> πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ὑπῆρχε τοῖς ἡμετέροις προγόνοις **μιᾷ γνώμῃ** χρωμένους περὶ τοῦ δικαίου διαμάχεσθαι. ἥ τε γὰρ ἀρχὴ τοῦ βίου δικαία· οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοί,

[48] Pope (1988: 277-282) surveys Thucydides' use of such collectives, and identifies vastly more frequent usage of collectives for Greek states (whether democratic or oligarchic) compared to non-Greek states, with the implication that any state not subject to the whims of an individual despotic power was understood as acting collectively.
[49] Hunter (1988: 26); Ober (1998: 100).
[50] I omit political associations and conspiracies, which are smaller and more selective than the groups discussed here. Depictions of associations often imagine them thinking and acting in concert: cf. Lys. 22. The frequent use of *sun-* compounds to depict group conspiracies highlights the idea of them working as collectives: cf. Moreno (2007: 293).
[51] Occasions on which the *dêmos*' vote was split resist being categorised as evidence of a collective mind. However, as Canevaro (2018) demonstrates, there seem to have been significant efforts to ensure that the *dêmos* voted by consensus (rather than simple majority) in political assemblies, meaning that unanimous votes were an encouraged norm rather than an exception. As such, Athenian political ideology seems to rely partially on the *dêmos* acting as a psychological collective.

> πανταχόθεν συνειλεγμένοι καὶ ἑτέρους ἐκβαλόντες τὴν ἀλλοτρίαν ᾤκησαν, ἀλλ' αὐτόχθονες ὄντες τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκέκτηντο μητέρα καὶ πατρίδα. πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ μόνοι ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐκβαλόντες τὰς παρὰ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς δυναστείας δημοκρατίαν κατεστήσαντο, ἡγούμενοι τὴν πάντων ἐλευθερίαν **ὁμόνοιαν** εἶναι μεγίστην …

The idea that the *dêmos* makes decisions μιᾷ γνώμῃ (driven by a single, collective reasoning) and in possession of ὁμόνοια recurs in accounts of democratic decision-making.[52] This passage goes further than presenting this as something that the *dêmos* happens to do: it seems to enshrine the possession of a collective γνώμη as something fundamental to the concept of being a *dêmos*. It suggests that what makes them different to others (οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοί …) is their autochthonic nature;[53] this is closely connected to them being the first people to found a democracy (πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ μόνοι … δημοκρατίαν κατεστήσαντο) and their ability to reason μιᾷ γνώμῃ is enshrined alongside these unique origins. Similarly, their belief in universal freedom is cast as ὁμόνοιαν … μεγίστην, which implies that ὁμόνοια – literally, a collectiveness of mind – is a crucial element of what creates a *dêmos*. Subsequently, in Lysias' account, that same collective reasoning secures the Athenians' survival. In contrast to the Persians, whose reasoning is that of their king (2.21-2; cf. 27-8), the Athenians reason collectively as one (2.23), and enter the battle μιᾷ γνώμῃ πάντες γνόντες (2.24).[54] Thucydides echoes this dichotomy: Pericles claims that the Spartans' ability to make concerted decisions is impeded by being οὐχ ὁμόφυλοι (Thuc. 1.141.6). According to Lysias, then, to be the Athenian *dêmos* is to have a group mind.

Plato's *Republic* extends this way of thinking about groups more broadly (*Resp*. 351C-D):

[52] For examples, cf. Ober (1989: 297-9); Budelmann (2019: 192-4).
[53] For the importance of autochthony in Athenian identity, cf. Loraux (1986: 148ff.).
[54] For Thucydides' emphasis on the importance of unity, cf. Pouncey (1980: 77).

> δοκεῖς ἂν ἢ πόλιν ἢ στρατόπεδον ἢ λῃστὰς ἢ κλέπτας ἢ ἄλλο τι ἔθνος, ὅσα κοινῇ ἐπί τι ἔρχεται ἀδίκως, πρᾶξαι ἄν τι δύνασθαι, εἰ ἀδικοῖεν ἀλλήλους;
>
> …
>
> στάσεις γάρ που, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, ἥ γε ἀδικία καὶ μίση καὶ μάχας ἐν ἀλλήλοις παρέχει, **ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοιαν καὶ φιλίαν**.

A group of any description – including, but not limited to, cities and armies – requires the absence of injustice to conduct collective action. This justice (defined here as the absence of injustice) creates ὁμόνοια. According to Socrates, then, group mind and group action go hand in hand for all groups, not just those of a political nature. On other occasions, though, we find group actions attributed to individual motivations and agency: Herodotus attributes Athenian success under democracy to the fact that each person was eager to achieve more for himself (Hdt. 5.78).

Thucydides depicts Alcibiades using a similar trope while debating the Sicilian expedition: καὶ οὐκ εἰκὸς τὸν τοιοῦτον ὅμιλον οὔτε λόγου μιᾷ γνώμῃ ἀκροᾶσθαι οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἔργα κοινῶς τρέπεσθαι (Thuc. 6.17.4). Alcibiades uses persuasive techniques that modern group psychology recognises: he encourages the Athenians' to feel superiority and hostility towards an out-group by casting them as fundamentally *different* to the Athenians in nature.[55] More pressingly, he suggests that the Sicilians – as they are not a democracy – are incapable of making a decision μιᾷ γνώμῃ or κοινῶς.

B2. Implicit Evidence for Groups as Psychological Units

Greek prose authors frequently make statements which imply that large groups are seen as having collective reasoning and agency. Thucydides, for example, mentions a specific occasion

[55] For Alcibiades' deceptive depiction of Sicily, cf. Hunter (1973: 136-9); Yunis (1996: 106).

on which ἡ ξύμπασα πόλις οὐκ αὐτοκράτωρ οὖσα ἑαυτῆς τοῦτ᾽ ἔπραξεν (Thuc. 3.62.4), which implies that typically the *polis* would have been in control of itself, and attributes powers of collective agency to the *polis*. These statements often take the form of parenthetical comments about how a group "typically" thought or acted, which contain the implicit assumption that group thought and group agency existed.[56] Such statements are particularly common in Thucydides' work.[57]

Thucydides' throwaway comments which imply group psychology often take the following form (Thuc. 4.28.3):[58]

> οἱ δέ, **οἷον ὄχλος φιλεῖ ποιεῖν**, ὅσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ Κλέων ὑπέφευγε τὸν πλοῦν καὶ ἐξανεχώρει τὰ εἰρημένα, τόσῳ ἐπεκελεύοντο τῷ Νικίᾳ παραδιδόναι τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ ἐκείνῳ ἐπεβόων πλεῖν.

The audience's escalation of pressure on Cleon, and intensifying demands for him to occupy a command, is cast as something typical of group psychology. The slow development of *thorubos* (28.1) with which this occurs, itself an important group-related motif, will be discussed later (Section E1). A similar example, which will be discussed subsequently, can be found at Thuc. 2.65.4: ὅπερ φιλεῖ ὅμιλος ποιεῖν.

Such explicitly psychological interpretations are not confined to politics and *poleis*, as the following extract demonstrates (Thuc. 4.125.1):

> οἱ μὲν Μακεδόνες καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν βαρβάρων εὐθὺς φοβηθέντες, **ὅπερ φιλεῖ μεγάλα στρατόπεδα** ἀσαφῶς ἐκπλήγνυσθαι, καὶ νομίσαντες πολλαπλασίους μὲν ἢ

[56] Hunter (1986: 414) notes these statements, and later (1988: 19-20) analyses them as derogatory depictions of mass psychology. At other points (Hunter 1988: 21n21), these statements indicate group volatility.
[57] It will be apparent that Thucydides' portrayal of groups runs much deeper than that of other historiographers, which is the implication of Pope's (1988: 277-282) survey of Thucydides' use of collectives, alluded to previously. This is perhaps because, as Pouncey (1980: 45-55, 58) notes, Thucydides seems to operate on the principle that concerted action is what builds a civilisation's power and prosperity, and that prominent individuals derive their power from effective command of group action.
[58] This telling line is discussed very briefly by Roberts (1994: 55).

ἦλθον ἐπιέναι, ὅσον δὲ οὔπω παρεῖναι, καταστάντες ἐς αἰφνίδιον φυγὴν ἐχώρουν ἐπ᾽ οἴκου.

Thucydides explicitly claims that the quick spread of panic is something *characteristic* of large groups, imagining them as collective units with a collective group-wide psychology. Ober argues that the Athenians' ability for collective action to a collective end degenerated after Pericles' demise;[59] excerpts such as those cited above remind us that certain authors still analyse groups as psychological units even outside Pericles' influence.

Plato's *Republic* also contains statements implying that groups can possess a collective psychology. The question ἕνα τινὰ ἀεὶ δῆμος εἴωθεν διαφερόντως προΐστασθαι ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τοῦτον τρέφειν τε καὶ αὔξειν μέγαν (*Resp*. 565C) imagines a *dêmos* consciously choosing its champion; elsewhere, *Republic* suggests that a *polis* can have character traits, derived from its citizens' traits (*Resp*. 435E). Thucydides attributes a collective *polis*-wide character to both Athens and Sparta (Thuc. 8.96.5), as does Demosthenes' depiction of the Phaselites (Dem. 35). On the other hand, many sources suggest that individuals think *differently* when they are in groups; this is a concept that underpins group psychology,[60] and may well be reflected by the fact that groups seem to experience certain emotions particularly frequently in Attic prose (as I discuss in Section C). Herodotus states memorably that πολλοὺς γὰρ οἶκε εἶναι εὐπετέστερον διαβάλλειν ἢ ἕνα (Hdt. 5.97);[61] soon after, he reinforces this statement with the example of Onesilus being unable to persuade Gorgus to revolt, but successfully persuading all of Cyprus to revolt (Hdt. 5.104). Thucydides claims that being part of a group encourages individuals within the group to take greater risks than they would alone (Thuc. 3.45.6). The envoys' desire

[59] Ober (1998: 92-4).
[60] Budelmann (2019: 200) suggests that Athenian sources acknowledge group minds and individual minds, but rarely group minds *made up of* individual minds. The excerpts cited subsequently, which acknowledge the fact that a group "thinks" a certain way, but individual components of that group would not, provide a way to bridge this dichotomy.
[61] A phrase rightly highlighted by Saxonhouse (1996: 55).

(Thuc. 4.22.2) to speak before a small group, rather than the *dêmos*, implies that they expect their arguments to be interpreted differently by groups of different sizes (although social class is also relevant here); cf. Thuc. 5.85, where the Athenians assume that the Melians don't want to allow them before the assembly, in case they deceive the assembly with seductive arguments (a hypothetical accusation which the Athenians do not trouble to deny).[62]

Another depiction of group minds and individual minds differing is offered by the pseudo-Demosthenic *Fourth Philippic*, which suggests that the collective memories of the people τοσοῦτον χρόνον … ὅσον ἂν κάθησθ' ἀκούοντες (Dem. 10.1) is not matched by their individual memories when returning home afterwards. Elsewhere, Demosthenes plays with the disjunct between group and individual by suggesting that Demosthenes' opponent frightens the jury collectively in order to blackmail them all individually (Dem. 25.41): an undercurrent here is exploitation of groups' propensity for fear (see Section C4). The ἰδιώτας καὶ ... ἀπείρους to whom Demosthenes alludes become a different entity when they enter the assembly. In Herodotus, this phenomenon is depicted in a much smaller group: a group of men agree collectively on two separate occasions to kill a child, but each is individually unable to kill the child while holding it (Hdt. 5.92).

Thucydides often digs into the interplay between group mind and individual minds: Saxonhouse reads the speeches of both Pericles and Cleon as encouraging the *dêmos* to think as a single-minded (in every sense) collective, rather than as an individual,[63] whereas Diodotus prizes division, change and multiplicity of viewpoint.[64] Elsewhere, too, Thucydides plays with this contrast (Thuc. 4.106.1):

[62] Ober (1998: 105) reads this as a reminder of the disjunct between oligarchic rulers and *dêmos*, rather than a reflection on group psychology.
[63] Saxonhouse (1996: 61-75), citing (e.g.) the extent to which Pericles prizes an unaltering mind (Thuc. 2.61). Not only does Cleon prize single-mindedness of groups and individuals (3.38.1), he also encourages them to see the Mytilenean population as a single unit capable of rebellious agency (3.39.6).
[64] Saxonhouse (1996: 76-78).

> οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ ἀκούσαντες ἀλλοιότεροι ἐγένοντο τὰς γνώμας, ἄλλως τε καὶ βραχὺ μὲν Ἀθηναίων ἐμπολιτεῦον, τὸ δὲ πλέον ξύμμεικτον, καὶ τῶν ἔξω ληφθέντων συχνοῖς οἰκεῖοι ἔνδον ἦσαν· καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα πρὸς τὸν φόβον δίκαιον εἶναι ὑπελάμβανον, **οἱ μὲν Ἀθηναῖοι** διὰ τὸ ἄσμενοι ἂν ἐξελθεῖν, ἡγούμενοι οὐκ ἐν ὁμοίῳ σφίσι τὰ δεινὰ εἶναι καὶ ἅμα οὐ προσδεχόμενοι βοήθειαν ἐν τάχει, **ὁ δὲ ἄλλος ὅμιλος** πόλεώς τε ἐν τῷ ἴσῳ οὐ στερισκόμενοι καὶ κινδύνου παρὰ δόξαν ἀφιέμενοι.

οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ ἀκούσαντες ἀλλοιότεροι ἐγένοντο τὰς γνώμας implies a collective change of mind, as a single unit (this is not necessarily contradicted by the plural γνώμας). Their reasoning is in many ways typical of a collective group (a decision made πρὸς τὸν φόβον – see Section C4); however, Thucydides then separately discusses the Athenians' and the others' reasons for this decision, acknowledging the fact that sub-groups within the main group formed a collective decision for different reasons. Significantly, Thucydides fronts the group outcome and only afterwards exploring the individual motivations behind it.

Similar occasions are found elsewhere in Thucydides, who frequently notes how a collective decision was built on sub-groups having different reasoning and motivation. He explains how the *dêmos* and the *dunatoi* were angry with Pericles for different reasons (Thuc. 2.65.1).[65] Similarly, when the Sicilian expedition sets out, everyone experiences an equally passionate lust to set sail (Thuc. 6.24.3), even though the old men, the young men and the *homilos* have different reasons: the group emotion transcends the divisions between sub-groups' reasoning.[66] Overall, though, Thucydides depicts groups as acting, thinking and feeling emotions

[65] I follow Hunter (1988: 22) and Visvardi (2015: 47, 58-9) in noting the interplay between group psychology and separate sub-group motivations here. Ober (1998: 92) suggests that this foreshadows the internal divisions that would begin to haunt Athens; Saxonhouse (1996: 71) suggests that these distinctions "cannot be allowed in the unified assembly that is beyond conflict". I argue that this dichotomy is a false one: Thucydides is demonstrating how the interplay between individual and group minds can work, and that a collective decision can be based on different parts of that group mind having different motivations. There is a telling implication, moreover, that the anger experienced by a large group (see Section C2) is able to *transcend* internal social divisions.

[66] Visvardi (2015: 85). Ober (1998: 114, 117) argues that the emotion of desire is what creates a collective mind here.

collectively with striking regularity: Hunter notes the Athenians' opposition to Pericles, their decision to spur on Cleon, their emotional response in favour of Alcibiades against Nicias and the Samian sailors' surge of hostility (Thuc. 8.86).

So far, this section has laid out evidence that Classical Athenian prose authors understood large groups as capable of collective emotion, decision-making and action. They offer only limited explanation of how they believe such collective thought and action comes about. In Herodotus (5.93), one individual's expression of a view encourages others to express their own views, which enables a group verdict to be formed. In Thucydides (6.24.3), when the entire city desires the Sicilian expedition, those who have doubts don't dare to speak out in case they are considered traitors, demonstrating explicit awareness of intimidatory group psychology which forces collective conformity.[67] The fact that this conformity is also created by the strength of the *epithumia*, however, may well suggest that Thucydides is exploring the concept of contagion: the idea that individuals can 'catch' the emotions of others in the same group.[68] A standard example of contagion is one section of an army fleeing and inspiring more widespread flight (cf. Hdt. 6.13-14). In an example of contagion noted by Hunter, Thucydides describes how small groups form in support of sallying against the Spartans, resulting in the whole city being stirred up (ἀνηρέθιστο ἡ πόλις, Thuc. 2.21.3) and collective anger directed at Pericles.[69] Plato, too, briefly explores how group behaviour can spread until the πλῆθος all adopts a certain behaviour in a democracy (*Resp*. 550E).[70] In Thuc. 7.75, while the Athenian army retreats, individuals feel sorrow and fear as they see the corpses of dead companions (ἐς λύπην μετὰ φόβου καθίστατο, 7.75.3), added to the sorrow caused by abandoning sick or wounded

[67] Thomas (2011) 172.
[68] Cf. Kelly (2001) for an overview of emotional contagion from a social psychology perspective.
[69] Hunter (1988) 21.
[70] It is elegantly coincidental that, at *Resp*. 556E, Plato uses the metaphor of sickness to reflect the crowd-action required for democracy to unseat an oligarchy, just as modern theorists use "contagion" to describe the spread of ideas through a crowd.

survivors. This leads to the negative emotion spreading through the entire army: ὥστε δάκρυσι πᾶν τὸ στράτευμα … κατήφειά τέ τις ἅμα καὶ κατάμεμψις σφῶν αὐτῶν πολλὴ ἦν (7.75.4-5).

Even though a political group may share emotions, impulses and motivations, sometimes they can only function as individuals in practice. At times, their decision-making and reasoning is divided and decidedly individual rather than collective (e.g. Lys. 12.75). They cannot, for instance, all speak in unison as a collective, as Demosthenes acknowledges (22.30). This is a fundamental problem with the *dêmos*' decision-making effectiveness, and praise of democracy tends to avoid this thorny issue. In Pericles' funeral oration, although he praises democracy, there is little focus on the *dêmos*' decision-making ability, which may be a pointed elision by Thucydides: the closest this speech comes is the idea that debate allows more time for reflection (Thuc. 2.40.3). The *dêmos* is clearly capable of demonstrating divided cognition and desire: frequently, we are told that opinion across an assembly is divided (e.g. Dem. 5.1, Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.36-7, Thuc. 3.49.1) or indeed across an entire *polis* or population (e.g. Hdt. 6.100, 7.142). In the Xenophon example, the *dêmos* utters a *thorubos* demonstrating the conflict between two sides; although the *dêmos* collectively tries to resolve the dichotomy (which interestingly implies a natural attempt to tend towards a consensus, 6.5.37), they are eventually reconciled by Cleiteles' speech, which triggers a *thorubos* of assent. Though this chapter cannot afford to consider in detail all arguments against democracy found in Attic prose (apart from those which specifically handle the collective nature of the *dêmos*), it is noteworthy that some such arguments seem predicated on the notion that collective agency *cannot* exist: τὸ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐν ταύτῃ διανενεμῆσθαι κατὰ σμικρὰ εἰς πολλούς (Pl. *Plt*. 303A). Such arguments, though, are relatively rare.

B3. Groups as Psychological Units: Conclusions

The idea of a group thinking and acting as a single collective was not just an ideal imagined in the *Republic*: it was depicted as underpinning a large amount of group decision-making. The motifs of ὁμόνοια and μιᾷ γνώμῃ surround examples of group decision-making across historiography, political thought and oratory. They are most frequently associated with democratic politics, which is unsurprising, given that this was a formalised occasion on which groups were considered to make decisions as a collective whole.

On occasion, the historiographers explicitly attribute collective psychology to groups in non-political contexts; often, though, we depend on less explicit evidence to understand non-political groups as psychological collectives. Thucydides frequently refers to entire populations (or, at the very least, assemblies) taking a decision as if they are individuals, and suggests that cities and armies formed consistent psychological habits. Plato's Socrates suggests that *poleis*, like individuals, can possess character traits; Herodotus assesses groups' liability to persuasion as greater than individuals'. Not only are groups implicitly presented as psychological collectives, but they are often presented as unities which are psychologically distinct from the individuals that compose them: orators and historiographers both point to occasions on which individuals think differently when in groups.

To an extent, we can see the anatomy of collective decision and view the seams between individual and group mind. Thucydides, in particular, demonstrates how a group decision can be propelled by different motivations held by individuals or sub-groups within that group; by doing so, he demonstrates groups' power to produce a single collective decision, spanning factional or demographic divides and distinctions in motive. Across various authors, we find examples of emotional contagion in large groups. These explorations of individual minds within groups articulate how powerful group psychology can be.

Section C: Groups' Decision-Making Abilities

This section begins discussing the specific tropes that tend to surround groups. A common trope is the idea that groups are unable to make good decisions. This is attributed to several factors: large groups' stereotypical desire for pleasure is a common motif. Often, a specific powerful emotion is blamed for swaying the group. Several specific emotions recur prominently in depictions of groups, and consequently merit their own subsections: the association between groups and anger (which is not always portrayed negatively) is particularly pervasive.[71] This anger is often presented as responsible for groups' tendency to seek individual scapegoats, which itself forms a recurring trope. Fear is another recurring emotion: though not exclusive to groups, fear is very frequently associated with groups.

C1. Imagining Groups as Poor Decision-Makers

The motif of groups making poor decisions frequently occurs in political contexts: the Stranger in Plato's *Statesman* (297B) claims bluntly that groups can neither understand nor carry out government. This trope underpins Thucydides' work from an early stage: he compares the historical knowledge he has discovered with the knowledge held by the Athenian πλῆθος (1.20.1-2). His implicit point is that the Athenian population, as a collective, are unable to test or verify the knowledge they hold: they deal in beliefs rather than information, and pleasure rather than truth.[72] Furthermore, Thucydides connects this to the wider matrix of tropes which suggest that the decisions made by groups (most prominently those involved in democratic

[71] This section is limited to discussing explicit references to the emotions in question, rather than phrases and arguments designed implicitly to arouse those emotions in the audience. Cf. Sanders (2012) for analysis of the various strategies which forensic oratory uses to arouse its listeners' hostile emotions.

[72] Roberts (1994: 55); Ober (1998: 53-55, 78); Visvardi (2015: 48). The idea that groups and populations make poor decisions due to powerful emotions seems to intensify as Thucydides' *History* progresses, and speakers rely more on emotion during the war than before it (as noted by Immerwahr [1973: 31], who connects this to the idea of power becoming corrupted during the war). Equally, there are clear parallels between the emotional decision-making (and tropes such as the wiser, more practical-minded speaker being derided) found at the start of Thucydides' works, when the Spartans vote for war, and much later in the debate concerning the Sicilian expedition: Stahl (1973: 73, 77).

decision-making) are likely to be flawed as a result of their psychology. We are warned that the *dêmos* is vulnerable to clever rhetorical tricks (1.34.3) before the first assembly of any kind in Thucydides' work.[73] As well as the inability to gain accurate knowledge, groups' inability to make well-reasoned decisions is a regular trope: this is an argument advanced against democracy in Herodotus' constitutional debate (3.81.2).[74] Here, Megabyzus' comparison of the *dêmos* to a river in flood is an example of the frequent comparisons of groups to bodies of water, which will be seen frequently in tragedy. The Old Oligarch, too, forcefully articulates the idea that groups cannot make good decisions (e.g. 5-9).[75]

We frequently see the idea of the population seeking pleasure rather than truth (which harms their collective decision-making abilities): cf. Pl. *Resp*. 505B, Ps.-Xen. *Ath. pol*. 1.5. For Socrates in the *Republic*,[76] the transformation of a man from oligarchic into democratic is marked by the lapse in his ability to restrain his unnecessary pleasures and appetites (*Resp*. 559C-E). Contrary views do exist, but are often relatively subtle: Pericles' funeral oration contains the claim that more reason, speech and debate brings better action (Thuc. 2.40), which nevertheless avoids explicit mention of the assembly and group decision-making.[77] Even the pro-democracy part of Herodotus' constitutional debate contains criticism of other regime types rather than praise of democracy.[78] Later, Aristotle suggests that groups might make better

[73] Ober (1998: 73-8) argues that the debate between Corinth and Corcyra emphasises the distinction between a historian's and a population's knowledge.
[74] Yunis (1996: 40).
[75] Countervailing arguments exist: Athenagoras suggests that κρῖναι δ᾽ ἂν ἀκούσαντας ἄριστα τοὺς πολλούς (Thuc. 6.39.1), a trope repeated elsewhere by Cleon (3.37.4) and Pericles (2.40.2). In the first two cases, it is possible that this is meant to be undercut by the unscrupulous and manipulative characterisation of Athenagoras and Cleon; perhaps this constitutes flattery directed at the *dêmos*. For further analysis of this motif in Thucydides, cf. Pope (1988: 285-7).
[76] As Saxonhouse (1996: 91-2) notes, the suspicion of groups is also found in apolitical contexts within Plato's works: Socrates acknowledges his fear of the *ochlos* (*Symp*. 174A).
[77] Saxonhouse (1996: 64).
[78] Saxonhouse (1996: 50-51). Broadly, Herodotus focuses less on group decision-making psychology than Thucydides; we often find decisions that are evidently made by a group in Herodotus, but with much less overt discussion of what motivated them than Thucydides offers (e.g. Hdt. 9.28.1, 9.52). On occasion, Herodotus presents us with groups being led into a poor decision by emotive analogies (2.172) and visual images (3.157), often against their interests.

decisions than individuals due to the multiplicity of individual judgements they contain (*Pol*. 1281A-B). In this regard, he departs from the prevailing opinion of Classical Attic prose on groups. Furthermore, he confines this judgement primarily to groups' judgements concerning τὰ τῆς μουσικῆς ἔργα καὶ τὰ τῶν ποιητῶν (1281B): he explicitly feels less certain about groups' political decisions.

Thucydides sometimes portrays groups as capable of calculated, well-reasoned decisions: during the Athenians' adjudication between Corcyra and Corinth (Thuc. 1.44), they change their mind swiftly from one view to the other and are credited with complex reasoning. Frequently, though, Thucydides depicts groups making poor decisions, often attributed to the presence of a specific powerful emotion.[79] The result of the Spartan vote in 1.87, for example, is attributed by Thucydides to fear (1.87.6); Sthenelaidas has used arguments designed to stir up his audience's emotions against the Athenians (1.86), in contrast to the carefully reasoned, pragmatic case advanced by Archidamus (1.80-85). Thucydides wants us to believe that the Spartans vote having been stirred into an anti-Athenian frenzy by Sthenelaidas, especially given the greater airtime which Archidamus' case receives; it should be noted, though, that this was already the decision the Spartans had reached before these two speeches began (1.79.2).

The debate which led to the Sicilian expedition sees considerable exploration of the reasons for the *dêmos*' poor decision: in this case, an important culprit is the ἔρως which Alcibiades' speech inspires. During the debate between Nicias and Alcibiades, Nicias' argument is logical and factual,[80] whereas Alcibiades' is rhetorically powerful. The Athenian *dêmos* is swayed by

[79] It is important to note that the idea of "emotional decision-making" is an ambivalent concept, which is handled well by Visvardi (2015: 46-7, 69); I summarise her exposition of this concept briefly as follows. Extreme collective emotions can distort the basis on which decisions are made; equally, the decision made by an assembly will always be based on emotion to a certain extent, as Athenians evaluate and respond emotionally to how a certain decision will affect their lives. The question, then, is not *whether* emotions should be "allowed" in collective decision-making, but which emotions and what extent of emotions is appropriate to any given decision.
[80] Nicias' focus is primarily factual and concrete: cf. Stahl (1973: 66). By recalling elements of Nicias' speech in his subsequent account of the Sicilian reality, Thucydides draws us to see Nicias' speech retrospectively as correct and well-founded: Stahl (1973: 69-76).

Alcibiades;[81] even more telling, though, is the way they respond to Nicias' speech. Nicias tries to use subtle psychology, highlighting the scale of the expedition required in order to deter the Athenians (6.24.1). However, they misunderstand Nicias' speech by taking it at face value, meaning that his psychology is lost on them: they now assume that the expedition will be safe if they send more manpower (6.24.2) and become even more enthusiastic as a result, an emotion that proves contagious.[82] The *dêmos*' misunderstanding is caused by their emotions: this section is filled with words connoting ἔρως or emotions adjacent to it.[83] Furthermore, these intense emotions cause collective homogeneity: those who are against the expedition are intimidated into voting for it διὰ τὴν ἄγαν τῶν πλεόνων ἐπιθυμίαν (Thuc. 6.24.4).[84] Tellingly, another important emotion – fear – later succeeds in pointing out the dangers of the Sicilian expedition to the *dêmos*, where reason previously failed. A large group (ὁ … ὅμιλος ἅπας, Thuc. 6.30.2) watches the ships setting sail. Only then do they understand the dangers: μᾶλλον αὐτοὺς ἐσῄει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ὅτε ἐψηφίζοντο πλεῖν (Thuc. 6.31.1). The emotional immediacy of the fear of losing their friends allows the group to understand what logical argumentation could not tell them. Even now, though, this fear is trumped by an even more superficial and short-term emotion: they are comforted by how impressive the fleet looks.[85]

The trope of groups making poor decisions, then, spans political philosophy, historiography and oratory; furthermore, this is often blamed on specific group-wide emotions. Attic orators

[81] Pope (1988: 287-8) attempts to include the Sicilian expedition within his thesis that Thucydides was not anti-democratic; his defence of the *dêmos*' portrayal at this point is tellingly short. Immerwahr's (1973: 31) view that group decision-making deteriorates across Thucydides' work is especially compelling when discussing the Sicilian expedition.
[82] Visvardi (2015: 85).
[83] ἐπιθυμοῦν (6.24.2), ἔρως ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι (6.24.3), πόθῳ (Ibid.). Saxonhouse (1996: 80-81) argues that Alcibiades' focus on personality, rather than public policy, is what attracts and manipulates the audience's love; cf. Ober (1998: 115). Cf. Cornford (1907: 201-20) for the resonance of ἔρως, particularly its connotations of tyranny; cf. Immerwahr (1973: 27) for brief discussion of a similar motif in Pericles' funeral oration. Burns (2014: 239-44) discusses Diodotus' criticism of ἔρως in collective decision-making in the Mytilene debate. ἔρως can sometimes be an emotion that contributes to the *polis*, rather than undermining it: this is an implication of Pericles' call for citizens to be an ἐραστής of the city (Visvardi [2015: 50]).
[84] Hunter (1988: 23-4); Visvardi (2015: 47).
[85] Cf. Ober (1998: 114) who discusses this scene briefly, and notes (n114) the demonstration that visual perception could be just as misleading for a group as verbal persuasion.

adduce examples of their audiences being swayed by the emotions they felt at opponents' speeches, with the implication that they should see reason this time round (see Section D1). Thucydides depicts occasions when a group is able to follow and make a decision based on a complex, densely-reasoned argument,[86] but dwells heavily on the idea that groups deal in emotions rather than evidence-based judgements. It makes sense that groups' ability to make decisions should be heavily affected by specific emotions: after all, Lysias 2 suggests that it is emotion (rather than reason) that gives groups their unity in the first place. Furthermore, emotional extremes can make groups even more unified, as Thucydides describes with this counter-intuitive statement: πάντα τε πρὸς τὸ παραχρῆμα περιδεές, **ὅπερ φιλεῖ δῆμος ποιεῖν**, ἑτοῖμοι ἦσαν εὐτακτεῖν (8.1.4). The more intense the emotion (here, fear) felt by the group, the more disciplined – and hence unified – it becomes.

C2. Anger as Typical Group Emotion

This section demonstrates that anger is frequently associated with groups, and flaws in group decision-making are often attributed to anger.[87] Conversely, however, orators often encourage their listeners to feel righteous anger, which will drive them to punish criminals and mistrust unscrupulous orators: anger is not universally treated as negative. A consequence of this anger is the phenomenon of group scapegoating: prose sources frequently allude to groups' propensity for finding individual scapegoats.[88] It is unclear why the connection between anger and groups is so pervasive; however, the association of groups with animals found in the *Republic* may well provide a clue. Anger is an emotion associated with spontaneous violence

[86] E.g. Diodotus' argument in the Mytilene debate: cf. Yunis (1996: 95).
[87] Harris (2001: 171, 178-9) notes the contrast between reason and ὀργή in Athenian thought: cf. Antiph. 5.71-73, Eur. *Med*. 909-13, Soph. *OT* 524, 584; Thuc. 3.42 (Diodotus' speech in the Mytilene debate). Visvardi, though (2015: 65, 69-70, 77), notes the dangers of over-emphasising this contrast. Though Thucydides seems to dichotomise γνώμη and ὀργή (3.82.2), this passage actually suggests that ὀργή is a *worse* γνώμη, not that the two are distinct.
[88] Such scapegoats need not necessarily be individual: for examples of orators inciting the Athenians against group conspiracies or associations, cf. Moreno (2007: 291ff.). In modern terms, this might be interpreted as an example of outgroup derogation: cf. Hewstone *et al.* (2002).

and savagery; hence, the frequency of this trope may well indicate a fundamental belief that groups' propensity for emotions made their collective cognitions subhuman. The prevalence of group anger may also play into fears surrounding group violence.

In prose sources, anger (often, but not exclusively, denoted using ὀργή and its cognates) is often adduced as a reason for groups' poor decision-making abilities.[89] In Thucydides, Archidamus claims starkly that the ease with which people (specifically the Athenians) turn to anger prevents them from using λογισμός effectively (2.11.7).[90] Demosthenes devotes one of his *Exordia* (38.2) to the audience being so angry that it impedes their good judgement, and that anger is directed against all *rhêtores* rather than just those responsible.[91] Elsewhere, he suggests that it is wrong to encourage juries to feel hatred or anger (18.278).[92] Aeschines begins a speech by complaining about speakers who win votes through appeals to ὀργή (3.4). Demades sees anger as a specific emotion which prevents groups from thinking clearly, and leaves them open to deception by unscrupulous orators (3). Isaeus, too, comments on the danger of τοῖς μετ᾽ ὀργῆς πραχθεῖσιν, ἐν οἷς ἅπαντες πεφύκαμεν ἁμαρτάνειν (1.13).[93] Thucydides attributes anger to groups far more frequently than individuals:[94] Pericles, for example, is afraid to convene an assembly, μὴ ὀργῇ τι μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμῃ ξυνελθόντας ἐξαμαρτεῖν (Thuc. 2.22.1). Here, anger is the specific example of the wider trope that the *dêmos*' emotions might affect their decision-making. Later, the Athenians' subjects are prepared to revolt, even παρὰ δύναμιν, because they judged the situation διὰ τὸ ὀργῶντες κρίνειν τὰ πράγματα (Thuc. 8.2.2): this suggests that anger can trump reason. Most famously, the Athenians make the decision to

[89] For a very brief treatment, cf. Knox (1957: 76-7). In the 5th Century BC, ὀργή increasingly denoted anger rather than a more generalised passion; cf. Harris (2001: 52-3).
[90] Visvardi (2015: 56).
[91] Yunis (1996: 251-2).
[92] Harris (2001: 186).
[93] Harris (2001: 186n119).
[94] E.g. Thuc. 3.84.1, 4.130.4, 5.46.5, 5.52.1, 6.40.1. Military groups may also be vulnerable to anger (4.128.4). Harris (2001: 180) cites Pericles' anger (2.65.8) as a notable exception.

slaughter the Mytileneans ὑπὸ ὀργῆς,[95] an emotion which initially trumps Salaethus' more pragmatic argument for leniency (3.36.1-2). This prompts Diodotus' gnomic comment: νομίζω δὲ δύο τὰ ἐναντιώτατα εὐβουλίᾳ εἶναι, τάχος τε καὶ ὀργήν (3.42.1). In Herodotus, we find the Spartans making decisions driven by anger (ὀργῇ χρεώμενοι, 6.85.2); moreover, Evenius' blinding (9.93) is a poor decision resulting from the Apollonians' anger at the sacred flocks being slain.[96]

In Thucydides, then, anger can affect the *dêmos*' decisions heavily; furthermore, it can make them changeable. A particularly fascinating instance takes place when the *dêmos* turns against Pericles (Thuc. 2.65.3-4):

> οὐ μέντοι πρότερόν γε οἱ ξύμπαντες ἐπαύσαντο **ἐν ὀργῇ** ἔχοντες αὐτὸν πρὶν ἐζημίωσαν χρήμασιν. ὕστερον δ' αὖθις οὐ πολλῷ, **ὅπερ φιλεῖ ὅμιλος ποιεῖν**, στρατηγὸν εἵλοντο καὶ πάντα τὰ πράγματα ἐπέτρεψαν, ὧν μὲν περὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἕκαστος ἤλγει ἀμβλύτεροι ἤδη ὄντες, ὧν δὲ ἡ ξύμπασα πόλις προσεδεῖτο πλείστου ἄξιον νομίζοντες εἶναι.

Throughout Pericles' speech, vocabulary connoting anger has been prevalent; here, their anger is assuaged by fining him. However, their changeable nature (explicitly attributed to ὅπερ φιλεῖ ὅμιλος ποιεῖν) results in Pericles' recall.[97] This is explicitly attributed to the public interest. Given how frequently the *dêmos* is satirised as being composed of self-interested individuals, the idea that the ὅμιλος can naturally coalesce around the public interest, which drives a change in policy, is important. Furthermore, Thucydides seems to associate emotional changeability with anger in the following passage (Thuc. 1.140.1):

[95] Harris (2001: 179).
[96] Harris (2001: 171-5) argues that Herodotus makes anger the vice of (individual) Persian tyrants, and never portrays a Greek leader making decisions in anger. He is right that non-Greek individuals (primarily Xerxes) are described as angry far more often than Greek individuals. However, Harris omits to mention that Herodotus often portrays groups feeling anger, including groups of Greeks (e.g. Hdt. 7.207, 7.229, 8.31, 8.109, 9.33).
[97] Cf. Roberts (1994: 55).

> … καίπερ εἰδὼς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὐ τῇ αὐτῇ ὀργῇ ἀναπειθομένους τε πολεμεῖν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ πράσσοντας, πρὸς δὲ τὰς ξυμφορὰς καὶ τὰς γνώμας τρεπομένους.

It is possible that ὀργή, in this case, means 'passion' rather than 'anger'; nonetheless, the association between this powerful emotional word and the population being changeable is significant. It is their passions that change, rather than their thoughts.

However, anger is not just a way for anti-democratic writers to stereotype the *dêmos*: sometimes, group anger is encouraged and considered justified.[98] Lysias depicts the Athenians experiencing righteous anger with the introspective Peloponnesian defenders (2.45). Cleon encourages his listeners to vote in the heat of their anger (Thuc. 3.38.1, 3.40.7) and suggests that it reflects unerring judgement.[99] Demosthenes encourages the jury to feel hatred and anger for Meidias (21.186); subsequently, they are told that Meidias deserves μῖσος καὶ φθόνος καὶ ὀργή (21.196).[100] Elsewhere, he criticises not the fact that the *dêmos* experiences anger, but the fact that it is frequently directed at the wrong targets (Dem. 6.34). Lysias encourages his listeners to see a dichotomy between 'pitying the guilty [or] being angry with them' (15.9). Aeschines, too, records and implicitly sanctions instances of large-scale collective anger (2.16, 3.85, 3.142, 3.157), and encourages his audience to feel anger towards political opponents (1.166, 3.66, 3.144), though he seems to prefer the verb ἀγανακτέω over ὀργίζομαι. It is possible that 'to become angry with such people' (ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις ὀργίζεσθαι, Lys. 28.2) was

[98] Saunders (1991: 99-100); Harris (2001: 185). More broadly, Allen (2003) offers an account of how and why anger was valorised as a civic emotion in Classical Athens. For a more complete list of group anger being encouraged and standing for collective punishment, cf. Allen (2003: 76n1); for other examples additional to those cited below, cf. Harris (2001: 188). Rubinstein (2004) has studied trends in orators encouraging juries to feel anger on their behalf, and notes that this is vastly more prevalent in public than in private trials: where it occurs in a private trial, this tends to be where a very specific kind of anti-social behaviour which threatened the entire community was alleged.

[99] Yunis (1996: 92); Visvardi (2015: 76). Ober (1998: 111) notes Alcibiades' boast that he won the Peloponnesians' trust using ὀργή (6.17.1) and reads this as a claim that ὀργή could be a basis for sound policy, reminding us of Cleon's previous appeals to righteous anger. However, this might equally be Alcibiades' attempt to mock the gullible Peloponnesians for his Athenian audience.

[100] As emphasised by Sanders (2012: 361). Cf. Dem. 4.43: θαυμάζω δ᾽ ἔγωγε, εἰ μηδεὶς ὑμῶν μήτ᾽ ἐνθυμεῖται μήτ᾽ ὀργίζεται.

often used as a formula synonymous with 'to vote against someone' or 'to find someone guilty' in Attic speeches.[101]

In Plato's *Phaedrus*,[102] Socrates suggests that generating the audience's anger is a crucial weapon in the unscrupulous orator's arsenal (*Phdr*. 267C-D).[103] Motifs suggesting group-wide anger are also present in Plato: the attitude of οἱ πολλοί towards philosophers is dichotomised as either χαλεπανοῦσι or οὐ χαλεπανοῦσιν (*Resp*. 500D-E).[104] This anger is often presented through imagery comparing groups to animals: Socrates describes the philosopher becoming involved with politics as ὥσπερ εἰς θηρία ἄνθρωπος ἐμπεσών (*Resp*. 496D). In the *Republic*, people who know only base desires rather than wisdom and virtue are described as βόσκονται χορταζόμενοι καὶ ὀχεύοντες (*Resp*. 586A), a bovine image which itself implies that such people are to be found in large groups (as cattle are invariably found in herds). On several occasions, the orator's ability to charm various types of group is compared to the sorcerer or animal trainer's ability to charm different species (*Euthyd*. 290A, *Resp*. 493A-C).[105] In conjunction with being a θρέμματος μεγάλου καὶ ἰσχυροῦ, the *dêmos* is defined as being either χαλεπώτατον, ἢ πραότατον (*Resp*. 493A-B): it is characterised either through anger or the absence thereof. In Plato, then, motifs of group anger are closely entwined with close comparisons between political groups and animals. This may explain why anger is so frequently associated with groups: it characterises them as less human and more animal, and thus (it is implied) less able to use the reasoning abilities conferred by their humanity. Plato suggests that democracy undoes the laws' civilising impact on humans: in *Laws* 874E-875A,

[101] Allen (2003: 76-7). The following examples are particularly pressing: Dem. 25.1; Aeschin. 3.197-8; Lys. 19.2 ἄνευ ὀργῆς … ἀκοῦσαι, where there is no obvious reason for the jurors to feel angry with the speaker; Lys. 29.6 ἑώρων τὴν ὑμετέραν ὀργὴν τιμωρεῖσθαι βουλομένων, where τιμωρεῖσθαι seems to suggest legal recompense; Lys. 15.9, 29.11, 30.23, 25.1; Dem. 16.19.
[102] As this section is specifically on group anger, it does not engage with the substantial literature on individuals' emotions in Plato. For a recent treatment, cf. Candiotto/Renaut (2020), especially the chapter by Marta Jimenez.
[103] Harris (2001: 188).
[104] Cf. *Resp*. 501C for a similar dichotomy between ἐχαλέπαινον and πραῦνονται. It is telling that Plato does not indicate that the people understand the arguments, just that they seem to get used to the new system and acquiesce.
[105] Karpyuk (2000: 90); Klosko (2013: 9).

it is suggested that only the rule of law enables humans to rise above the level of wild beasts.[106] Interestingly, the connection between large groups (especially political) and animals is later echoed by Aristotle. In the context of wondering whether groups were truly better-suited to decision-making than individuals, he asks: καίτοι τί διαφέρουσιν ἔνιοι τῶν θηρίων ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν (*Pol*. 1281B).

C3. Scapegoating as Group Characteristic

Many sources associate group anger with groups' habit of finding individual scapegoats to blame when things go wrong. Demosthenes suggests that the *dêmos* prefers to hear individuals being abused rather than praised, a preference which he extends to all humankind (18.3). As mentioned previously, Demosthenes' *Exordia* closely associate the *dêmos*' hypothetical anger with indiscriminate seeking of scapegoats: τὸ δὲ μὴ τοῖς αἰτίοις ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν ἐφεξῆς ὀργίζεσθαι (*Ex*. 38.2). The deeply anti-democratic Old Oligarch sets out the *dêmos*' propensity for scapegoating (2.17). In democracy, stereotypically, this often takes effect against people who have done nothing wrong.

Scapegoating is a recurrent trope in historiographical depictions of groups, both political and apolitical. Herodotus describes a rebellion against the Egyptian king Apries after the Egyptians blame him for a large-scale military defeat, believing that he sent the army deliberately to its death: their anger (δεινὰ ποιεύμενοι) leads to scapegoating (Hdt. 2.161; cf. Hdt. 4.159).[107] Groups often suspect speakers of having personal agendas in the policies they suggest,[108] or blame them for problems which they did not cause: Thucydides is often explicit in articulating

[106] Klosko (2013: 11).
[107] For other examples in Herodotus of groups unfairly blaming individuals for their suffering, cf. Hdt. 6.12, 6.136. The explicit scapegoating found in Hdt. 7.197 is divinely ordained, rather than a consequence of group psychology.
[108] Thuc. 1.68.2, 3.43.1.

what he sees as the *dêmos*' habit of scapegoating.[109] This is especially prominent after the Sicilian expedition. The Athenian *dêmos* is angry with the specific orators who had supported the Sicilian expedition and the soothsayers who predicted success;[110] Thucydides' cutting aside ὥσπερ οὐκ αὐτοὶ ψηφισάμενοι (8.1.1) highlights the *dêmos*' hypocrisy. Indeed, Nicias even tells his army in Sicily to fear the Athenian *dêmos*' propensity to find scapegoats, which would lead to the soldiers accusing their generals upon their return to Athens.[111] Being among τοῖς τὸν δῆμον καταλύουσιν could operate as a pretext for acting on a private grudge (Thuc. 3.81.4). Having a reputation for intelligence also turns the *dêmos* against individuals (Thuc. 8.68.1). When lined up as a likely scapegoat by the *dêmos*, assuring them of your guilt is insufficient: the only escape is to accuse other individuals in your place, as Cleon demonstrates by pointing the finger at hapless messengers (Thuc. 4.27.3). Similar traits are attributed to groups in less political contexts: for example, the army commanded by Cleon (Thuc. 5.7.2) attributes their misfortunes to their commander.[112] When the Athenians escape from Syracuse, the Syracusans immediately accuse Gylippus, unfairly, of allowing the Athenians to escape on purpose; furthermore, the order in which Thucydides describes events implies that the Syracusans prioritised finding someone to blame over pursuing the fugitive Athenians (Thuc. 7.81.1).

Demosthenes, too, describes the *dêmos*' desire to blame its misfortunes on scapegoats (1.16):

[109] E.g. Thuc. 2.59.2: καὶ τὸν μὲν Περικλέα ἐν αἰτίᾳ εἶχον **ὡς πείσαντα** σφᾶς πολεμεῖν. This is associated with *dêmos*-wide anger (2.59.3) and is said to be exactly what Pericles expected to happen (2.59.3). cf. Thuc. 2.64.1, 2.70.4, 3.43.5, 5.46.5.

[110] Thuc. 8.1.1., with emphasis on anger: χαλεποὶ μὲν ἦσαν … ὠργίζοντο δέ ….

[111] Thuc. 7.48.4; Nicias also points to the likelihood of the *dêmos* being swayed by τις εὖ λέγων διαβάλλοι (7.48.3), which Saxonhouse (1996: 84, 86) identifies as exemplifying Nicias' lack of faith in democratic decision-making. It is telling that Nicias himself tries to manipulate the army. He has his own, logical reasons for wanting the army to remain in Sicily (7.48.1-2); however, in his speech, he decides instead to play on the soldiers' fear of how the Athenians will receive them at home, then gives them only a simplified version of his reasoning.

[112] In Thuc. 5.60.2-5 and 5.63.1-2, scapegoating by the army and the Spartan population coincide. Cf. Thuc. 5.60.5-6, 6.103.4.

> ἐγὼ δ’ οὐκ ἀγνοῶ μέν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦθ’ ὅτι πολλάκις ὑμεῖς **οὐ τοὺς αἰτίους, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ὑστάτους** περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων εἰπόντας **ἐν ὀργῇ ποιεῖσθε**, ἄν τι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην ἐκβῇ.

Demosthenes presents the Athenian *dêmos* as indiscriminate in its attempts to find a scapegoat when events do not turn out as planned. Not only do the Athenians often find the wrong scapegoats, it is heavily implied that this is a result of their propensity for a knee-jerk emotional reaction: their collective memory is short, and they react in anger against the most recent speakers rather than those who are to blame.[113] Elsewhere, Demosthenes issues another important critique of the *dêmos*’ propensity for scapegoating (Dem. 3.17):

> ἀλλὰ πρὸς θεῶν πάντ᾽ ἐάσαντες καὶ μόνον οὐχὶ συγκατασκευάσαντες αὐτῷ, τότε τοὺς αἰτίους οἵτινες τούτων ζητήσομεν; οὐ γὰρ αὐτοί γ᾽ αἴτιοι φήσομεν εἶναι, σαφῶς οἶδα τοῦτ᾽ ἐγώ. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πολέμου κινδύνοις τῶν φυγόντων οὐδεὶς ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ καὶ τῶν πλησίον καὶ πάντων μᾶλλον …

After a clear indictment of the *dêmos*’ refusal to blame itself (which is continued in 3.18; cf. 3.32), Demosthenes compares the *dêmos* to an army panicking in flight. This is important for several reasons. Firstly, it reinforces what the evidence found in Thucydides seems to suggest: though scapegoating was commonly associated with groups in politics, it also extends to city-wide populations or armies. Moreover, it implies that the army is a psychologically cohesive unit, even in panicked flight without the organised framework of a general’s commands: it is still imagined as having sufficiently unified cognition and agency to blame a specific individual collectively.

An unscrupulous orator can use group scapegoating to his advantage by directing this impulse towards a political opponent. When Peisander has only with difficulty persuaded the people

[113] For a strikingly similar example, cf. Dem. 6.34.

that an oligarchy is required for their survival, he seemingly wins the people's affection by offering them a scapegoat: a false accusation is sufficient for the *dêmos* to dismiss Phrynichus along with Scironides (Thuc. 8.54.3). Furthermore, the use of scapegoating characterises the speech of Athenagoras, who has been viewed as a paradigm of the unscrupulous orator.[114] Having been depicted as πιθανώτατος τοῖς πολλοῖς (6.35.2), he launches an *ad hominem* attack against Hermocrates,[115] and attributes the rumours of invasion to individual scapegoats: ἀνδρῶν οἵπερ αἰεὶ τάδε κινοῦσι ξύγκεινται (6.36.2). He goes on to blame all the problems which the city faces upon these people's attempts to sow fear and dissent (6.38.2-4). This plays into the common motif of group fear, which will be dealt with subsequently. Athenagoras' subsequent general praise of democracy emphasises the fact he is manipulating the crowd's emotions in paradigmatically demagogic fashion.[116]

C4. Fear as Typical Group Emotion

Among other emotions which groups regularly feel in Attic prose, fear is the most common. Thucydides' depiction of the psychology of fear in group contexts, and the extent to which it resembles the psychology expounded by Gorgias, have already been documented effectively by Virginia Hunter.[117] This chapter will not seek to emulate the depth of Hunter's dissection of several key instances of group-wide panic; instead, it will demonstrate the range of occasions on which fear is associated with groups, beyond simply occasions on which we might naturally expect fear to occur (e.g. Thuc. 6.49.2). Much like anger, fear is interpreted as having a positive

[114] Yunis (1991: 194).
[115] Saxonhouse (1996: 82).
[116] Yunis (1991: 193) suggests that the generals' intervention demonstrates that Athenagoras brought the Syracusan assembly to the brink of mob violence by appealing to their emotions. Saxonhouse (1996: 83) interprets the intervention, and its reminder of the importance of *sôphrosunê* (6.41.1) as underlining the *ad hominem* nature of Athenagoras' speech. It might also be deliberate sleight of hand on Thucydides' part, in order to leave us with the lasting impression that the assembly was swayed by Athenagoras' emotional manipulation: if he is to lose the debate, he should be shown to do so thanks to the generals' intervention rather than through failure to persuade his listeners.
[117] Hunter (1986: 415-21).

side; though fear may lead to civic disorder via collective panic, fear also ensures the respect for the laws which underpins a united and disciplined *dêmos*.

Collective fear can strike various types of group. City-wide populations are vulnerable to spontaneous panic (Thuc. 2.94.1); indeed, fear can seemingly spread spontaneously between cities (Thuc. 3.33.2). Armies are similarly vulnerable to attacks of spontaneous fear, which can seize an entire group simultaneously (Hdt. 7.43.2); Thucydides explicitly states that large armies often tend to be stricken by unaccountable panic (Thuc. 4.125.1), thus closely associating groups with spontaneous fear.[118] Many episodes during the Sicilian expedition are characterised by outbreaks of collective fear which lead to disorder (e.g. Thuc. 7.44.7-8).[119] Furthermore, among a large group, fear can be contagious: on occasion, the Athenians' disordered terror causes fear to spread and escalate (Thuc. 5.10.6). Spreading fear across the πλῆθος is also imagined as a way for unscrupulous individuals to take control of it (6.38.2). One anecdote depicts a thunderstorm frightening a group so much that they spontaneously begin killing each other (Hdt. 5.85.2). Fear has a particularly important effect on the behaviour of large groups: it is strongly associated with civic disorder. Across Thuc. 5.50.4, fear spontaneously fills the Spartan assembly, leading to danger of civil disorder. Group-wide fear is closely associated with ταραχή at various points across Thucydides;[120] furthermore, it is also associated with *thorubos* (see Section E1).[121]

Fear can sway voting groups: the Spartan vote that triggers the Peloponnesian War is explicitly attributed to fear of the Athenians, rather than the persuasive power of the allies' arguments (Thuc. 1.88; 1.50.4);[122] at Thuc. 3.3.1-2, more positively, an abrupt onset of fear is the only

[118] Collective fear inspired by misadventure on the battlefield is unsurprisingly more common for armies, e.g. Hdt. 8.38, 9.70.4. On other occasions, the fear is something that each individual experiences personally (e.g. Hdt. 8.86).
[119] Visvardi (2015: 86-7).
[120] Cf. Hunter (1986: 416-17): Thuc. 7.44.1-7; Thuc. 2.84.3, both of which describe armies.
[121] E.g. Thuc. 3.77.1, Thuc. 7.44.4.
[122] Immerwahr (1973: 24).

thing that can push the Athenians from simply hoping that the news isn't true to acting precipitously on it. In a speech which is otherwise relatively dry and factual,[123] Nicias appeals to his listeners' fear of anti-democratic conspiracies (Thuc. 6.11.7), which likely foreshadows the Athenians' collective panic and paranoia over the destruction of the Herms (Thuc. 6.27.2-3).[124] In Thuc. 8.92.11, a large crowd shouts in support of the Five Thousand, even though their true desire is for the *dêmos* to take power, because they fear the adverse political consequences of offending some of the Five Thousand; previously, fear prevents the *dêmos* from speaking out against the conspirators, fuelled by mutual suspicion and uncertainty (Thuc. 8.66). Even when the Acanthians take a secret vote (as opposed to an open vote through acclamation), Thucydides attributes their reasoning (perhaps unfairly) both to the seductive nature of Brasidas' argument and to their fears about the harvest (Thuc. 4.88.1). Conversely, on two memorable occasions, a frightened army is calmed and given courage by a rational explanation of their path to success, thanks to Phormio (Thuc. 2.88) and Brasidas (4.125); here, the anomalous use of a rational case to win over an emotional group is rooted in a deep understanding of the group's dynamic emotions by the speakers.[125]

Like anger, fear is not universally treated as inimical to group decision-making. Pericles states that διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν (Thuc. 2.37.3): collective fear plays an important role in uniting the *dêmos*.[126] The thumbnail sketch of what makes Pericles a good leader (Thuc. 2.65.8-9), which will be analysed in more detail subsequently, highlights his ability to instil and remove fear depending on how appropriate it was.[127] True civic disorder takes place not

[123] Stahl (1973: 61); Ober (1998: 108); for a fuller exposition, cf. Tompkins (1972).
[124] Ober (1998: 109).
[125] Hunter (1988: 25).
[126] Visvardi (2015: 49-51).
[127] Visvardi (2015: 60).

simply when fear sets in, but when fear of death replaces the fear of law and the gods, as occurs in the aftermath of the Athenian plague.[128]

C5. Stoning as Group Violence?

Stoning is quintessentially a punishment carried out by groups: it exists partly to ensure that the community, rather than any individual, bears responsibility for the victim's death. At times, it results from collective anger and scapegoating,[129] such as the Argives blaming Thrasyllus (Thuc. 5.60.5-6). Rosivach's study charts instances of collective public stoning across Greek literature,[130] including prose and tragedy, although he omits several examples in comedy (e.g. *Ach*. 234ff., *Vesp*. 221-9). Although I disagree with Rosivach on several specific points, the thoroughness of his study makes it unnecessary to reiterate the source material concerning fifth-century stoning in this chapter. Rosivach focuses especially on the stoning of Lycides, arguing that this was an act of uncontrolled mob violence before it was subsequently reinterpreted as a controlled and legal action conducted by the *dêmos*.[131] Crucially, he argues that stoning was not a normal legal penalty. Across all genres, actual incidences of stoning are extremely rare, although allusions to the *possibility* of stoning are rather more frequent. In prose texts, stoning is a relatively rare and marginal trope used to depict community-wide collective violence, often as a form of retribution. However, as with the other tropes handled in this chapter, the fact that stoning may be an element of prose texts' literary imagination does not prevent it from being a relevant trope in the fifth-century depiction of groups, with a number of reverberations in drama.

[128] Visvardi (2015: 55).
[129] Hunter (1988: 24).
[130] Rosivach (1987). N.b. I do not accept the dichotomy which Rosivach (1987: 242) constructs between stoning as a cruel punishment meted out by tyrants, or a legitimate punishment inflicted on traitors by the community (and which, he concedes, often does not apply in tragedy).
[131] Rosivach (1987: 238-9).

C6. Groups' Decision-Making Abilities: Conclusions

This section has demonstrated that orators, historiographers and political theorists frequently revisit the idea that groups are ill-suited to decision-making, for broadly similar reasons. Unsurprisingly, this often occurs in political contexts: Plato depicts the *dêmos* as pursuing pleasure rather than reason, and orators use this *topos* to cast doubt on previous decisions. Similarly, when the Athenians have made a decision that is proven disastrous with hindsight (such as the Sicilian expedition), Thucydides depicts this as the triumph of the ἔρως inspired by Alcibiades over Nicias' logical argument. Anger occupies an important space as a recurring emotion that affects group decision-making. For Socrates in the *Republic*, it underpins the famous comparison of the *dêmos* to wild beasts, epitomising the inability to make decisions based on reason. In Thucydides, groups political and apolitical alike are depicted as angry far more frequently than individuals; in Herodotus, too, it is commonly a group emotion. Orators often criticise anger as an emotion that clouds the *dêmos*' ability to think; however, they also encourage anger as a means of ensuring that wrongdoers will be righteously punished. The body of evidence suggests that anger was understood as a natural part of a jury trial, and that the use of "to be angry with" as a formula synonymous with "to vote against" was relatively common. Anger, then, was not just a stereotype used to vilify the *dêmos*; it was a trope in the portrayal of groups across political and apolitical contexts, positive or negative in tone depending on the circumstances. Scapegoating is a more negative stereotype associated with group anger. This trope has its roots in anti-democratic discourse, and was famously raised by the Old Oligarch, but the historiographers suggest that apolitical groups such as armies were equally liable to act in this fashion. It is possible that groups' tendency to find scapegoats underpins depictions of stoning, an unusual form of collective violence. Finally, attacks of spontaneous fear, though not an emotion exclusive to groups, were often closely associated with groups, primarily in historiographical texts.

Section D: How Groups are Controlled

Collective political decisions are often depicted as being vulnerable to manipulative orators, who know how to take advantage of the extreme emotions discussed in Section C. This widespread trope demonstrates several intriguing variations: on occasion, the manipulative skill of a well-trained orator is not depicted in a negative light, and some texts suggest that groups are responsible for transforming speakers into unscrupulous manipulators. Orators' ability to manipulate and mislead groups is often connected to specific argumentative strategies, namely flattery and bribery.

D1. Controlling Groups: Unscrupulous Orators

The idea that groups are vulnerable to extreme emotions, which influence their decisions, underpins a different trope: the idea that groups are vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous orators.[132] In Herodotus and in several of the speeches which Thucydides depicts, this is presented as a universal truth. The flip side of this trope is the idea that arguments based on reason fail to persuade groups; Thucydides underlines this with a series of pairings between orators (Diodotus and Cleon, Nicias and Alcibiades, Hermocrates and Athenagoras) who respectively seem to represent a logically reasoned case and a case aimed to manipulate the audience emotionally. Frequently, the Attic orators try to stereotype their opponents as unscrupulous orators. Furthermore, some political thinkers suggest that groups incentivise orators to become unscrupulous demagogues, rather than orators incentivising groups to turn from reason to emotion.

[132] Dover (1974: 23-6).

Prose literature regularly raises the trope of the unscrupulous orator who is skilled at manipulating groups: Plato provides many examples of this motif.[133] In the *Apology*, Socrates explicitly refuses to address his audience with the tears and lamentations often heard from others (38D-E). In Herodotus' constitutional debate, Darius demonstrates how a champion of the *dêmos* may transform into a monarch through the political prestige and admiration he accumulates (3.82.4). As Yunis observes, Darius' speech omits the rhetoric and manipulative tactics which would be needed to create this effect:[134] by failing to mention how the popular leader would need to manipulate the *dêmos*, Darius' account implicitly emphasises the *dêmos*' vulnerability to manipulation. Later, as mentioned in Section B2, Herodotus confirms this by explicitly describing groups as more vulnerable to persuasion (especially by an unscrupulous orator) than individuals (5.97).[135] This is closely connected to the strand of thought which depicts groups as overly dependent on emotions in their decision-making: a manipulative orator is one who is skilled in manipulating these emotions, channelling (for example) a group's anger in order to win their votes.

Thucydides often depicts an unscrupulous orator's manipulation as responsible for the *dêmos*' poor decision. Appealing to the *dêmos*' emotions is presented as a clear way to succeed: in the Mytilene debate, we are surely meant to read a disturbing causative link into the fact that Cleon is ἐς τὰ ἄλλα βιαιότατος τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος (3.36.6), and his decision to deliver a speech consisting solely of an appeal to the Athenians' anger:[136] Cleon is a skilful orator *because* he knows how to play to his audience's emotions. Another

[133] This account offers insufficient space to discuss political readings of Plato's *Symposium*, in which Alcibiades entrances the dinner guests (who evoke a democratic assembly) and overturns their carefully-mandated resolutions: cf. Saxonhouse (1996: 94-8).
[134] Yunis (1996: 46).
[135] Saxonhouse (1996: 55). Saxonhouse also notes the example of Peisistratus tricking the Athenians using a woman disguised as Athena (Hdt. 1.60); Herodotus explicitly notes his surprise at how gullible the notoriously intelligent Athenians proved (1.60.3). This seems to foreshadow the trope of groups being vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous orators.
[136] Ober (1998: 103).

case in point is Alcibiades' portrayal in his speech to the Spartans: ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης παρώξυνέ … καὶ ἐξώρμησε λέγων τοιάδε (6.88.10). The speech plays on their fears: it offers a terrifying vision of what will occur as a result of the Sicilian expedition, with very little detail or logic to justify each step. He generalises in wildly hyperbolic fashion: καὶ εἰ αὕτη ἡ πόλις ληφθήσεται, ἔχεται καὶ ἡ πᾶσα Σικελία, καὶ εὐθὺς καὶ Ἰταλία (Thuc. 6.91.3). Manipulative orators often exploit groups' tendency to find scapegoats: Alcibiades complains of other men leading the ὄχλος astray (6.89.5-6), which may well draw attention to the fact that he is deploying the very tactics he criticises. Despite Alcibiades' speech being impressionistic with factual detail, the Spartans are described as νομίσαντες παρὰ τοῦ σαφέστατα εἰδότος ἀκηκοέναι (6.93.1). Fascinatingly on a psychological level, not only are they vulnerable to a speech which plays on their fears rather than encouraging them to reason, but the speech persuades them *that* the speaker displayed knowledge and rationality.

Chaereas' ability to manipulate the Samians' emotions provides a further example. He exaggerates the situation at Athens (πάντα δεινώσας) enough to stir the Samians into a frenzy (8.74-5). Consequently, his audience spontaneously convenes an assembly, where they hunt for scapegoats, deposing their previous generals and trierarchs (8.76.2). When the Four Hundred's envoys arrive, the Samians refuse to listen to them: they initially demand to have them killed, and no matter how much the envoys try to explain (using logical, reasoned arguments, e.g. 8.86.3) the Samians οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἐσήκουον, ἀλλ' ἐχαλέπαινον (8.86.4). As well as being enduringly angry, the population has been emotionally influenced by Chaereas, and consequently proves impervious to rationality. Once a group is in a frenzied state, attempted persuasion will only cause the group's emotions to become more extreme rather than altering them. This trope has been seen before: Thucydides explicitly attributes it to group psychology (4.28.3), and Nicias' second wave of arguments against the Sicilian expedition

only heightens the excitement which Alcibiades had inspired (6.24).[137] A similar example can be found in Demosthenes: after hearing a particularly spellbinding speech from Aeschines, the audience refuses to hear a word of rebuttal from Demosthenes or from anyone else (Dem. 19.35).

The trope of vulnerability to unscrupulous orators also exists in the Attic orators' works, frequently as a way to discredit opponents.[138] Demosthenes often deploys the motif of the untrustworthy professional orator, in order to differentiate himself from this archetype (e.g. Dem. 3.3, 3.22).[139] His words οὐχὶ τῶν ἐνοχλούντων ὑμᾶς οὐδὲ τῶν πολιτευομένων καὶ πιστευομένων παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ὤν (Dem. 23.4) emphasise this.[140] He goes on to suggest, with emphatic paradox, that less skilled speakers are better (it is implied, more trustworthy) men than expert speakers: a trope which commonly recurs.[141] Noteworthy here is the term δεινός, which frequently denotes unscrupulous orators in Attic drama (and elsewhere in prose, e.g. Dem. 22.31, Aeschin. 2.114). For Demosthenes, the *dêmos*' trust in unscrupulous orators forms a fundamental part of their nature: it is almost axiomatic that τοὺς ἐπὶ μισθῷ λέγειν … εἰωθότας are utterly untrustworthy (23.146), and yet the *dêmos* persists in trusting them (23.147).

Demosthenes frequently deplores groups being turned against a 'good' orator by an unscrupulous orator who turns the audience against the 'good' orator: τῆς ἐπὶ ταῖς λοιδορίαις ἡδονῆς καὶ χάριτος τὸ τῆς πόλεως συμφέρον ἀνταλλαττόμενοι (Dem. 18.138). In a different speech, we are told that Aeschines avoids talking about τῶν ἐν τῇ βουλῇ ῥηθέντων, εἰ ἄρα ἠμφεσβήτει μὴ ἀληθῆ λέγειν ἐμέ (Dem. 19.19), which encapsulates logic and "proper" debate,

[137] Visvardi (2015: 85).
[138] E.g. Aeschin. 1.117, 1.170, 1.174-5, 2.156, 3.35, 3.127.
[139] Cf. Yunis (1996: 262-6).
[140] The verb ἐνοχλέω (which, interestingly, is derived from ὄχλος) is often used of orators annoying their listeners: cf. e.g. Lys. 24.21, Isoc. 4.7.
[141] Dem. 23.5; cf. Aeschin. 1.180-81, Thuc. 3.37.3-4.

in favour of a flamboyant, eye-catching speech: τοιούτους λόγους καὶ τηλικαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτ᾽ ἔχοντας ἀγαθά (Ibid.). The result, supposedly, is that the *dêmos* is completely persuaded.[142] Later, we see Demosthenes' logical argumentation undermined by a witty one-line jibe (Dem. 19.46), uttered ὑβριστικῶς, by Philocrates: the *dêmos*' response is to laugh (and, it is implied by the blunt finality of καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐγελᾶτε, to be won over by Philocrates). As this motif accumulates, it becomes a comment on the jurors' tastes: the audience is vulnerable to Aeschines' humorous and witty performance, which turns them against the carefully reasoned argument which Demosthenes portrays himself as offering.

As group anger is not necessarily negative, so being a manipulative orator is sometimes cast in a more positive light. In certain circumstances, it was possible for a speaker to concede that they are a skilled rhetorician to gain tactical advantage (e.g. Aeschin. 2.170).[143] Thucydides uses Pericles strikingly as the paradigm of a good orator (Thuc. 2.65.8-9):

> … κατεῖχε τὸ πλῆθος ἐλευθέρως, καὶ οὐκ ἤγετο μᾶλλον ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἢ αὐτὸς ἦγε, διὰ τὸ μὴ κτώμενος ἐξ οὐ προσηκόντων τὴν δύναμιν **πρὸς ἡδονήν** τι λέγειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχων ἐπ᾽ ἀξιώσει καὶ **πρὸς ὀργήν** τι ἀντειπεῖν. ὁπότε γοῦν αἴσθοιτό τι αὐτοὺς παρὰ καιρὸν **ὕβρει θαρσοῦντας**, λέγων κατέπλησσεν **ἐπὶ τὸ φοβεῖσθαι**, καὶ **δεδιότας** αὖ ἀλόγως ἀντικαθίστη πάλιν **ἐπὶ τὸ θαρσεῖν**. ἐγίγνετό τε λόγῳ μὲν δημοκρατία, ἔργῳ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή.

Thucydides' paradigmatic good orator is defined by his ability to control the *dêmos*' emotions. Not only can Pericles avoid giving them pleasure, but he can even get away with making them angry; he can take them from arrogant boldness to fear and from fear back to boldness. As well

[142] A passage noted briefly by Yunis (1996: 262-3): Demosthenes aims to counteract his opponent's flattery and unscrupulous rhetoric by pointing out his audience's susceptibility to this flattery (and performatively distancing himself from it).
[143] Dover (1974: 26); Hesk (2000: 209-15).

as showcasing Pericles' ability to use rhetoric,[144] this passage identifies which elements of the *dêmos*' psychology Pericles' rhetoric appeals to. The *dêmos* is imagined as a construction of emotions: ἡδονή, ὀργή, φόβος, θάρσος.[145] This implies that controlling a group's emotions is what makes an orator able to persuade them, and that the extent to which Pericles understood and was able to command the *dêmos*' emotions made this [ἡ] ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή. The motif of manipulating an audience's emotions was not confined to immoral orators alone.

A strand of political thought reverses the causative link which this section has so far implied. Rather than making orators responsible for manipulating groups' emotions, it is also suggested that groups are capable of swaying orators into saying what they want to hear.[146] This is an argument presented by Plato's Socrates (e.g. *Resp*. 492A-C); it is reaffirmed subsequently that an individual becoming τὸν ὄγκον τοῦ πλήθους … ἐκπληττόμενος leads to involvement in ἀπέραντα κακά (*Resp*. 591D). Groups are emotionally volatile, and consequently poets who want to appeal to groups present them with τὸ ἀγανακτητικόν τε καὶ ποικίλον ἦθος (*Resp*. 605A) instead of τὸ … φρόνιμόν τε καὶ ἡσύχιον ἦθος (*Resp*. 604E). Similarly, in the *Gorgias*, we find the idea that groups affect what orators say, rather than the other way round (481E).[147] Demosthenes uses this idea to counter Aeschines' portrayal of him as a stereotypical unscrupulous orator (Dem. 18.276): he argues that the audience defines the ability of a speaker (καίτοι ἔγωγ᾽ ὁρῶ τῆς τῶν λεγόντων δυνάμεως τοὺς ἀκούοντας τὸ πλεῖστον κυρίους, 18.277).

D2. Flattery and Bribery as Control of Groups

Within the broader trope of groups being vulnerable to unscrupulous orators, several specific means of manipulating groups surface frequently. Groups are often portrayed as amenable to

[144] Yunis (1996: 67-9).
[145] Roberts (1994: 56) observes that the *dêmos* is depicted as emotional and malleable. Hunter (1986: 425) notes the language of emotion here (especially fear) and Pericles' ability to manipulate mass psychology; Visvardi (2015: 60) notes the emphasis on fear.
[146] A point made by Ober (1998: 78): if we understand groups as vulnerable to persuasion by means other than objective fact and reason, then it makes sense that speakers were unlikely to present facts impartially.
[147] Roberts (1994: 74).

flattery. In the *Republic*, this is an argument against democracy: flattering the population becomes synonymous with (and perhaps even supersedes) being a good statesman.[148] Demosthenes informs his audience that the *dêmos* is amenable to being appeased, in superficial fashion, by orators (3.22), which leads them to be swayed by short-term considerations and abandon the city's long-term interests.[149] The dichotomy between hearing flattering remarks and achieving concrete political goals is similar to the dichotomy in the *Republic*, especially given the recurrence of the specific terms χάρις and κολακεία.

Unscrupulous orators can also manipulate groups using money. Consequently, groups are often characterised as venal. According to Plato's Socrates, this is a principle on which the *dêmos* is based: for him, the only reason a *dêmos* might assemble is to receive a share of the metaphorical honey (*Resp*. 565A). The Old Oligarch offers a similar view: in Athens, he argues, the amount of business transacted is proportional to the amount of money given to the βουλή or δῆμος (3.3). However, a group can also be bribed in more subtle ways: Lysias reminds his listeners that a guilty defendant might be acquitted on the basis that they could be useful to the city in the future (14.43). This does not admit bribery in its most obvious sense, but nevertheless reveals a precedent for acquittal based on collective interest rather than perceived justice.

Examples are offered in depictions of practical politics as well as political thought. Thucydides often blames the lure of money in situations where the *dêmos* demonstrates a lack of critical reasoning: οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι … ἀκούσαντες … τά τε ἄλλα ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῆ καὶ περὶ τῶν χρημάτων … (Thuc. 6.8.2). Demosthenes describes how the *dêmos* is deluded (τετυφῶσθαι) by Aristocrates' provision of small sums of money, leading to Aristocrates receiving votes of thanks (23.184-6). Furthermore, the elegiacs which Demosthenes quotes from Solon provide a

[148] For other criticisms of flattering oratory in Plato's works, cf. *Resp*. 426C, *Grg*. 502D (on the latter, cf. Roberts [1994: 74]). *Gorgias* is a nuanced dialogue which resists being classified as straightforwardly antidemocratic; for an indication of some of the complexities, cf. Roberts (1994: 75).
[149] For other examples, cf. Dem. 8.34, 9.4.

paradigm of how citizens and demagogues ruin cities χρήμασι πειθόμενοι, a point which is subsequently repeated: πλουτοῦσιν δ' ἀδίκοις ἔργμασι πειθόμενοι (19.255). Aeschines records accusations of assemblies and juries being bribed (1.86). Thucydides sees other groups as similarly venal: ὁ μὲν ὄχλος, εἰ καί τι παραυτίκα ἤχθετο τοῖς πρασσομένοις, διὰ τὸ εὔπορον τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ παρὰ βασιλέως μισθοῦ ἡσύχαζεν (Thuc. 8.48.3). It is striking that this group abandons their principles (ἤχθετο τοῖς πρασσομένοις) in favour of receiving payment from the king; the more so when the policy which they were initially resisting was to abolish the democracy itself (8.48.2). The promise of money encourages this group to abandon even its own unified existence.

D3. Controlling Groups: Conclusions

All orators, good and bad, play to their audience's emotions. If this were not already clear from the interchange between Aeschines and Demosthenes (each of whom portray the other as manipulative orators), it would be clear from Thucydides' glowing portrait of Pericles: his skill and his service to Athens lay in his ability to manipulate the *dêmos*' emotions, but for good. One person's visionary leader, then, is another's unscrupulous demagogue, but this does not stop the trope – the bogeyman, perhaps – from being immensely powerful across many genres of Attic prose. Herodotus depicts being amenable to manipulation by such an orator as inherently a group phenomenon. Thucydides goes out of his way to portray Cleon, Alcibiades and Athenagoras as cunning speakers who can manipulate groups; where Cleon narrowly fails, Alcibiades and Athenagoras succeed. The longer-term psychological effects of such manipulation are frequently noteworthy. An audience under the spell of emotional manipulation may well believe that they are being persuaded by an eminently reasonable argument; once driven into a frenzy, an audience may only become more frenzied if a subsequent orator appeals to them using reason (as seen at several points in Thucydides).

The weapons in the unscrupulous orator's arsenal, alongside understanding of the audience's emotions and a willingness to exploit them, include flattery and bribery, which are regularly indicated as vulnerable points in a group's psychology. An important further interpretation of this trope is a paradoxical one: vulnerability to manipulative orators, which is a crucial characteristic associated with a *dêmos*, can destroy that *dêmos*. Plato's texts claim that a popular orator could easily transform into a tyrant; Thucydides portrays a *dêmos* being bribed out of its own existence.

Section E: **Group Communication and Noise**

This section discusses two recurring tropes concerning group communication. The first is *thorubos*: generalised collective group noise, either approving or disapproving. *Thorubos* is an important means for an assembly or jury to interact with speakers and hold them accountable by expressing their collective opinion, thus circumventing the lack of official means for the group to express its opinion (other than voting). *Thorubos* is often associated with negative tropes: a group which has been swayed by its emotions or led astray by an immoral orator is often portrayed as using *thorubos* to derail the assembly and shout down a morally upstanding speaker.

The second motif discussed in this section is collective common knowledge. This is not in itself a form of communication, but is the result of previous group-wide communication: the passage of rumour. Rumour is imagined as passing quickly, almost instantaneously, across a population. In doing so, it can damage individuals' reputations by spreading information about their wrongdoing. The swift passage of rumour can cause powerful group-wide emotions, and perhaps for this reason is depicted by Thucydides as a factor behind groups' inability to use reason. In the orators, the common knowledge that results from the passage of rumour is treated in double-edged fashion, presumably depending on the evidence of the case in question. Some

orators are keen to remind us that common knowledge drawn from rumour is untrustworthy and may cloud correct judgement; others depict it as an inherent source of authoritative truth which holds individuals to account. There is a distinction between deliberate and spontaneous rumour, with the latter considered inherently more trustworthy.

Though *thorubos* and collective knowledge drawn from rumour are separate motifs, some interesting overlap between them can be found. On occasions where the argument advanced by an orator reflects collective common knowledge, the audience often responds to this using *thorubos*: here, the *thorubos* reflects the recognition that what the orator is saying chimes with the group's collective knowledge. This coincidence may well remind us of the parallel power which both *thorubos* and group-wide common knowledge hold: they are both ways for the *dêmos* to hold an individual to account for their transgressions. In addition, *thorubos* was the means for a group to communicate its common knowledge (by voicing collective agreement or disagreement with an orator's words).

E1. *Thorubos*

Thorubos, often translated as either "noise" or "uproar", is a group-related motif.[150] Collective noise is a natural part of a group experiencing emotion collectively: Thucydides describes the Corcyraeans erupting spontaneously πολλῷ θορύβῳ καὶ πεφοβημένοι (3.77.1). *Thorubos* is not exclusive to political situations: it denotes, for example, the disordered uproar of the Scythian army chasing a rabbit (Hdt. 4.134). It also has a close association with collective violence: the Persians' spontaneous massacre of the Magi, for example (Hdt. 3.79-80). Andocides associates the growing *thorubos* with the imminent danger that he would be put to death (And. 2.15).

[150] LSJ, s.v. θόρυβος. Examples exist of *thorubos* referring to an individual (typically confusion within someone's mind); however, the vast majority of occurrences are in a group context, and LSJ gives the primary definition as "noise, esp. the confused noise of a crowded assembly, uproar, clamour". For *thorubos* referring to distress among a small group, cf. Thuc. 5.65.6.

Importantly, as Thomas reminds us,[151] other vocabulary can be used to acknowledge an audience's approbation (τοῦ δήμου σφόδρα ἀποδεχομένου, Aeschin. 2.122) or criticism (ὥστε καὶ συρίττεσθαι, Aeschin. 3.76). Nevertheless, *thorubos* is by far the most common word used to refer, with a variety of connotations, to the collective sounds made by a dikastic or political audience: as such, Tacon is surely correct in identifying it as a key term denoting spontaneous collective sounds made by groups interrupting democratic processes.[152] Another word worthy of specific mention, though, is κραυγή and its cognate verb κράζω. At one point, Aeschines mentions the κραυγὴ πολλὴ καὶ θόρυβος (in approbation) he received from the Amphictyons (3.122); here, these two nouns are treated as synonymous. With some exceptions, though, κραυγή is usually a word used to denote the shouting of individuals, and tends to have pejorative connotations.[153] Away from prose, the use of κραυγή is particularly favoured by Aristophanes and will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter 3.

Thorubos seems to play a concrete role in some voting processes: in Aeschines' description of applications for deme citizenship (1.77-78), θορυβεῖτε either depicts a genuine vote by acclamation, or stands as synecdoche for a unanimous voting outcome. Thucydides describes an instance of genuine vote by oral acclamation in Sparta (1.87.1-2). More generally, Bers argues that instances of *thorubos* were an accepted and important part of the Athenian lawcourt, allowing the jury as a whole to react and express their real-time views on the speeches despite not formally being able to have a collective say.[154] In political contexts, *thorubos* does not seem to be particularly controlled, although Aeschines 1.35 might imply that there was some control on who could παρακελεύεσθαι: Demosthenes paints a more unpredictable picture of jurors being accosted by crowds at the casting of lots (19.1), while Aeschines describes an occasion

[151] Thomas (2011: 175) argues against over-emphasising the term *thorubos*, and notes that there were many other ways to denote the noise made by the *demos* during an assembly (citing, for example, Ar. *Ach*. 37-39). Though this is a valid point, the term *thorubos* is especially prevalent when depicting democratic politics.
[152] Tacon (2001).
[153] Aeschin. 1.86, 2.10, 3.210, 3.218; for a more positive and group-oriented use of κραυγή, cf. 1.34.
[154] Bers (1985: esp. 12-15).

on which all the citizens *and foreigners* standing around the assembly cried out in protest (Aeschin. 3.224). Aeschines cites past instances of *thorubos* as demonstrations of the jury's previous collective judgement of Timarchus,[155] and cites an example of a similar phenomenon taking place in the context of an assembly.[156] Lysias (12.73) cites *thorubos* as a means by which the *dêmos* shouted down a speaker at a critical moment, preventing him from setting up a disastrous new policy. The early stages of Demosthenes 19 (analysed previously), in which he records how his opponents turned the audience against him by mocking him, depend on the audience's *thorubos* in the form of mocking laughter;[157] later in the same speech, though, Demosthenes reminds us of the audience's *thorubos* as a way of shouting down Aeschines' villainous proposals (19.112-13), and thus a positive means of holding a nefarious speaker to account. Thucydides, too, sometimes uses *thorubos* to represent an assembly putting pressure on a political leader and holding them to account (Cleon in Thuc. 4.28.1).[158]

The orators, then, seem to treat *thorubos* as a neutral, double-edged phenomenon: a crucial way for the audience to give their views, which the orator can subsequently use to support his case, but also a means to interfere with democratic process and shout down a speaker unfairly; a strand of thought echoed at some points in other prose genres. Tacon's interpretation of the orators' views, then, is perhaps too straightforwardly negative:[159] as Thomas observes, the orators do not depict *thorubos* as unambiguously negative.[160] Bers' approach is perhaps more nuanced: fundamentally, *thorubos* is about disturbance, about reasserting the *dêmos*' authority, which inevitably will be either in the interests of a given speaker or against them. As Thomas notes, one crucial incident recorded in Lysias depicts the *dêmos* creating a *thorubos*, which

[155] Aeschin. 1.80, 82-4; cf. 1.69 (concerning Leodamas).
[156] Aeschin. 2.49 (Demosthenes judges from the *thorubos* that people approved of Aeschines' report); 2.51 (Demosthenes' outrageous speech attracts *thorubos* both for and against him). Demosthenes uses a similar example: 6.26.
[157] E.g. Dem. 19.23; cf. Thomas (2011: 176).
[158] Noted by Bers (1985: 4).
[159] Tacon (2001: 180).
[160] Thomas (2011: 177).

Lysander is quick to shut down (Lys. 12.73-5). The fact that oligarchs and Spartan commanders are opposed to *thorubos* highlights its nature as a weapon wielded by democracy on democracy's behalf.[161]

As Bers notes, anti-democratic sources tend to depict *thorubos* more negatively.[162] This is not confined to anti-democratic sources: even in the orators' works, *thorubos* is a double-edged sword. Aeschines fears his opponent's ability to manipulate *thorubos* and thus turn the jury against him (1.174):[163] *thorubos* represents the emotional frenzy which, supposedly, and unscrupulous orator might create.[164] Aeschines also casts *thorubos* as a way for a sensible speaker to be unfairly interrupted by the audience, and pairs it with ταραχή (a Thucydidean word for civil disorder).[165] Much like Thucydides, Aeschines uses the pairing of *thorubos* with *phobos* as a depiction of an assembly gone wrong.[166] For Demosthenes, [τὸ] θορυβεῖν καὶ φιλονικεῖν (5.3) can be a way of avoiding effective action.[167] Demosthenes' *Exordia* contain a number of instructions to the listeners which portray θορυβεῖν in an unambiguously bad light.[168]

Political thought and historiography tend to be less positive about *thorubos* than the double-edged picture we receive from the orators. Plato's *Laws* contains the suggestion that democratic decision-making would be weakened by being θορύβου μεστά, καθάπερ θέατρα (*Leg*. 9.876B; cf. *Leg*. 9.949B);[169] the *Republic*, moreover, imagines the *dêmos* being filled with θόρυβος

[161] Thomas (2011: 177-8).
[162] Bers (1985: 1), citing (e.g.) Pl. *Leg*. 9.949b, Pi. *Pyth*. 2.87.
[163] Bers (1985: 1n3).
[164] Cf. Aeschin. 2.181. Bers (1985: 1n3) suggests that this is the implication in Aeschines' suggestion that they listen to Ctesiphon's speech ἀθόρυβος (Aeschin. 3.201).
[165] Aeschin. 3.2; cf. Dem. 13.3, 5.15, the latter noted by Tacon (2001: 177n21). Tacon (2001: 173-4) goes so far as to cite Aeschines' (3.2) nod to the law as a claim that *thorubos* interrupting speakers was illegal.
[166] Aeschin. 2.72; cf. Thuc. 3.77.1, Thuc. 7.44.4.
[167] A rather more ambiguous case in Demosthenes is his record of a debate πολλῶν δὲ λόγων καὶ θορύβου γιγνομένου (Dem. 3.4); which – perhaps deliberately – seems to play into stereotypes concerning a bad decision made due to emotion. It turns out, however, that Demosthenes endorses the decision made in these circumstances (3.5).
[168] Dem. *Ex*. 4.1, 10.1, 21.4, 26.1 (cf. Tacon 2001: 179-180).
[169] Bers (1985: 1); Thomas (2011: 174).

(*Resp*. 492B-C).[170] In this portrayal, *thorubos* is powerful: a young man listening to it will be compelled to have the same opinions as the multitude, to do what they do and to be what they are. According to Socrates in the *Republic*, then, *thorubos* transforms a group into a psychological unity in the strongest possible sense of the word: it makes an individual think like them. Even in the broadly anti-democratic world of Plato's dialogues,[171] though, *thorubos* is also a way for the *dêmos* to defend its interests against unqualified speakers (e.g. *Prt*. 319c).[172] Xenophon presents *thorubos* as a means for the audience to demand an illegal proposal and frighten the *prytaneis* into granting it (Xen. *Hell*. 1.7.12-15).[173]

E2. Rumour and Common Knowledge

Poor group decision-making is often connected to the fact that hearsay information and rumours are passed uncritically through large groups. The passage of information through groups via rumour is often understood as being extremely quick, even instantaneous. The question of whether or not such rumours were considered authoritative sources of truth is a complex one. Rumour feeds collective common knowledge, which the orators often cite as a means of passing judgement on individuals and holding them to account: as such, rumours can underpin groups' legal power. This is found in Aeschines' speeches particularly often, but also across the Attic orators' works. On occasion, though an orator will pour scorn on common knowledge received via rumour.

Thucydides connects poor group reasoning with the uncritical transmission of hearsay information (1.20.1). Cleon criticises the *dêmos*' dependence on hearsay during the Mytilene debate (Thuc. 3.38.4). Subsequently, the Athenians' decision to attack Sicily is dominated by motifs suggesting misinformation about Sicily's geography and history, conveyed by

[170] Thomas (2011: 174).
[171] For a more complex analysis of Plato's depictions of democracy, cf. Monoson (2000).
[172] Noted by Thomas (2011: 177).
[173] Thomas (2011: 173).

hearsay.[174] There tends to be a close association between population-wide common knowledge and rumours, because rumours are often held responsible for creating common knowledge. Prose texts frequently refer to the speed with which information is thought to spread. Aeschines offers a vivid picture of the speed with which rumour could establish new information as common knowledge (Aeschin. 1.60):

> τῇ δ᾽ ὑστεραίᾳ ὑπεραγανακτήσας τῷ πράγματι ὁ Πιττάλακος ἔρχεται γυμνὸς εἰς τὴν ἀγοράν, καὶ καθίζει ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν τὸν τῆς μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν. **ὄχλου δὲ συνδραμόντος, οἷον εἴωθε γίγνεσθαι**, φοβηθέντες ὅ τε Ἡγήσανδρος καὶ ὁ Τίμαρχος μὴ ἀνακηρυχθῇ αὐτῶν ἡ βδελυρία εἰς **πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν (ἐπῄει δὲ ἐκκλησία**), θέουσι πρὸς τὸν βωμὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τῶν συγκυβευτῶν τινες, …

The disgruntled Pittalacus sits in the *agora*. Timarchus and his cronies assume that an *ochlos* will form *as usual*, and that the information will thereby spread quickly to the entire city – especially given that the oncoming assembly creates a further opportunity for gossip to spread. Groups, both formal and informal, ensure that news can quickly travel across the city at the expense of an individual.[175]

Rumours are spread so quickly that prose accounts attribute spontaneity to them (Hdt. 9.100.1):

> ἰοῦσι δέ σφι φήμη τε ἐσέπτατο ἐς τὸ στρατόπεδον πᾶν καὶ κηρυκήιον ἐφάνη ἐπὶ τῆς κυματώγης κείμενον·

[174] Ober (1998: 106n95) notes the language of hearsay and uncertainty: λέγονται (6.2.1), ἐγὼ οὔτε … ἔχω εἰπεῖν (Ibid.), φαίνονται (6.2.2), ὡς μὲν εἰκὸς καὶ λέγεται (6.2.4), ἐγγύτατα (6.4.4). Equally, some facts are presented as certain: ἡ ἀλήθεια εὑρίσκεται (6.2.2).

[175] Though written much later, it is worth noting the much-cited example of rumour in Plutarch's *Nicias* 30.1. A man's words in a barbershop are sufficient to make the story spread quickly across the *agora* (terms relating to speed accumulate: δρόμῳ συντείνας … εὐθύς). However, Ober (1989: 148) omits to mention that this rumour is quickly scrutinised in an assembly, and briefly considered false (30.2): it is perhaps not as easy to transform a rumour into universal authoritative fact as Ober suggests. Nevertheless, the speed with which the rumour spreads, and the city-wide ἐκπλήξεως … καὶ ταραχῆς which it causes, illustrate how quickly and compellingly large groups can communicate messages. It is worth noting that these words connoting terrified disorder are found frequently in Thucydides' portrayal of group fear: we might profitably, then, connect the common motif of group-wide fear and panic to the speed and power of rumours passing through groups.

In this excerpt, the use of φήμη as the nominative subject grants it implicit agency, and thus spontaneity, as if it can spread across the army without being consciously uttered by anyone. Furthermore, the speed with which φήμη spreads is emphasised by *hysteron proteron* here: one imagines that, in reality, the appearance of the κηρυκήιον … ἐπὶ τῆς κυματώγης κείμενον would have helped initiate the rumour, rather than (as Herodotus' ordering implies) substantiating it later. Subsequently, the spontaneity of the φήμη becomes more explicit, and is treated by Herodotus as evidence of τὰ θεῖα τῶν πρηγμάτων (Hdt. 9.100.2). In this regard, Herodotus takes his cue from Hesiod, who suggested that θεός νύ τίς ἐστι καὶ αὐτή [= φήμη] (Hes. *Op.* 764).

The quick passage of information through a group – whether true or false – was extremely important in the orators' works, since the orators had to handle not only the new information which they were teaching their listeners, but the pre-existing knowledge, hearsay and opinion which their listeners would hold about matters of public policy and private wrongdoing alike. At times, the orators are scathing about information passed on by hearsay: Demosthenes notes the number of rumours circulating about Philip (Dem. 4.48) and concludes that ἀνοητότατοι γάρ εἰσιν οἱ λογοποιοῦντες (4.49). Elsewhere, however, the orators often suggest that a spontaneous rumour can be considered authoritatively truthful.[176] An example is found in Demosthenes, who, like Herodotus, demonstrates the influence of the Hesiodic conception of φήμη (Dem. 19.243):

> οὐκοῦν, Αἰσχίνη, καὶ σὲ πάντες οὗτοι χρήματ᾽ ἐκ τῆς πρεσβείας φασὶν εἰληφέναι, ὥστε καὶ κατὰ σοῦ δήπουθεν "φήμη δ᾽ οὔ τις πάμπαν ἀπόλλυται, ἥντινα λαοὶ πολλοὶ φημίξωσιν."

[176] In this regard, spontaneous rumours are differentiated from deliberately-spread slander, which is considered false: cf. Hardie (2012: 239). Lewis (1996: 12) cites (e.g.) Aeschin. 2.145, who draws this distinction clearly. For tactical purposes, it suits orators to make such a distinction, in order to characterise their own arguments as based on authoritative rumour and their opponents' as drawing on deliberate, untrustworthy slander.

Here, the presence of a widespread rumour is a consequence of the large number of people who consider Aeschines guilty (σὲ πλείους ἢ ἐκεῖνον αἰτιῶνται, 19.244). The collective authority of such large numbers mean that the spontaneous rumour can be considered a truthful account.[177]

Consequently, examples of the population's common knowledge being taken as fact abound in the orators. This was underpinned by group psychology: according to Aristotle, the tactic of saying that everyone knows something could be used to secure universal agreement, as those who did not know would be ashamed of their relative ignorance (*Rh*. 1408a32-36).[178] Andocides simultaneously pours scorn on a rumour (παρὰ τοῖς παιδαρίοις τοῖς μικροτάτοις καὶ τοῖς γυναίοις κληδὼν ἐν ἁπάσῃ τῇ πόλει κατεῖχεν, 1.130) and immediately afterwards uses it to convince the audience of his point (1.131).[179] Isaeus alludes to Ἀλκή, ἣν καὶ ὑμῶν οἶμαι πολλοὺς εἰδέναι (6.19);[180] by appealing to the audience's collective knowledge (much of which, given the context, must be hearsay), Isaeus characterises Alke more concisely, and appeals to the audience to lend his characterisation the authority of truth. Hyperides suggests that, by weight of sheer numbers, reports passed among the entire civic population can be considered authoritative:[181] it is impossible λαθεῖν … τὸ πλῆθος τὸ ὑμέτερον (1.14). Aeschines, too, asserts that φήμη … ἐστιν, ὅταν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πολιτῶν αὐτόματον ἐκ μηδεμιᾶς προφάσεως λέγῃ τινὰ ὡς γεγενημένην πρᾶξιν (2.145) and subsequently suggests that τῇ … φήμῃ δημοσίᾳ θύομεν ὡς θεῷ (Ibid.). Aeschines cites collective common knowledge especially often:[182] he is rather more explicit than his peers in attributing authoritative truth and legal

[177] It is possible that this is connected to the axiom that, in Athenian courts, witness statements were considered trustworthy and perhaps even preferable to official documents. Witnesses provided testimony on a person's private character, and the importance of population-wide common knowledge is underpinned by the idea that it can provide general information about a person's character (Lewis 1996: 9-10, 14).
[178] Ober (1989: 149).
[179] Lewis (1996: 11).
[180] Ober (1989: 149).
[181] Ober (1989: 150).
[182] Aeschin. 1.44, 1.48, 1.56, 1.77-8, 1.125-9. Elsewhere, Aeschines uses his ostentatious faith in common knowledge to underwrite a comedic attack on Demosthenes (1.131). On the other hand, Aeschines acknowledges the fallibility of common knowledge by admitting the critical importance of facts that escape public knowledge (2.146).

significance to common knowledge about individuals' characters. Aeschines even depicts pre-existing collective knowledge as an antidote to the danger of being deceived by cunning rhetoric at the trial itself.[183] In the democratic trial, then, public φήμη is often considered to provide truthful moral judgement on individuals.

The motifs of *thorubos* which surround the deployment and recognition of common knowledge in Aeschines' speeches are interesting in themselves. In the precedents cited by Aeschines, when the prosecutor announces that a person has been disqualified from deme membership using the demesmen's pre-existing common knowledge (1.78), the response is an immediate *thorubos* of assent and approval (εὐθὺς θορυβεῖτε ὑμεῖς, 1.78). Later, the audience recognises concealed meanings in specific references to Timarchus' character with *thorubos* (1.82-4): the reverberations of the orators' words with the audience's collective knowledge create this *thorubos*.

E3. Communication: Conclusions

Prose texts associate *thorubos* closely with groups, especially in political contexts. In an anti-democratic source, *thorubos* is unproductive uproar that hinders decision-making. By its sheer force, Xenophon suggests, *thorubos* can even destroy the rule of law. On the other hand, though, even Plato acknowledges how *thorubos* might enable the *dêmos* to hold unscrupulous speakers to account and legitimately defend its interests. The orators (and, on occasion, the historiographers) furnish us with many examples of *thorubos* enabling a jury or assembly to halt a disastrous proposal in its tracks. *Thorubos* is depicted as enabling groups to communicate externally with individuals and make their views heard during trials and assemblies, for better or for worse.

[183] Aeschin. 1.84 (truth prevailing over *logisma*); 1.92-3.

The passage of rumour enables groups to communicate internally. Its passage, which is often portrayed as being instantaneous, allows information to spread and construct a body of common knowledge. This common knowledge means that the citizen body will enter an assembly or a jury trial with shared information: therefore, common knowledge is crucial in enabling a group to act as a single psychological entity during decision-making processes. In many ways, common knowledge and rumour have a similar effect to *thorubos*: individuals fear rumour and the creation of common knowledge as a means to hold them to account by ensuring that their misdeeds are collectively known. The fact that common knowledge was often viewed as authoritative by the orators grants it increased power to hold individuals accountable. Furthermore, the fact that orators' references to common knowledge were often greeted with collective *thorubos* demonstrate how they interact as means for groups to exert power over individuals. Equally, rumour is also connected to groups' emotions: when fear quickly spreads across a population, the speed of its spread depends on the passage of information through rumour. Some sources imply that the *dêmos*' reliance on hearsay information undermines its ability to make decisions.

Section F: Conclusions

Prose depictions of large groups often imagined them operating as a single psychological unit. This is more than just a metaphorical way to depict unanimity: discussions of groups often suggest that a "collective mind" was crucial for a democratic population. If groups can be considered a psychological unit, then groups can have psychological traits: on occasion, we find comments about how groups typically acted or thought. Furthermore, surveying how groups are commonly portrayed in the surviving sources tells us what traits groups were typically imagined as having. The most frequent motifs which circulate in fifth- and early fourth-century discourse about groups of people (both in political and apolitical contexts) are the following:

- Groups make poor decisions, often because their emotions carry them down the wrong path. Specifically, anger (which can cause groups to search for undeserving scapegoats, and sometimes even propel them into collective violence) and fear often dominate groups' thought processes.
- Consequently, groups can easily be manipulated by skilled, unscrupulous orators who take advantage of their poor decision-making. Flattery and bribery are particularly well-established ways for orators to manipulate groups.
- Groups can communicate in formalised settings (such as assemblies or trials) using collective noise, most often denoted by *thorubos*. Outside formalised settings, groups can communicate internally and spread information by passing rumours, which spread very quickly and allow common knowledge to build up.

For the purpose of this thesis, these remain motifs rather than fact: they are elements of how various prose genres imagine groups as acting and thinking, not necessarily an accurate depiction of armies, populations or democracies. They are very common motifs, but not universally true: sometimes, groups are depicted as engaging with complex logical argument and voting rationally against an unscrupulous orator. However, by establishing what group-related motifs were circulating in the intellectual environment of fifth-century Athens, we can better understand the background to Athenian dramatists' portrayals of groups. Many of these motifs, from the more precise (the use of *deinos* to denote a cunning orator, or the depiction of groups using metaphors of flowing liquid) to the broad-brush (groups being extremely liable to anger) are reflected or refracted in extant Athenian drama.

This chapter is about ancient group psychology, not applying modern group psychology to the ancient world. Nevertheless, it is fascinating how many established concepts in modern group psychology resonate in ancient portrayals of groups. Such resonances lie outside the remit of this thesis, but provide fertile ground for future study. Concepts such as contagion (the spread

of emotions through groups), conformity (what makes dissenting individuals choose to follow the collective) and out-group bias (a "favoured" group being hostile towards a group which does not share their characteristics) are frequently studied in modern group psychology. Several passages discussed above depict groups in ways which offer fascinating angles on these phenomena.

Many of the motifs discussed above come from texts with an anti-democratic slant. However, even seemingly negative tropes are not always depicted negatively, and it is striking that many of them receive a double-edged treatment in surviving sources. Fear and anger can distort a group's ability to make decisions, but fear can also underpin their obedience to the laws, while anger can ensure the punishment of wrongdoers. Manipulative orators can exploit group decision-making and even overturn democracy – unless, like Pericles, they use their ability to manipulate collective emotions for good. Rumours can spread false information, or hold wrongdoers accountable by making their misdeeds common knowledge. *Thorubos* can derail legal processes, or derail individuals who wish to abuse legal processes. From a factual perspective, this is reassuring: the fact that sources use the same motifs to reach opposite conclusions suggests that those motifs are an accurate reflection of how groups were perceived. However, this is also a salutary reminder of how malleable the popular morality that surrounds group thought and group action was.

Chapter 2: Collective Political Decision-Making in Tragedy

Several times, in extant drama, the *dêmos* makes decisions in assembly. Although we do not see these assemblies on stage,[184] they are reported by individual characters; sometimes (most notably in Euripides' *Orestes*), the entire decision-making process is described, speech by speech. As such, our understanding of the *dêmos*' deliberations is filtered through characters' perceptions and allegiances. This, though, does not make their observations valueless. Rather, this is one of the many ways in which tragedy engages with group decision-making. Existing scholarship tends to focus on abstract discussions of whether democratic decision-making works in principle: the famous debate on democracy in Euripides' *Suppliants* has been much discussed. This chapter adopts a different approach by discussing reported group decision-making scenes in the extant tragedies. Two of the surviving plays – Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes* – showcase off-stage group assembly or trial scenes as the centrepiece of their respective plots. The prominence of these scenes means that other characters throughout the plays discuss the assemblies, anticipate their decisions and attempt to rationalise the *dêmos*' verdict. This often leads to these characters exploring and articulating rudimentary group psychology.

The fact that the assembly in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and the trial in Euripides' *Orestes* are located off stage encourages us to consider democratic decision-making through multiple lenses, as different characters on stage demonstrate their opinions of the assembly's vote. Furthermore, the messengers themselves (especially in the case of *Orestes*) often view proceedings through partisan eyes. Characters' discourse on group decision-making dwells on how best to influence, persuade or manipulate the assembly. In this way, tragedy contributes a further dimension to the account of group decision-making psychology found in fifth-century

[184] Carter (2010) surveys the different methods by which comedies and tragedies circumvent this convention.

prose (see Chapter 1). Surviving depictions of group decision-making in prose genres tend to fall in binary fashion: the *dêmos* can either be trusted to make good decisions, or it is emotional, untrustworthy and liable to manipulation by unscrupulous orators. In tragedy, depictions of group decision-making explore and engage with grey areas. In *Suppliants* and in *Orestes,* I argue, we see a complex interaction between collective decision-making and persuasion by individual voices.

I begin by discussing how Euripides' *Suppliants* portrays group decision-making in the much-discussed democratic debate between Theseus and the Herald. *Suppliants* demonstrates how tragedy often played with stereotypes about group decision-making similar to those found in prose texts, both in relatively straightforward fashion (by placing them in the Herald's mouth, to be rebutted by Theseus) and more ambivalently (by refracting them into Theseus' criticisms of Adrastus' government). This is far from a simple pro-democracy play: Theseus' handling of the Athenian *dêmos* in some ways feels almost monarchic, while the debate with the Herald seems to expose some flaws in Theseus' case. For the purposes of this chapter, though, it is most interesting that the Athenian *dêmos*' off-stage decision is dealt with quickly and insulated from the discussion on stage about democracy in principle. I suggest that it is relevant that the assembly in Euripides' *Suppliants* is set in Athens, whereas the other collective political decisions discussed in this chapter are set in Argos. I posit that reporting an off-stage assembly scene in full allows the group's decision-making process to be scrutinised and problematised. By avoiding a detailed report of the Athenian assembly's decision in *Suppliants,* then, Euripides prevents this decision from being directly scrutinised and analysed as potentially flawed. By contrast, Adrastus' government, the assembly in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and the trial in Euripides' *Orestes* are all set in Argos: this allows them to be examined in a fashion that might cause discomfort if applied directly to an Athenian assembly.

I then discuss Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, which may well contain the earliest tragic portrayal of a democratic body in action.[185] From the Danaids' initial arrival in Argos, their imminent reckoning with the Argive assembly is (implicitly or explicitly) a subject of discussion, and both Danaus and Pelasgus offer similar advice on how the *dêmos* can be persuaded, implying that visual images and emotional appeals will carry particular weight. The type of rhetoric used by Pelasgus in the assembly also implies that the assembly's decision will be influenced by certain specific types of argument (which the unanimous vote confirms). This has substantial implications for our understanding of *Suppliants*. Existing scholarship divides in binary fashion concerning Pelasgus' handling of the assembly: it has been interpreted as either an idealised democratic vote or a manipulated façade of democracy. This chapter argues for a hitherto untrodden middle ground, and suggests that the assembly-scene is a balanced and ambivalent presentation of how a democratic assembly might function, which encompasses an understanding of how elite individuals such as Pelasgus might seek to influence its outcome, while simultaneously believing in the ideal of democracy and hoping to preserve the assembly's independence.

This chapter ends by discussing Euripides' *Orestes*, whose detailed depiction of an off-stage political decision (specifically a trial, in this case) is unparalleled in extant tragedy for its length and detail.[186] Furthermore, multiple characters discuss the assembly's decision and explore ways to influence it. Several characters' explicit claims that they can manipulate the *dêmos*, as well as Orestes' subsequent attempt to kill Helen and kidnap Hermione, have led many scholars to see *Orestes* as set in a politically corrupt dystopia. This chapter takes a different approach, focusing on how the *dêmos* is portrayed. The *dêmos*' collective opinions are scrutinised even

[185] Meier (1993: 84). For debate concerning the original performance date, cf. Garvie (1969: 141-62), Scullion (2002).
[186] Barker (2011: 156). De Romilly (1972: 239) notes the practically unique nature of this reported assembly scene, but seems to overlook Aeschylus' *Suppliants* in suggesting that we must look to Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and *Knights* for parallels.

before the trial scene, and undercut elite characters' claims that they have the power to manipulate the trial. Furthermore, the trial scene (despite the deployment of stereotypes relating to group decision-making) does not strongly imply that individuals have successfully manipulated the outcome, and in fact may suggest that existing community-wide opinion of Orestes holds more sway. This analysis of *Orestes* suggests a new way to navigate this politically complex play, with wider implications in demonstrating how a tragedy can interact with and undercut prose stereotypes concerning group decision-making. In a different way to both Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Suppliants*, *Orestes* encourages us to explore the effectiveness of group decision-making from various perspectives, making it far from clear-cut.

Section A: Euripides' *Suppliants*

The depiction of group decision-making in Euripides' *Suppliants* receives less space than in both Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes*. In Euripides' *Suppliants*, the decision itself is condensed into Theseus' perfunctory two lines: καὶ μὴν ἑκοῦσά γ᾽ ἀσμένη τ᾽ ἐδέξατο | πόλις πόνον τόνδ᾽ ὡς θέλοντά μ᾽ ἥσθετο (393-4). Though it stops short of depicting off-stage group decision-making in detail, *Suppliants* is well known for its debate on the merits and faults of democracy. This debate has been thoroughly discussed in scholarship; some treatments have found in the play a defence of democracy which is ultimately convincing, though realistic about some of its flaws,[187] while others have argued that Theseus argues weakly and even appears somewhat suspicious of unfettered democracy.[188]

[187] E.g. Morwood (2009); Mills (2020).
[188] Gamble (1970: 399-400); Michelini (1994: esp. 235-6) on weaknesses of Theseus' argument in the *agôn*, Ibid. 226-30 on the possible implications of Theseus' preference for the political μέσοι. Both Hesk (2007: 80) and Storey (2008: 50) connect the depiction of assemblies rushing thoughtlessly to war with Thucydides' analysis of Athenian assemblies in this period; Hesk (2011: 121-37) identifies a more detailed interaction with Herodotus' and (especially) Thucydides' conception of εὐβουλία in the mid- to late fifth century BC.

I devote less space to *Suppliants* than to other plays in this chapter, because this chapter is primarily concerned with more extended depictions of off-stage assemblies. Nevertheless, *Suppliants* plays a small but important role in my argument. It demonstrates, firstly, that tragic depictions of group decision-making could draw, in some cases heavily, on stereotypes which are also found in prose texts. The Theban Herald argues against democracy using stereotypes very similar to those covered in Chapter 1, such as people thinking differently in groups, being manipulated by unscrupulous orators and being eager to seek scapegoats. These stereotypes echo Theseus' previous comments towards Adrastus, suggesting that suspicion of group psychology is not necessarily coterminous with anti-democratic thought (although the two naturally have considerable overlap). I then consider why *Suppliants* comes across as such an outlier in this chapter: given its focus on democracy, it is surprising that *Suppliants* chooses not to depict the assembly scene at length, in the mould of Aeschylus' earlier play which shares its name. Instead, it offers a binary political soundscape of diametrically opposed stereotypes, and the debate (about the strengths and weaknesses of democracy in principle) seems oddly removed from the actual question to be resolved by the assembly. It is difficult to argue conclusively why this should be the case: it is entirely possible to say that this was simply not the focus of Euripides' *Suppliants*. I tentatively posit, though, that the plays' respective settings might hold some answers: perhaps Euripides was unwilling to probe the uncomfortable shades of nuance that lie between manipulative demagoguery and idealised democracy in a play set in Athens. The Herald and Theseus can debate democracy in theory, but this unresolved debate feels distanced from the off-stage assembly's decision, which proceeds smoothly and whose implications are not challenged or problematised. I posit that extensive, probing discourse surrounding an off-stage assembly's decision – as in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, or even the quintessentially Athenian myth of *Orestes* – must be set in Argos.

The Theban Herald criticises democracy in the following fashion (409-18, 423-25):

ἓν μὲν τόδ᾽ ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐν πεσσοῖς δίδως
κρεῖσσον· πόλις γὰρ ἧς ἐγὼ πάρειμ᾽ ἄπο
ἑνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός οὐκ ὄχλῳ κρατύνεται·
οὐδ᾽ ἔστιν αὐτὴν ὅστις ἐκχαυνῶν λόγοις
πρὸς κέρδος ἴδιον ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλοσε στρέφει,
τὸ δ᾽ αὐτίχ᾽ ἡδὺς καὶ διδοὺς πολλὴν χάριν
ἐσαῦθις ἔβλαψ᾽, εἶτα διαβολαῖς νέαις
κλέψας τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ᾽ ἐξέδυ δίκης.
ἄλλως τε πῶς ἂν μὴ διορθεύων λόγους
ὀρθῶς δύναιτ᾽ ἂν δῆμος εὐθύνειν πόλιν;
ἦ δὴ νοσῶδες τοῦτο τοῖς ἀμείνοσιν,
ὅταν πονηρὸς ἀξίωμ᾽ ἀνὴρ ἔχῃ
γλώσσῃ κατασχὼν δῆμον, οὐδὲν ὢν τὸ πρίν.

This speech offers a selection of stereotypes similar to the stereotypes describing group decision-making in prose texts.[189] Even if we stop short of the idea that ὄχλῳ κρατύνεται (411) must automatically be pejorative, we find here the idea that orators can manipulate the citizens for personal gain (412-13, 424-5; Chapter 1 D1), perhaps through use of bribery (414; Chapter 1 D2); that scapegoats are blamed rather than those truly responsible (διαβολαῖς νέαις | κλέψας τὰ πρόσθε, 415-16; Chapter 1 C3); that the people are collectively unable to judge, and hence rule, correctly (417-18; Chapter 1 C1); that ἀμείνων and πονηρός are irrevocably juxtaposed (423-4). Subsequently, the Herald speaks in stereotypes applicable not only to democracy, but to group decision-making more broadly (479-85):

[189] Hence Morwood's (2009: 356-7) argument that this is a satire of contemporary anti-democratic clichés. Allan (1999-2000: 154) notes that the Herald's criticisms resemble Thucydides' depiction of Athens during the Peloponnesian War.

ἐλπὶς γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἄπιστον, ἢ πολλὰς πόλεις
συνῆψ᾽ ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολάς.
ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος ἐς ψῆφον λεώ,
οὐδεὶς ἔθ᾽ αὑτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται,
τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει.
εἰ δ᾽ ἦν παρ᾽ ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψήφου φορᾷ,
οὐκ ἄν ποθ᾽ Ἑλλὰς δοριμανὴς ἀπώλλυτο.

The Herald suggests that hope persuades cities to let their emotions draw them into bad decisions (ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολάς, 480). This is explicitly connected to the fact that the decision is made by a collective: rather than considering the impact of death on themselves individually, voters only imagine other citizens dying (481-3: cf. Thuc. 3.45.6, as discussed in Chapter 1 B2). This is rudimentary group psychology: according to the herald, the very fact of it being a group decision means that the personal stake for voters is distributed and thus diminished, and the decisions are more likely to be misled by collective emotions.

The Herald's stereotypes echo the earlier conversation between Adrastus and Theseus, which (though not explicitly about democracy) circles around aspects of group decision-making which are closely relevant to democracy. Adrastus explains Argos' misfortune as follows: νέων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος ἐξέπλησσέ με (160). These young men are mentioned again subsequently (232, 250).[190] It has been noted that Theseus' criticisms of Adrastus' government are very similar to, and perhaps reinforce, the Herald's criticisms of democracy more broadly.[191] To this suggestion I would add the alternative, that Theseus' criticisms show us that stereotypes

[190] For discussion of the connection between youth and *hubris* in *Suppliants*, and how this interacts with contemporary criticisms of Athenian foreign policy as overbearing, cf. Michelini (1994: 220-21, 228).
[191] Michelini (1994: 224-5) finds it potentially contradictory that Adrastus, who is subsequently labelled a τύραννος able to make unilateral decisions on behalf of Argos (1189-90) is here addressed in terms casting him as the leader of a failing democracy. She considers the idea that Argos is portrayed as an aristocratic oligarchy (dominated by powerful, impulsive young men); I prefer her later contention that there is some dramatic blurring of the boundaries between different regime types here.

relating to group psychology are applicable to a variety of different political contexts. That a collective *thorubos* can cause poor decision-making even without an institutional democracy reminds us that these group-related stereotypes, though frequently coexisting with discussion of democracy (Chapter 1 E1), are not coterminous with it.[192]

Despite the implicit anti-democratic stereotypes found in the discussion between Theseus and Adrastus (which becomes explicit with the Herald's arrival), both have tacitly agreed to comply with democratic norms. Theseus asks Adrastus ἰδίᾳ δοκῆσάν σοι τόδ᾽ ἢ πάσῃ πόλει (129), in response to which Adrastus confirms that πάντες <σ᾽> ἱκνοῦνται Δαναΐδαι (130). Later, Adrastus ends his plea as follows (188-91):

πόλις δὲ σὴ
μόνη δύναιτ᾽ ἂν τόνδ᾽ ὑποστῆναι πόνον·
τά τ᾽ οἰκτρὰ γὰρ δέδορκε καὶ νεανίαν 190
ἔχει σε ποιμέν᾽ ἐσθλόν·

Adrastus explicitly couches the plea in terms of the *polis* (in stark contrast to the Danaids in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, who explicitly pushed Pelasgus to make the decision on the city's behalf and guide their assembly accordingly). Indeed, by attributing collective agency to the *polis* (implicit in δέδορκε, 190) he underlines its authority; by casting Theseus as the shepherd of its youth, he diplomatically circumvents the anachronism inherent in Theseus' position and ensures that his respect for the *dêmos* does not come at the expense of showing Theseus due regard. It is Theseus himself who seems willing to push his own agenda on the assembly, asking τί πρὸς πολίτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς λέγων καλόν (247) and subsequently declaring confidently that the

[192] Hesk (2011: 129) takes this as evidence that Theseus' construction of εὐβουλία would hold much of interest to audience members from non-Athenian (and not necessarily democratic) *poleis*.

city will follow his wishes (349-55), a passage which has raised further concerns about just how democratic Theseus is.[193]

The political debate on stage is heavily influenced by stereotypes; as Michelini demonstrates,[194] this is as true of Theseus' arguments in favour of democracy as the Herald's counterarguments. This is not unusual: as I will subsequently demonstrate, on-stage characters frequently articulate stereotypical views of an off-stage assembly. The *agôn* of *Suppliants*, though, is unusual because it is disconnected from the *dêmos*' off-stage decision. Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes* depict a lengthy interaction between characters who sometimes discuss democratic politics in the abstract, but whose discussions are rooted in a debate concerning what the *dêmos* should decide, what the implications of that decision could be, and whether and how to influence the *dêmos*' decision. By contrast, Theseus and the Herald only debate *in principle* whether democracy is good or bad. Relatedly, it is noteworthy that the *dêmos*' decision is presented in only two lines. This, combined with the generalising focus of the debate, means that the play gives us no encouragement to consider the *dêmos*' verdict potentially problematic – nobody challenges the decision itself after it is made, only the legitimacy of democracy more broadly. Furthermore, the challenger is a Theban Herald, who as well as being biased in favour of tyranny is depicted as exceeding his station as herald by arguing with Theseus.[195]

Tragedies which explore democracy will not all explore democracy in the same way, nor should we expect them to. However, I would posit that there is a reason Euripides' *Suppliants* avoids treating the *dêmos*' decision as potentially flawed or problematic. It is entirely possible that Euripides was avoiding detailed scrutiny of an off-stage assembly's decision *set in Athens*.[196]

[193] Gamble (1970: 400-401); Storey (2008: 42).
[194] Michelini (1994: 234-5).
[195] Morwood (2009: 358).
[196] The play itself is set in Eleusis (for brief discussion of which, cf. Storey 2008: 18-20) but the assembly's decision takes place in Athens.

Extended off-stage assembly scenes, even when not depicted explicitly as manipulated or otherwise flawed, lend themselves easily to scrutinising and problematising the interactions between speakers and collective; this is the case with both *Orestes* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants*. However, these plays are both set in Argos – even Euripides' depiction of Orestes' trial, despite being a quintessentially Athenian myth. I argue that this setting, distant from Athens (although ideologically not as far removed as Thebes),[197] enables assemblies to be placed directly under the microscope in a way which Euripides' *Suppliants* avoids. It makes sense, then, that the closest *Suppliants* comes to criticising democracy in practice is Theseus' remarks about Adrastus being led astray by young men's excitement: a flaw which readily evokes antidemocratic criticisms of group psychology in Athens, but here applied to Argos.[198]

We need not prove that the Herald argues strongly against democracy, or Theseus weakly in its favour, to understand that Euripides' *Suppliants* is far from an uncomplicated paean to democracy. Theseus' criticisms of Argive politics have correctly been interpreted as a complex evocation of stereotyped group psychology, which might offer ammunition to the Theban Herald's criticisms of democracy. Furthermore, Theseus' power over the democratic process, as well as being anachronistic,[199] has double-edged political implications which have given critics pause. Whereas Adrastus couches his plea in terms addressed to the entire *polis*, Theseus seems to depict the democratic process as confirmation of his own decision rather than an open group decision, most prominently at 349-55.[200] Furthermore, as Adrastus highlights, although Theseus claims to be rejecting the suppliants in the interests of Athens (247), the decision not

[197] Thebes' significance as tragic setting has been much discussed, beginning with the classic treatment by Zeitlin (1990a). Argos has been less discussed, although cf. Zeitlin (1990a: 145-6), Saïd (1993).
[198] Morwood (2009: 358) acknowledges the fact that Theseus' subtle criticism of democracy is removed from Athens, but sees this more as Theseus conceding the imperfections in democracy in order to lend greater force to his side in the subsequent *agôn*.
[199] Cf. Easterling (1985) for a wider account of how Athenian tragedy handles the tension resulting from anachronistic political structures.
[200] Gamble (1970: 400-401); Storey (2008: 42). Mills (2020: 865) compares this inconsistent "oddity" to Demophon in *Heraclidae*, who unilaterally decides to help the children but subsequently changes his mind due to apparent popular opinion (415-19).

to present their case to the *dêmos* means that Theseus effectively makes the decision for them (257). In allowing Aethra's arguments to win him over, moreover, several scholars have argued that Theseus surrenders to the very same emotion-based argumentation which he criticises in Argos (and, by extension, which characterise stereotyped flaws in the democratic decision-making process).[201] The first half of Euripides' *Suppliants* allows arguments against democracy to be articulated, and Theseus is far from an uncomplicated paragon of its virtues as a political system. It is striking that no assembly-scene is provided, though, and I speculate (despite the alternative possible reasons why it might have been undesirable to allocate space for an extended depiction of the assembly) that, in a tragedy set in Athens, in-depth scrutiny of the *dêmos* itself in action – which might seem to endorse the conclusion that group decision-making as a concept was flawed – was a bridge too far. The following sections of this chapter demonstrate how two tragedies set in Argos embrace the possibilities for scrutinising an assembly's decision and setting it against elite characters' attempts to influence that decision.

Section B: Aeschylus' *Suppliants*

At first glance, *Suppliants* appears to be a model of democratic interaction between ruler and *dêmos*: Pelasgus refuses to make a decision without consulting the assembly. In this regard, it has been contrasted with Euripides' *Heracleidae* and *Suppliants*.[202] Some analyses, though, have found the process by which the *dêmos* is consulted rather more problematic, and argue that the off-stage *dêmos* has limited agency:[203] as a result of the Danaids' threat, Pelasgus has predetermined what the result of the assembly must be and manipulates it by providing incomplete information concerning the Danaids' presence and motives.[204] This section posits a middle ground between these views. It argues that *Suppliants* consistently encourages us to

[201] Michelini (1994: 232); Hesk (2011: 131).
[202] For Euripides' *Suppliants*, cf. Fitton (1961: 444-5); for *Heracleidae*, cf. Burian (1977b: 6).
[203] E.g. Burian (2007: 206); this is implicit in Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: i.38): "the Danaids' success with Pelasgus, *and consequently with* the Argive people" (emphasis mine).
[204] Carter (2013); Sommerstein (1997: 75).

think about an assembly's decision-making processes, and how elite individuals influence them. From the Danaids' arrival in Argos, they immediately consider how they can persuade the local population to protect them. Danaus' instructions revolve around the Danaids' self-characterisation rather than explaining the reasons for their presence; the fact that this approach is then abandoned implies that the advice Danaus provided was tailored towards persuading the imaginary Argive army, not the individual Pelasgus. Subsequently, Pelasgus' interactions with the assembly do not imply uncomplicated manipulation and exploitation; nor, though, is this an idealised democracy in which the assembly makes a completely uninfluenced decision. Rather, Pelasgus initially intends to consult the *dêmos* openly; as his negotiations with the Danaids continue, though, he increasingly understands what the correct answer must be. In exerting influence over the Argive assembly, Pelasgus echoes the strategies which Danaus previously suggested. *Suppliants*, then, offers a nuanced view of the backstage processes through which a *dêmos* makes decisions. Elite individuals understand the importance of the assembly's independent decision – some for more idealistic, others for pragmatic reasons – but they also discuss what that decision should be, and how they can influence it. The assembly-scene is at once an assertion of the *dêmos*' will and a demonstration of the extent to which this will can be influenced by elite individuals.

From an early point in *Suppliants*, it becomes clear that the Danaids' fate will rest on persuading the Argive *dêmos*. Danaus suggests how best to do this (181-203):

ὁρῶ κόνιν, ἄναυδον ἄγγελον στρατοῦ·
σύριγγες οὐ σιγῶσιν ἀξονήλατοι·
ὄχλον δ᾽ ὑπασπιστῆρα καὶ δορυσσόον
λεύσσω ξὺν ἵπποις καμπύλοις τ᾽ ὀχήμασιν·
τάχ᾽ ἂν πρὸς ἡμᾶς τῆσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέται
ὀπτῆρες εἶεν ἀγγέλων πεπυσμένοι.

ἀλλ᾽ εἴτ᾽ ἀπήμων εἴτε καὶ τεθηγμένος
ὠμῇ ξὺν ὀργῇ τῶνδ᾽ ἐπόρνυται στόλος,
ἄμεινόν ἐστι παντὸς οὕνεκ᾽, ὦ κόραι,
πάγον προσίζειν τόνδ᾽ ἀγωνίων θεῶν.
κρεῖσσον δὲ πύργου βωμός, ἄρρηκτον σάκος.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα βᾶτε καὶ λευκοστεφεῖς
ἱκτηρίας, ἀγάλματ᾽ αἰδοίου Διός,
σεμνῶς ἔχουσαι διὰ χερῶν εὐωνύμων,
αἰδοῖα καὶ γοεδνὰ καὶ ζαχρεῖ᾽ ἔπη
ξένους ἀμείβεσθ᾽, ὡς ἐπήλυδας πρέπει,
τορῶς λέγουσαι τάσδ᾽ ἀναιμάκτους φυγάς.
φθογγῇ δ᾽ ἐπέσθω πρῶτα μὲν τὸ μὴ θρασύ,
τὸ μὴ μάταιον δ᾽ ἐκ †μετώπω σωφρονῶν†
ἴτω προσώπων ὄμματος παρ᾽ ἡσύχου·
καὶ μὴ πρόλεσχος μηδ᾽ ἐφολκὸς ἐν λόγῳ
γένῃ. τὸ τῇδε κάρτ᾽ ἐπίφθονον γένος.
μέμνησο δ᾽ εἴκειν· χρεῖος εἶ ξένη φυγάς·
θρασυστομεῖν γὰρ οὐ πρέπει τοὺς ἥσσονας.

The assembly-scene in *Suppliants* casts a long shadow over the play: the anticipation of the Argive army also introduces the topic of how to influence a group's decision. The imaginary off-stage group (κόνιν … στρατοῦ, 180) makes the Danaids feel threatened. At its heart, this threat is military: the Danaids are encouraged to find a κρεῖσσον δὲ πύργου βωμός (190) for protection, recasting the altar as a military defence. However, Danaus views this as an opportunity for the Danaids to plead for safety before the entire population. The plurals and collective nouns used by Danaus suggest that the Danaids must persuade not the individual

leader of this army, but the Argive army in general: ξένους ἀμείβεσθ' (195), τὸ τῇδε κάρτ' ἐπίφθονον γένος (201). The types of argument which Danaus then suggests are instructive. Danaus gives the women only brief advice on what to say (τορῶς λέγουσαι τάσδ' ἀναιμάκτους φυγάς, 196); he focuses on *how* they should say it, and how they should characterise themselves. He emphasises the visual image which the Danaids should project: they must present a scene that will encourage pity, wielding λευκοστεφεῖς | ἱκτηρίας (191-2). He then tells them to speak αἰδοῖα καὶ γοεδνὰ καὶ ζαχρεῖ' ἔπη (194) to arouse their audience's respect and pity; subsequently, he teaches them to avoid displaying attitudes which might anger their listeners (200-201). The closing section, again, suggests that the Argives will be interested not in what the Danaids say, but in their self-characterisation: μέμνησο δ' εἴκειν· χρεῖος εἶ ξένη φυγάς· | θρασυστομεῖν γὰρ οὐ πρέπει τοὺς ἥσσονας (202-3). Danaus is acutely aware of the importance of the Argives' emotions, which are categorised as either angry (ξὺν ὀργῇ, 187) or not (ἀπήμων, 186). As well as demonstrating the importance of channelling the Argives' collective emotions in order to influence their decision, this plays into the stereotypical idea that anger or its absence plays a crucial role in group decision-making (Chapter 1 Section C2). The implication is that they will be less interested in the facts of the Danaids' flight: indeed, Danaus does not mention the principal reasons for their flight (their pursuit by the Aegyptids) or their legal right to Argive citizenship (15-18). Rather, faced with an imaginary army to persuade, Danaus prioritises not facts but personality traits: he focuses on how the Danaids should attract sympathy by portraying themselves as pitiable, submissive and reverent. This implies that the army's decision is likely to be swayed for emotional reasons – a common trope in prose discussions of group decision-making (Chapter 1 Section C1).

Subsequent events imply that Danaus' advice was targeted particularly at persuading a large group. When Pelasgus appears on stage, the Chorus seems to ignore Danaus' previous advice. Rather than depending on visual imagery and emotive self-characterisation, they exhaustively

prove their Argive descent (291ff.), and use this to justify their claim to Pelasgus' help (323-4); only then do they begin explaining their misfortune (335) and subsequently appeal to Pelasgus emotionally (348-53). The point here is that Danaus' schooling aimed to teach the Chorus how to persuade, specifically, a *group*. The Chorus ignores this advice because, unexpectedly, they find themselves addressing and attempting to persuade only the *individual* Pelasgus. When the Chorus asks Pelasgus whom they are addressing (246-8), part of what they want to understand is whether they are seeking to persuade an individual or a group. From the distant dust-cloud, they have been expecting an army. Even after Pelasgus and his retinue appear on stage, the plural nature of the verb προσφωνοῦμεν (236) makes the resolution of this question unclear; μόνον τόδ᾽ Ἑλλὰς χθὼν συνοίσεται †στόχῳ (243) also implies that the Danaids' presence is being scrutinised by Greece itself. After the Chorus' question concerning their audience's identity, though, Pelasgus' individual nature is emphasised in his response: πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ἀμείβου καὶ λέγ᾽ εὐθαρσὴς **ἐμοί**· | τοῦ γηγενοῦς γάρ **εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ** Παλαίχθονος … (249-50). Subsequently, there is still a reminder of the importance of *polis*-wide decision-making (273), which foreshadows the role taken later by the Argive *dêmos*; however, Pelasgus identifies himself as not only τῆσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέτης (251) but also the individual to whom the Chorus must address their argument. The singular ἀρχηγέτης echoes, but departs from, the plural τῆσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέται (184) which Danaus was previously expecting. As a result, the Chorus radically adapts their prepared arguments.

The early scenes of *Suppliants*, then, contain implicit discourse on how to persuade the entire population. Danaus instructs the Danaids on how best to appeal to the approaching army, instructions which are conspicuously disregarded when the individual Pelasgus appears. Soon after, though, Pelasgus attempts to return the responsibility of this decision to the *dêmos*' collective shoulders, initiating further discussion of the role which the off-stage assembly will take. Initially, Pelasgus reminds us that he represents the city's interests (356-8) and is

motivated by the city's safety. The series of democratic sentiments he offers, though, are not as clear-cut as has previously been believed. His initial response is the following (365-9):

> οὗτοι κάθησθε δωμάτων ἐφέστιοι
> ἐμῶν· τὸ κοινὸν δ᾽ εἰ μιαίνεται πόλις,
> ξυνῇ μελέσθω λαὸς ἐκπονεῖν ἄκη.
> ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἂν οὐ κραίνοιμ᾽ ὑπόσχεσιν πάρος,
> ἀστοῖς δὲ πᾶσι τῶνδε κοινώσας πέρι.

Pelasgus does not deliver the resoundingly pro-democratic sentiments that Theseus later articulates in Euripides' *Suppliants*. However, the argument that the Argive citizens (not him) are the stakeholders, and therefore should make the decision independently, is close enough to an argument for democracy in principle. Following this, however, Pelasgus moves to indecision (376-80), then self-preservation (397-401):

> οὐκ εὔκριτον τὸ κρῖμα· μή μ᾽ αἱροῦ κριτήν.
> εἶπον δὲ καὶ πρίν, οὐκ ἄνευ δήμου τάδε
> πράξαιμ᾽ ἄν, οὐδέ περ κρατῶν, μὴ καί ποτε
> εἴπῃ λεώς, εἴ πού τι μὴ τοῖον τύχοι,
> "ἐπήλυδας τιμῶν ἀπώλεσας πόλιν."

Here, Pelasgus suggests that his preference for democratic decision-making is underpinned by self-interest. In the words οὐκ εὔκριτον τὸ κρῖμα· μή μ᾽ αἱροῦ κριτήν (397), it is difficult not to see a causal link, along the lines suggested by Burian:[205] Pelasgus does not want to decide the issue, *because* it is difficult to decide and both options seem disastrous. οὐκ ἄνευ δήμου τάδε | πράξαιμ᾽ ἄν (398-9) repeats his previous insistence on seeking the *dêmos*' views; however, the subsequent lines imply that this is also motivated by fear that the population will

[205] Burian (2007: 203-4).

seek vengeance upon him for ignoring their views (399-401). This, in itself, casts doubt on the ideological principles behind Pelasgus' ostensibly democratic approach. Furthermore, it aligns the Argive *dêmos* with the idea that, in times of crisis, a group will always search for a scapegoat and blame its leader (Chapter 1 C3). Later, Pelasgus articulates this motif in language that casts it almost as a universal truth: ἀρχῆς γὰρ φιλαίτιος λεώς (485). As a prominent elite figure, Pelasgus' position is dangerous: it is repeatedly pointed out that he risks either incurring the wrath of Zeus Hikesios (347, 359-64, 385-6, 413-16, 478-9) or driving the city into a dangerous war. We now learn that part of this danger comes from the *dêmos* itself, as we see a ruler considering the *dêmos*' psychology in advance of an important decision.

Pelasgus, then, is not a principled supporter of democracy. In contrast to the more overtly pro-democratic sentiments uttered by (for example) Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants*, most of Pelasgus' democratic sentiments come with qualifying motivations. Pelasgus' approach to the *dêmos* is not that of a *tyrannos*.[206] He states repeatedly that the decision should be made by the *dêmos*, and is distanced from the Chorus' uncompromising statement that σύ τοι πόλις, σὺ δὲ τὸ δήμιον (370). Unlike Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants*, even when Pelasgus departs to win over the *dêmos*, he does not unilaterally promise that they *will* vote in the Danaids' favour. The depiction of Pelasgus at the helm of Argos' democracy, then, is nuanced. Pelasgus comes across as a character who considers it important that the assembly reaches an independent decision; some of his reasons for this are based on principle (365-9) while others are rather

[206] Burian (2007: 203-4) argues that Pelasgus has the power to act without the dêmos' approval, given that he introduces himself as king (251-2, 260-9), but later withdraws from the burden of making this decision as he becomes aware of its difficult implications. It is true that Pelasgus does not raise the importance of democratic decision-making until he has become aware of the difficulties posed by the Danaids' presence. However, this makes intuitive sense: why refer a decision to the demos if there is no decision to be made? Burian's argument overemphasises the language Pelasgus uses to introduce himself, which should be set against the typical tragic anachronism of a ruler such as Pelasgus coexisting with a democracy; furthermore, the word ἀρχηγέτης (251), with its Athenian and democratic overtones, does not imply monarchic power.
Burian's argument is based on the interpretation of οὐδέ περ κρατῶν (399) as "though I have the power [to act without their approval]", an interpretation which the author has subsequently doubted (though Friis Johansen/Whittle [1980: *ad loc*.] accept it unproblematically). If it should indeed be translated in this fashion, it is entirely possible that the power to which Pelasgus refers is in fact his power to influence the Argive assembly in the way which he eventually does.

more pragmatic (e.g. 397-401). Some of these pragmatic considerations, moreover, are underpinned by considering how the *dêmos*' psychology (which echoes depictions of group decision-making psychology found in prose texts) will guide their response to the outcome of a poor decision.

Furthermore, Pelasgus later echoes Danaus' previous advice on persuading groups. He encourages the Danaids to place branches on the altars (483-5), and explicitly explains that this will affect the Argives' emotions (486-9):

> καὶ γὰρ τάχ᾽ ἄν τις οἰκτίσας ἰδὼν τάδε
> ὕβριν μὲν ἐχθήρειεν ἄρσενος στόλου,
> ὑμῖν δ᾽ ἂν εἴη δῆμος εὐμενέστερος·
> τοῖς ἥσσοσιν γὰρ πᾶς τις εὐνοίας φέρει.

Pelasgus encourages the Danaids to arrange themselves in order to attract pity (οἰκτίσας, 486) hatred for their Aegyptid pursuers (ὕβριν … ἐχθήρειεν, 487) and kindness (εὐμενέστερος, 488; εὐνοίας, 489) towards their vividly-portrayed vulnerability (τοῖς ἥσσοσιν, 489). This reinforces the idea that the Argives must be encouraged to pity the Danaids using a visual τέκμαρ (483): Pelasgus understands that the Argives will be more willing to vote in the Danaids' favour if they are already on their side emotionally.[207] Pelasgus then departs, not to consult the people in open-minded fashion, but to convince them of his viewpoint:[208] ἐγὼ δὲ λαοὺς συγκαλῶν ἐγχωρίους | σπεύσω, τὸ κοινὸν ὡς ἂν εὐμενὲς τιθῶ (517-18). Again, an important motif implicit in this stated intention is that what matters is not the information given to the people, but their mood and emotional allegiance: ὡς ἂν εὐμενὲς τιθῶ.

[207] Carter (2013: 33) highlights this as an example of Pelasgus' political skill in securing popular consent; cf. Sommerstein (1997: 75).
[208] Meier (1993: 90), Schwab (2011: 32). Carter (2013: 33) emphasises Pelasgus' departing invocation of πειθώ ... καὶ τύχη (523), arguing that it foreshadows the importance of persuasion in swaying the *dêmos* (623-4).

Danaus describes the off-stage assembly as follows (605-609, 615-24):

ἔδοξεν Ἀργείοισιν, οὐ διχορρόπως,
ἀλλ᾽ ὥστ᾽ ἀνηβῆσαί με γηραιᾷ φρενί·
πανδημίᾳ γὰρ χερσὶ δεξιωνύμοις
ἔφριξεν αἰθὴρ τόνδε κραινόντων λόγον.
…
τοιάνδ᾽ ἔπειθε ῥῆσιν ἀμφ᾽ ἡμῶν λέγων
ἄναξ Πελασγῶν, ἱκεσίου Ζηνὸς κότον
μέγαν προφωνῶν μήποτ᾽ εἰσόπιν χρόνου
πόλιν παχῦναι, ξενικὸν ἀστικόν θ᾽ ἅμα
λέγων διπλοῦν μίασμα πρὸς πόλεως φανὲν
ἀμήχανον βόσκημα πημονῆς πέλειν.
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀκούων χερσὶν Ἀργεῖος λεὼς
ἔκραν᾽ ἄνευ κλητῆρος ὡς εἶναι τάδε·
δημηγόρους δ᾽ ἤκουσεν εὐπειθὴς στροφὰς
δῆμος Πελασγῶν, Ζεὺς δ᾽ ἐπέκρανεν τέλος.

In some ways, this evokes an Athenian democratic debate:[209] markers include the voting by show of hands (604, 607, 621),[210] the potential punishment of *atimia*,[211] the formulaic language used of assembly decrees.[212] Equally, this is a problematic depiction of an assembly-wide decision. As Burian observes, the extremely short nature of this episode, with the focus predominantly on the thought processes of Pelasgus, makes the vote seem perfunctory.[213] The

[209] *Pace* Burian (2007: 202).
[210] Sommerstein (1997: 75).
[211] Ibid.
[212] Carter (2013: 31): e.g. δήμου δέδοκται (601) and ἔδοξεν Ἀργείοισιν (605); cf. Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad* 601, 605, 609-14).
[213] Burian (2007: 206).

Argives' unanimity (605, 607-8) also poses interpretive difficulties. As Carter notes, παντελῆ ψηφίσματα (601) is an emphatic and unambiguous display of unanimity;[214] moreover, οὐ διχορρόπως (605) may well explicitly mean "without dissent" in this context.[215] This in itself is not necessarily problematic: as Canevaro argues, it is likely that a unanimous or near-unanimous consensus was the norm in Athenian assemblies.[216] However, the sheer spontaneity of the vote (ἔκραν᾽ ἄνευ κλητῆρος, 622) ensures that no opposing argument would be heard.[217] We hear that Pelasgus has deployed religion-based rhetoric, threatening pollution (619) and the anger of the gods (616), in order to persuade the *dêmos*. He appeals directly to the Argives' fear, which was broadly accepted by Attic prose texts as a key emotion in group decision-making (Chapter 1 C4). He does not explain the context of the Danaids' flight, their reasons for supplication in Argos,[218] or the potential danger of war resulting from accepting them.[219] Instead, Pelasgus ensures that the Argives are so awestruck by the threat of divine anger that they vote spontaneously, ensuring that no opposition can be heard.[220] A δῆμος this may be, but an εὐπειθὴς … δῆμος (623-4).[221] Furthermore, this seems to give Pelasgus licence to act in authoritarian fashion subsequently: in his exchange with the Herald, he responds to the

[214] Carter (2013: 31).
[215] Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad loc.*). Unanimity must, moreover, be the meaning of πανδημίᾳ (607), given its strong emphasis (Ibid. *ad loc.*).
[216] Canevaro (2018); *pace* Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad* 607).
[217] Carter (2013: 31).
[218] Sommerstein (1997: 75).
[219] Sommerstein (1997: 75). Carter (2013: 31) considers it "worrying […] that there is not a word of opposition to a proposal that risks leading the city into war", but does not mention that the *demos* could not have known this, given the limited information with which they were furnished.
[220] Carter (2013: 31-2) asks "how can they tell what they are voting for if the vote has not been announced?" However, this omission is likely a result of dramatic economy: it is intuitively clear that they are voting in favour of Pelasgus' arguments, and we need not expect direct correspondence to the procedure of the Athenian assembly. What is more telling, though, is how, on a psychological level, they have been stirred into such enthusiasm that they are driven to raise their hands, *en masse*, before being invited to, thus eliding the formal announcement of the motion and the opportunity for other speakers to offer their opinions. This suggests that their decisions are being driven by emotion rather than reason: a parallel can be found in Thucydides 6.26, where the voting body is swayed by its emotions into voting spontaneously, although it is admittedly not fully clear whether ἀκούσαντες δ᾽ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐψηφίσαντο **εὐθὺς** reflects immediate spontaneity or simply speed. This comes immediately after an unnamed Athenian seems to play to the audience's emotions, set against the logical reason used by Nicias: καὶ τέλος παρελθών τις τῶν Ἀθηναίων καὶ παρακαλέσας τὸν Νικίαν οὐκ ἔφη χρῆναι προφασίζεσθαι οὐδὲ διαμέλλειν (6.25.1).
[221] Carter (2013: 32) highlights the importance of lines 623-4, as well as (33) the fact that they have been delayed to obscure the crucial revelation of why exactly the *dêmos* voted in the Danaids' favour.

Herald's legalistic approach (916, 918, 924) with aggression (911-15) and threats (925).[222] More alarmingly, he unilaterally accepts the Herald's declaration of war (944ff.), despite not having warned the people of this possibility.[223] Pelasgus secures the *dêmos*' approval in the most general possible terms, then interprets this approval flexibly and acts unilaterally. We remain acutely aware, moreover, that the war for which the assembly has unknowingly voted will be disastrous for Argos.[224]

A strand of thought in prose texts argues that democracies could easily transform into tyrannies (*Resp*. 564-9), and that the activity of unscrupulous manipulative speakers turned democracy into tyranny (*Resp*. 568C). The end of *Suppliants* seems to foreshadow this strand of thought: Danaus re-enters the stage not merely as the guide of the Chorus, but as a *tyrannos*.[225] Of course, Danaus is not (yet) the ruler of Argos; however, the escort of spearmen who accompany Danaus from 980 onwards seem to recast him in the role of an oppressive tyrant (in the modern sense) who must fear an unexpected death (987-8).[226] The brief, off-hand explanation ὡς ἔχοιμι τίμιον γέρας (986) comes across as a half-hearted, euphemistic screen, attempting to obscure (and thus emphasising by attempted omission) the hint that Danaus must be protected from a hostile people.[227] Moreover, Danaus' ὀπαδοὺς τούσδε καὶ δορυσσόους (985), especially the rare word δορυσσόος,[228] echoes the Argive ὄχλον … δορυσσόον (182) by which the Danaids

[222] Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad loc*.) argue that Pelasgus' threat at 925 would be regarded by a Greek audience as a serious fault, given heralds' sacrosanct status.
[223] Sommerstein (1997: 75).
[224] Ibid.
[225] In the ancient sense if not the modern sense: this seems to prefigure the future in which. For a summary of the traditions in which Danaus becomes the sole ruler of Argos, cf. Cunningham (1953: 228-31). Zeitlin (1990b: 106), moreover, suggests that Danaus' autocratic rule over his daughters foreshadows Danaus becoming a political *tyrannos* in the next part of the trilogy.
[226] Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: i.43); for the *tyrannos*' request of a bodyguard as a defining step between democracy and tyranny, cf. Pl. *Resp*. 566b, 568d, Arist. *Rh*. 1357b30-6.
[227] Furthermore, as Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad loc.*) point out, there is nothing in the play to explain why Danaus should receive a τίμιον γέρας.
[228] This word is used only three times in Aeschylus, the only other instance being in *Sept*. 124, where it describes the ἀγήνορες πρέποντες attacking the city. One might be tempted to posit that δορυσσόος is used to convey a threat by Aeschylus; however, the sample size is simply too small to draw such a conclusion. The one instance we find in Euripides, at *Heracl*. 774, has a similar context of the speaker feeling threatened by an impending army (πόρευσον ἄλλᾳ τὸν οὐ δικαίως | τᾷδ' ἐπάγοντα δορυσσοῦν | στρατὸν Ἀργόθεν); the word appears to be used simply as a descriptive epithet by Soph. *OC* 1313 δορυσσοῦς Ἀμφιάρεως, but this may well be designed to

felt threatened earlier.[229] This implies that Danaus now has power over the same Argive army which threatened him and the Danaids earlier: previously, after all, his instructions to the Danaids demonstrated a thorough command of the psychology of large groups, and how best to persuade them and gain their support. As such, Danaus charts a clear path from the speaker capable of persuading a population to the sole ruler of that population. He follows the same path which Plato would subsequently chart: from βούλαρχος | καὶ στασίαρχος (11-12) through orator to *tyrannos*.

Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, then, offers a detailed depiction of how the decision made by an assembly takes shape over time. This is partly achieved through the off-stage assembly-scene, which shows us how expertly Pelasgus shapes a case convincing enough to sideline potential opposition and win the *dêmos*' unanimous support. From this scene alone, we might conclude that Pelasgus is a clichéd unscrupulous orator, who manipulates the assembly into an incorrect decision and precipitates a disastrous and ultimately futile war. However, the anatomy of the decision in *Suppliants* contains more than just the assembly scene itself: the early scenes of the play invert the democratic processes that the audience would normally see, by placing the back-stage negotiations that lead up to the assembly on stage and in full view. These early scenes present a more complex picture. Not only is Pelasgus exposed to both sides of the argument (and the even more disastrous potential consequences of refusing the Danaids' supplication); he explicitly wants the *dêmos* to reach an independent decision, and is only pushed reluctantly into guiding their decision; he avoids the much more coercive approach which the Danaids demand, refusing to act unilaterally as though he were the *polis* (370).[230] The *dêmos*' approval is genuine, and nothing Pelasgus tells them is false; however, he offers them selective

highlight the intertext with Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, given that the context is describing the seven armies' siege of Thebes.

[229] As noted by Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: *ad loc.*). This highlights the resemblance which Friis Johansen/Whittle (1980: i.43) find between Danaus' return at 980 and Pelasgus' previous entries at 234 and 911.

[230] For the Danaids' fundamentally coercive understanding of political power, cf. (e.g.) Burian (2007: 206).

information, both about the Danaids' identity and the threats they face. In depicting characters who conduct preliminary negotiations concerning the assembly's verdict, Aeschylus depicts the ways in which elite individuals might tread a politically complex path: finding ways to guide and influence the *dêmos*, while similarly articulating their desire for an idealised democracy.

In doing so, both Danaus and Pelasgus actively discuss the *dêmos*' decision-making psychology, which often reflects tropes found in fifth-century discourse on group decision-making. They frequently talk about the assembly in terms of its emotions, considering how to make them pity the Danaids, avoid their anger and inspire fear at the possibility of divine retribution. They both, seemingly independently, decide that visual images will win over the *dêmos*. Pelasgus' preference for democratic process is also articulated through the fear that the *dêmos*' collective tendency to find scapegoats will undermine his position, including their tendency to make decisions for emotional reasons (especially anger or fear) and to hunt for scapegoats among their leaders. Pelasgus' sharp awareness of the *dêmos*' psychology, and his explicit decision to use this psychology to guide their decision, demonstrates how he finds an unstable middle ground between enabling democracy to function unimpeded and ensuring that the assembly reaches what he knows is the 'correct' decision.

And yet, as the audience already knows, this decision is 'correct' only in that it is the lesser of two evils; the rest of the trilogy allows the disastrous consequences of the assembly's decision to unfold. In highlighting how Pelasgus guides the *dêmos*' decision, *Suppliants* demonstrates the flaws inherent in the careful balance which Pelasgus constructs: the risks which Pelasgus omits in his speech before the assembly (i.e. the danger of war, which he previously acknowledged on stage) are exactly what comes to pass. More generally, Pelasgus' handling of the *dêmos* points to a darker reading of *Suppliants*. Danaus is aligned with the Danaids' coercive and monarchic conception of the Argive government; it is worrying, then, that the

persuasive strategy suggested by Pelasgus so closely matches Danaus' earlier advice. Similarly, the series of increasingly aggressive decisions which Pelasgus unilaterally makes in the aftermath of the assembly implies a dangerously flexible interpretation of the mandate he has been accorded by the vote. Pelasgus' increasingly aggressive posture mirrors Danaus' progress from suppliant leader to (it is implied) a position of unchallenged power in Argos, complete with bodyguard. This closing scene implies that political cracks are beginning to appear even before the war's consequences are revealed; furthermore, this hints at the wider political implications of individuals being able to understand and exploit the type of reasoning that persuades an assembly, foreshadowing the formula subsequently articulated by Plato of the demagogue becoming a tyrant.

Section C: *Orestes*

It has frequently been noted that Euripides' *Orestes* drastically alters the trial found in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.[231] The vote will now be taken by the entire *dêmos* and the format of the debate has changed, to the extent that it structurally resembles the assembly-scene of Aeschylus' *Suppliants*.[232] Moreover, we are explicitly told that Orestes' trial is located in the place where Danaus convened an assembly, which may well encourage comparison with Aeschylus' *Suppliants*.[233] The decision-making group in *Eumenides* is not only smaller but select: Athena departs promising that κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα | ἥξω (*Eum*. 487-8). In *Orestes*, though the play is set in Argos, the jury reaches its verdict in a manner which broadly evokes the Athenian assembly.[234] It is useful that two of tragedy's most direct depictions of democracy in action represent the same episode from the same myth, but with

[231] E.g. Wolff (1968: 133-4); Euben (1986); Hall (1993b: 266); Wright (2008: 106); Naiden (2010: 68ff.); Barker (2011: 155).
[232] Barker (2011: 155).
[233] Schein (1975: 60); Easterling (1997b: 33); Pelling (2000: 165).
[234] Pelling (2000: 165) notes the imprecise nature of some evocations of Athenian democratic procedure in *Orestes*. Some have gone further in finding specific correspondences between Athenian political figures and characters in *Orestes*, e.g. De Romilly (1972: 245-6); Hall (1993b: 267).

several variables (not least the outcome itself) altered: this enables us to assess what might be interpreted as affecting groups' decision-making processes in a democratic context, and how these processes are represented by characters and dramatists alike.

Scholarship underestimates the importance of group decision-making in *Orestes*.[235] Several characters claim the power to manipulate the *dêmos* and offer detailed mechanisms by which (they claim) the *dêmos*' psychology can be influenced. For this reason, the democratic politics of *Orestes* are commonly considered problematic, often by implicit comparison with the democratic paradigm offered by *Eumenides*.[236] This section argues that interpretations such as these have overlooked one of Euripides' most substantial innovations in the Orestes myth: the inclusion of a large decision-making collective whose opinion of Orestes begins forming long before the trial scene, rather than making their decision in a vacuum as seems to be the case in *Eumenides*. Throughout the play, we are acutely aware of the *dêmos*' powerful and even threatening presence: they surround Orestes, preventing his escape, and their seemingly hostile opinion of him coalesces across the play. In the off-stage assembly-scene, the depiction of the *dêmos*' decision-making process is unprecedented in its detail. The trial is filled with stereotyped oratorical figures, who are automatically assumed to have influence over the *dêmos*' decision. Analysis of this scene has focused excessively on the speakers and omitted important hints of the assembly's reaction to their speeches. This section acknowledges the difficulty in assessing the assembly's responses to speeches uttered off-stage, reported by an openly partisan Messenger. However, the collective reactions as reported are distinctly incongruous with the narrative of persuasion by an unscrupulous demagogue, and perhaps encourage us to imagine that they merely confirm a decision made long in advance by their community-wide opinion of Orestes. The emphasis on sentencing and the absence of discussion

[235] Easterling (1997b: 28-33) is a well-argued exception to this rule.
[236] Barker (2011: 159) emphasises the fact that Euripides divorces the act of institutionalising the law-court from his re-enactment of Orestes' trial; as such, this paradigmatic nature is absent from *Orestes*.

concerning δίκη, compared to the trial in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, creates the impression that Orestes has been considered guilty by the community from the very beginning. In this complex and morally dark play, this perhaps adds a promising hint that the *dêmos* is capable of making decisions independent of elites who hope to manipulate it, and undercuts the bold claims of Tyndareus, Menelaus and Orestes. The *dêmos* does not make its decisions in a vacuum; rather, the extant body of community-wide received wisdom plays a significant role.

In *Orestes*, the *dêmos*' important role is signalled early with Electra's mention of the imminent vote (48-9); furthermore, the words ἔδοξε δ' Ἄργει (46) evoke the language used to record decisions made by the Athenian assembly.[237] Our attention is drawn not only to the decision, but to the decision-makers and their existing views. The population is against Orestes well before the assembly begins:[238] μισούμεθ' οὕτως ὥστε μὴ προσεννέπειν (428) implies a powerful antipathy. Specific individuals within the population, moreover, have predetermined allegiances (428-433):

Ὀρ: **μισούμεθ' οὕτως ὥστε μὴ προσεννέπειν.**

Μεν: οὐδ' ἤγνισαι σὸν αἷμα κατὰ νόμον χεροῖν;

Ὀρ: **ἐκκλῄομαι γὰρ δωμάτων ὅποι μόλω**. 430

Μεν: τίνες πολιτῶν ἐξαμιλλῶνταί σε γῆς;

Ὀρ: Οἵαξ, τὸ Τροίας μῖσος ἀναφέρων πατρί.

Μεν: συνῆκα· Παλαμήδους σε τιμωρεῖ φόνου.

Argos is suffused with existing hatred of Orestes. We also learn that Orestes is physically restrained by the Argive population (430), which will form a recurring motif: as well as

[237] De Romilly (1972: 237); Wright (2008: 107); Barker (2011: 149). The depiction of Argive politics echoes contemporary Athens: Euben (1986: 222); Hall (1993b: 284). Here, as elsewhere, Pelling (2000: 165) notes the inexact nature of this echo.

[238] Carter (2013: 39, 43); he points out, additionally, that the provisional decree denying Orestes and Electra food and shelter (46-8) hardly bodes well for their prospects.

demonstrating emotional animosity towards him, they also form a hostile physical presence. Orestes redirects Menelaus' attention to Oeax, a 'citizen' (presumably in a leadership role) who allegedly stirs up the Trojans' hatred; he also attributes responsibility to friends of Aegisthus (435-6). There is no suggestion that Orestes is lying here; that said, it suits Orestes to argue that the population is being turned against him by a handful of unscrupulous individuals with private agendas. As such, it is likely that Orestes would try to present what is evidently a widespread feeling as the opinion of only a small number of citizens. In this regard, his explanation is similar to the subsequent account given by the explicitly biased Messenger, who pushes a narrative of unscrupulous individuals manipulating the *dêmos*. Given the strength of feeling which Argos collectively experiences, we are perhaps disinclined to hold a small group of individuals responsible.

Furthermore, stereotypes surrounding group psychology (on which the assembly's decision will, to an extent, rest) recur throughout the lead-up to Orestes' trial. Orestes takes it for granted that, despite the ostensible openness of the trial, he will be condemned to death (440-46):

Ὀρ: ψῆφος καθ᾽ ἡμῶν οἴσεται τῇδ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ. 440
Με: [φεύγειν πόλιν τήνδ᾽; ἢ θανεῖν ἢ μὴ θανεῖν;
Ὀρ: **θανεῖν ὑπ᾽ ἀστῶν** λευσίμῳ πετρώματι.]
Με: κᾆτ᾽ οὐχὶ φεύγεις γῆς ὑπερβάλλων ὅρους;
Ὀρ: **κύκλῳ γὰρ εἱλισσόμεθα** παγχάλκοις ὅπλοις.
Με: ἰδίᾳ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν ἢ πρὸς Ἀργείας χερός; 445
Ὀρ: πάντων πρὸς ἀστῶν, **ὡς θάνω**· βραχὺς λόγος.

It is worth bearing in mind that we are viewing the *dêmos* through the lens of Orestes' intense pessimism, which previously bordered on madness (cf. 255f. for Orestes' hallucinations). Nevertheless, it is telling that Orestes presents the *dêmos*' verdict as a *fait accompli*. He takes

it for granted that he will be condemned to death (442, 446). Furthermore, our attention is again drawn to the Argives' threatening physical presence. The fact that Orestes is surrounded by armed citizens (444) makes sense as a way of preventing a defendant's escape, but nevertheless implies collective hostility towards him. Regardless of the precise reasons for its presence, this surrounding group feels instinctively frightening due to its marked physical presence.[239] Line 442, if genuine,[240] provides us with one of several suggestions that Orestes will be stoned to death; this recurs at various points.[241] Stoning is a quintessential depiction of *group* violence; its recurrence, and apparent inevitability, ensures that an ordered disciplined vote is associated closely with motifs of spontaneous, murderous violence (Chapter 1 C5).[242] Subsequently, the imagery of a menacing surrounding group becomes increasingly claustrophobic (760-62):

Ὀρ: οὐχ ὁρᾷς; φυλασσόμεσθα φρουρίοισι πανταχῇ. 760

Πυ: εἶδον ἄστεως ἀγυιὰς τεύχεσιν πεφαργμένας.

Ὀρ: ὡσπερεὶ πόλις πρὸς ἐχθρῶν σῶμα πυργηρούμεθα.

This emphasises the mass of foes surrounding and restricting Orestes and Pylades. The imagery is increasingly military in flavour: Orestes compares himself to a city surrounded by an army (762).[243] In this way, the Argive population is imagined as a military force, which underlines their opposition to Orestes and casts the trial's outcome as a foregone conclusion.

[239] Burnett (1971: 184); Hall (1993b: 283). For a survey of the threatening motif of the city's population surrounding the on-stage characters, cf. Wright (2008: 111). Saïd (1993: 186) suggests that the encircling mass of Argives enables the off-stage geography of Argos to shape events. Easterling (1997b: 32) argues that the depiction of armed groups barring Orestes' escape is made more imposing by the lack of description of other geographical features in Argos.

[240] I bracket this line following Diggle's (1994) edition. For discussion, cf. Willink (1986: *ad loc*.).

[241] The first is as early as *Or*. 59; cf. 536, 614, 625, 914 (although one of 536 and 625 is likely to be corrupt, given the verbatim repetition).

[242] Rosivach (1987: 244ff.) suggests that the prevalence of stoning motifs in *Orestes* emphasises the play's generally brutal environment, since this is a unique instance of (threatened) stoning as a punishment for matricide; De Fátima Silva (2010: 82) argues that stoning here conveys the population's fury and lack of moderation. Barker (2011: 149n21) argues that "stoning […] points to contemporary practice", which (as Rosivach has argued) overlooks the complex half-life of this motif in democratic politics.

[243] The rare verb πυργηρέομαι has military overtones. Elsewhere, it is used (as the simile here suggests) to describe besieged cities (Aesch. *Sept*. 22, 184; Eur. *Phoen*. 1087). This verb is used later in *Orestes* (1574) to describe

The Argive population, then, is frequently associated with primal images of power and brutality, the threat of mass stoning, and the group using their numbers to encircle and eventually destroy the individual. This makes *Orestes* certain that the trial will result in his condemnation to death, a certainty which is repeated subsequently (729-31):

> θᾶσσον ἤ μ᾽ ἐχρῆν προβαίνων ἱκόμην δι᾽ ἄστεως,
> σύλλογον πόλεως ἀκούσας ὄντ᾽, ἰδὼν δ᾽ αὐτὸς σαφῶς 730
> [ἐπὶ σὲ σύγγονόν τε τὴν σήν, ὡς κτενοῦντας αὐτίκα].

The chronology here feels strangely disordered. Pylades' words imply that the trial has already been concluded; in fact, as line 756 subsequently reveals, the vote has not yet been taken.[244] Even so, Pylades informs Orestes that σ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον θανεῖν (755), a certainty mirrored by Orestes in line 746.

A second important thread running through the early scenes of *Orestes* is discourse among characters on how the *dêmos*' decisions are made, and how it can be influenced. Orestes gives reasons for suspecting a foregone conclusion: he considers the *dêmos* easy to manipulate, and believes that it is being manipulated by individuals before the trial has even taken place. Orestes' fears seem to be justified subsequently. Tyndareus initially speaks piously about the importance of trusting τὸ … δίκαιον (494) and τὸν κοινὸν Ἑλλήνων νόμον (495). However, the hypocrisy of his overtly pro-democratic position is quickly revealed,[245] and he leaves with the following intention (612-14):

buildings; admittedly, this is a non-military context, but there it alludes to the presence of an angry mob holding torches.

[244] This led Diggle's (1994) edition, following Herwerden, to delete line 731; for a defence of the line, cf. Willink (1986: *ad loc*.).

[245] Schein (1975: 57).

μολὼν γὰρ εἰς ἔκκλητον Ἀργείων ὄχλον

ἑκοῦσαν οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν ἐπισείσω πόλιν

σοὶ σῇ τ᾽ ἀδελφῇ, λεύσιμον δοῦναι δίκην.

Tyndareus believes that Orestes' death can be secured "whether the *polis* is willing or not" (613): a strikingly confident depiction of his power to manipulate the assembly. Other characters also believe that the *dêmos* is easy to manipulate. Menelaus discusses how this might be turned to Orestes' advantage (696-703):

ὅταν γὰρ ἡβᾷ δῆμος εἰς ὀργὴν πεσών,

ὅμοιον ὥστε πῦρ κατασβέσαι λάβρον·

εἰ δ᾽ ἡσύχως τις αὐτὸν ἐντείνοντι μὲν

χαλῶν ὑπείκοι καιρὸν εὐλαβούμενος,

ἴσως ἂν ἐκπνεύσειεν· ἢν δ᾽ ἀνῇ πνοάς, 700

τύχοις ἂν αὐτοῦ ῥᾳδίως ὅσον θέλεις.

[ἔνεστι δ᾽ οἶκτος, ἔνι δὲ καὶ θυμὸς μέγας,

καραδοκοῦντι κτῆμα τιμιώτατον.]

Carter identifies Tyndareus' and Menelaus' speeches as highlighting "the sort of backstage politicking that was sometimes needed to secure a vote".[246] These lines go further, though: they depict elite individuals discussing the *dêmos*' psychology, with a view to persuading them. These lines play repeatedly into the stereotype, found regularly in prose texts (see Chapter 1 C2), that the *dêmos* is consistently quick to anger:[247] εἰς ὀργὴν πεσών (694), θυμὸς μέγας (702).[248] Furthermore, Menelaus gives Orestes advice on how to exploit this psychology. Challenging the *dêmos* is unlikely to change their views when their anger is entrenched (696-

[246] Carter (2013: 42).
[247] E.g. Thuc. 8.2.2, 5.46.5, Dem. 1.16, 21.186, Lys. 28.2, 29.6.
[248] Willink (1986: *ad loc*.) considers lines 702-3 "[o]ddly woolly […] but not inappropriate to the characterization of Men[elaus]."

7); a more circumspect approach, waiting for them to grow calm, is required. This is a trope in prose depictions of groups (Chapter 1 D1): when their emotions have been stirred up, attempting to reason them out of a particular collective mindset is typically unsuccessful, and on occasion makes their views more entrenched. This is reflected by events at the end of *Andromache*, where Neoptolemus' honest answer to a group who have already been stirred up against him only confirms rather than negating their suspicions (1109-11).

This, then, is the backdrop to the off-stage trial: characters are acutely aware of the *dêmos*' surrounding presence, and the weight of their pre-existing opinions (sometimes verging on violence in their hostility) against Orestes. Characters also suggest mechanisms by which the *dêmos* can be (or has already been) manipulated into voting for a certain outcome. Euripides' treatment of Orestes' trial is significantly innovative in several ways: that Orestes' fate should depend on a popular assembly,[249] let alone the startling departure from tradition in having Orestes condemned to death. It is important to understand why the verdict is to condemn Orestes. Menelaus seems confident in his ability to take control of the *dêmos*' emotions: where does this go wrong? For a start, as has frequently been observed, Menelaus himself seems to have little faith in his promised ability to manipulate his audience: he doesn't even address them.[250] We might, then, argue that Tyndareus' manipulative ability over the *dêmos* has simply proved stronger,[251] but (as I will argue subsequently) despite the Messenger's claims, there is little evidence to suggest this.

Euripides' innovations run deeper than have previously been observed. In *Eumenides*, the Athenian voters come to their decision with fresh pairs of eyes and ears. Their presence, let alone their pre-existing allegiances, is not mentioned until they appear to hear the case; their

[249] Greenberg (1962: 162); De Romilly (1972: 237).
[250] Easterling (1997b: 30); Pelling (2000: 166).
[251] This is the approach taken by Easterling (1997b: 31).

decision seems to be made in a vacuum devoid of existing opinion. However, *Orestes*, as we have already seen, is pervaded by the voters' presence and their existing views. As De Fátima Silva notes, Orestes is bereft of allies;[252] his successive abandonment by on-stage characters serves partly to underline the fact that he has already been abandoned by those whose votes will be conclusive: the *dêmos*. It is for this reason that Menelaus must ask τὰ πρὸς πόλιν δὲ πῶς ἔχεις δράσας τάδε (427): he is anxious to learn where the *dêmos*' collective allegiance lies before he declares for either side. Euripides presents the *dêmos* as a body whose opinions and emotions concerning the issues on trial have developed over time. It was generally established that Athenian assemblies and juries would already have a collective opinion of the matter or individual at stake: orators often encourage juries to make decisions based on common knowledge of an individual's character (Chapter 1 E2). In Aeschylus, we are presented with a rarefied Athens in which the jury do not seem to have encountered Orestes before, let alone formed a pre-existing opinion of him. Euripides' rendition, by contrast, adds a detailed and threatening backdrop of the community, charged with opinion transmitted off-stage. We are reminded that the citizen body is aware of Orestes' presence, and has formed collective opinion of him – a collective opinion which, given his murderous past, was likely to contain a degree of instinctive revulsion.[253]

Mechanically, the actual trial is very different to that depicted by Aeschylus. In *Eumenides*, the jurors do not speak; they hear each side setting out their case, then deliberate. In Euripides, by contrast, the parameters of the trial are different, as underlined by the herald's first words (885-7):

[252] De Fátima Silva (2010: 85).
[253] Euben's (1986: 236) opinion that "Orestes is tried by a corrupt Argive assembly, rather than a divinely constituted Athenian court" seems to share my view of the contrast between the Argive and Athenian decision-making groups, though our approach need not be so judgemental.

Τίς χρήζει λέγειν, 885

πότερον Ὀρέστην κατθανεῖν ἢ μὴ χρεών,

μητροκτονοῦντα;

In this trial – much like the Athenian assembly, at least in theory – everyone seems to have the right to speak.[254] Most of the subsequent speakers seem to be those whose power and standing is already established, but not all: unlike its Aeschylean equivalent, this debate is fluid rather than tightly structured. The herald's speech ends with μητροκτονοῦντα, strikingly placed in enjambment after a sentence which initially seems to end at the close of line 886. This draws our attention to a crucial point in the parameters set for this trial. To use a modern analogy, this comes across not as a trial but as a sentencing hearing.[255] That Orestes killed his mother is not disputed in any version of the trial, of course; nevertheless, the trial begins with Ὀρέστην … μητροκτονοῦντα, emphasising the paradoxical idea that Orestes' guilt is clear at the start of his trial. In *Eumenides*, the point of the trial is to decide on which side δίκη lies.[256] Here, by contrast, the start of the trial suggests that the point is not to decide whether Orestes is guilty, but to decide *how he must be punished* for his guilt (which, implicitly, is cast as indisputable): specifically, πότερον Ὀρέστην κατθανεῖν ἢ μὴ χρεών (886). Indeed, the sheer absence of references to δίκη within the Euripidean trial (in stark contrast to Aeschylus' version) has often been noted:[257] this underlines the impression that the people have not been convened to decide – or rather, they have already decided – which side is just. The fact that there is little or no debate concerning the justice of Orestes' actions – and that his sentence, not his guilt, is up for

[254] τίς χρήζει λέγειν is a variation on the formula used in the Athenian assembly, τίς βούλεται ἀγορεύειν (e.g. Dem. 18.170): De Romilly (1972: 242), Schein (1975: 60). Pelling (2000: 165) notes that assembly procedures are presented here in blurred terms (thanks in part to the inexact use of assembly formulae) and warns against expecting direct equivalence to Athenian procedure.

[255] Discussion of sentencing normally took place as part of Athenian trials after the guilty verdict (for a famous example, cf. Pl. *Ap*.). For homicides, though, penalties were typically laid out in advance as either execution or exile, depending on the nature of the homicide: cf. Todd (1995).

[256] E.g. Aesch. *Eum*. 470-2 (δικάζειν), 488, 581 (τήνδε κύρωσον δίκην).

[257] Wolff (1968: 144); Euben (1986: 237).

debate – seems to inspire Pelling's conclusion that the *dêmos* has failed to grapple with the real issues at stake.[258] To do so is to privilege incorrectly the trial in *Eumenides* as 'right', and its Euripidean counterpart as 'wrong'. On the contrary, the focus on sentencing rather than justice confirms what we already suspect from our previous glimpses of the *dêmos*' collective opinion: the population has formed collective opinions about Orestes before the trial.

The trial scene takes place off stage and is reported by an extended Messenger's speech. The Messenger is unabashedly partisan in Orestes' favour (868-70):[259] as he describes each speech, he does not trouble to conceal his support for Orestes and hostility towards those who speak against him. In itself, this explicitly partisan Messenger chimes with Euripides' presentation of the *dêmos* more widely: it reminds us that every voter has pre-existing views on the matter, and that there is no such thing as an impartial citizen. Often, moreover, these views are based on emotional factors, rather than a dispassionate logical analysis of the case at hand: in the Messenger's case, for example, σῷ γὰρ εὔνοιαν πατρὶ | ἀεί ποτ᾽ εἶχον, καί μ᾽ ἔφερβε σὸς δόμος | πένητα μέν (868-70). The Messenger's overt bias makes a powerful point.[260]

Even though this scene is set up as a sentencing rather than a trial, and only one speaker argues that Orestes should in fact be found innocent, it is still important to discuss why the assembly reaches the decision it does. If we believe the Messenger, the assembly has been manipulated emotionally. The truncated nature of the Messenger's speech makes detailed interpretation of the speeches (and the voters' responses to each in turn) difficult;[261] however, some useful

[258] Pelling (2000) 166.
[259] Greenberg (1962: 180); Wolff (1968: 144); Schein (1975: 61); Easterling (1997b: 31); Morwood (2009: 361); Barker (2011: 158); Carter (2013: 40). This is perhaps under-emphasised by Wright (2008: 106), who labels the assembly a "nightmare scenario" of democratic behaviour: it goes without saying that the trial will be a nightmare scenario for Orestes and those loyal to him.
[260] It is debated how far a Messenger may be biased. It is likely that a Messenger's authoritative position prevents them from telling an outright lie (Barrett [2002]); however, they can offer subjective reflections on events, or present them in a slanted light (Scodel [2009]). Euripides' handling of Heralds might provide a fruitful analogy: as Yoon (2020) demonstrates, Euripides' heralds tend to probe the boundaries of their conventional literary roles, for example by offering personal opinions on their masters' decisions.
[261] Wolff (1968: 144).

conclusions can nevertheless be drawn. Scholars have given detailed accounts of the individual speakers' comments (and the political stereotypes which they resemble); however, the audience's responses, or lack thereof, to each individual speech have gone relatively unnoticed.[262] The Messenger does not mention any response to Talthybius' speech. Diomedes' speech receives a mixed response: ἐπερρόθησαν δ' οἱ μὲν ὡς καλῶς λέγοι, | οἱ δ' οὐκ ἐπῄνουν (901-2). The more morally upstanding speaker then receives, we might assume, some approbation:[263] this is implied by καὶ τοῖς γε χρηστοῖς εὖ λέγειν ἐφαίνετο (930). Crucially, however, the Messenger does not mention the audience's response to the stereotyped cunning, unscrupulous orator. The Messenger portrays this speaker as a stereotypical demagogue, a bogeyman taken from the nightmare visions offered by oligarchic viewers of the democratic assembly. If this were the case, we would expect the audience's reactions to be enthusiastic.[264] After all, the Messenger's speech has not previously shied away from depicting audience response; furthermore, this is a speaker θορύβῳ τε πίσυνος κἀμαθεῖ παρρησίᾳ (905),[265] a man who depends on manipulating the audience's *thorubos*. The absence of reported audience response undercuts the Messenger's narrative that an unscrupulous populist speaker managed to sway the *dêmos* into voting against Orestes: it encourages us to imagine that the assembly may be less vulnerable to such manipulation than the Messenger suggests.

Orestes' closing speech is the only speech quoted directly, which further emphasises the Messenger's allegiance to him.[266] His speech has been condemned in scholarship as limp both logically and persuasively.[267] Orestes' repetition comes across as rhetorically directionless and

[262] Only De Romilly (1972: 243) briefly charts the audience's responses to each speech.
[263] *Pace* De Romilly (1972: 243).
[264] Furthermore, as Greenberg (1962: 180) notes, the claims and counterclaims become more and more extreme as the trial continues (culminating in the stark contrast between acclamation and public stoning); as such, we would normally expect the audience's responses to become more and more powerful.
[265] Dunn (1996: 163) points out that this is the earliest surviving tragedy in which free speech itself is portrayed as negative.
[266] Barker (2011: 158).
[267] Morwood (2009: 362). It has been suggested that Orestes' avoidance of an Aeschylus-style argument, drawing on Apollo's influence, is a major error. Burnett (1971: 206-8), though, points out that this omission is completely

panicked, at least in the text as transmitted;[268] furthermore, his claim that the audience will likely die comes across more as a desperate threat than a well-reasoned argument, as Orestes has not explained any of the steps in his logic. It has been argued that the recklessness of Orestes' speech is what propels the Argives to vote against him.[269] That said, the widespread scholarly condemnation of Orestes' speech is perhaps conditioned by the fact that it immediately precedes the assembly's vote against him, by its brief nature, and by the fact that it is reported in direct speech (and is therefore more exposed to rhetorical criticism). It also makes the ever-present assumption that the assembly's decision is primarily influenced by individual speakers. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the assembly votes against Orestes as an immediate reaction to a poor speech; rather, public opinion is firmly against him from the start, and is unaffected by Orestes' closing statement. The impression we receive is of an assembly whose decision is made in advance by the formation of community-wide public opinion, which only undergoes slight steers due to speeches made in the assembly itself. We have no evidence that, as Pelling claims, the assembly "is swept away in more extreme views",[270] only the Messenger's word for it, which is itself undercut by the Messenger's pre-existing allegiances.

The political world of *Orestes* is a far cry from the pristine, clear-cut debate of *Eumenides*, and is more complex even than that of Aeschylus' *Suppliants*. It is a murky and turbulent world, which many scholars have found morally bankrupt: the tool of 'political corruption' used by

understandable: Orestes has already advanced such an argument to Tyndareus and Menelaus previously, where it fell upon deaf ears. Orestes' argument seems to abandon popular justice in favour of tribal justice (Burnett [1971: 208]), which is hardly compelling, but in this context understandable.

[268] E.g. οὐ φθάνοιτ' ἔτ' ἂν | θνήσκοντες (*Or*. 936-7), κοὐ φθάνοι θνήσκων τις ἄν (*Or*. 941). Orestes' panicked repetition and flawed logic have motivated several deletions, including Willink's (1986: *ad loc*.) deletion of 932-42. Diggle (1994) excises only 938-42.

[269] Greenberg (1962: 181); Dunn (1996: 167).

[270] Pelling (2000: 166). For a similar approach, cf. Barker (2011: 158), who argues that the assembly is "not working – that is, coming to the decision to execute Orestes". According to my analysis, the assembly works well in representing the views which have been forming across the Argive community throughout the play.

Euben to interpret the play is in many ways convincing.[271] The audience is not necessarily meant to feel comfortable with the *dêmos*' vote to condemn Orestes – which, after all, marks a radical divergence from the easy resolution offered by the mythic tradition – any more than they feel comfortable with Orestes' brutal attempts to blackmail Menelaus with his daughter's life, or with Apollo's abrupt resolution of the plot with the path set down by myth. However, Euben's 'political corruption' does not tell the whole story of *Orestes*. On the surface, a series of individuals claim that the *dêmos* is being or can be manipulated, and the Messenger describes a stereotypical assembly being swayed by an unscrupulous orator into convicting a good man. More deeply, though, paying more attention to the off-stage *dêmos*' portrayal and decision-making processes reveals that the ability claimed by characters to manipulate the *dêmos* is consistently undercut. Rather, we are shown that the entire population of Argos has a pre-existing opinion of Orestes, which has been coalescing from the start of the play and is powerfully demonstrated in their threatening group presence and hostility towards Orestes. This is far from unproblematic: compared to the neat and idealised vision of democracy which Aeschylus' depiction of the trial offers, this is a dark and threatening depiction of group decision-making. In some ways, it confirms Orestes' paranoia. However, in a play as dark and morally ambiguous as *Orestes,* it is possible that some hope lies in the fact that the *dêmos* makes the decision it was always going to make, despite rather than because of elite individuals' influence.

Section D: Conclusions

These plays demonstrate the possibilities of Argos as a space for developing alternative perspectives on Athenian-style democracy. Plays set in Athens (*Eumenides*, Euripides' *Suppliants*) tend to allow group decisions to proceed smoothly and unproblematically, although

[271] Euben (1986).

some anti-democratic perspectives are also heard (such as the Theban Herald). As we will see in Chapter 4, Thebes is a space where the relationships between individual elites and off-stage groups often become fractious and dysfunctional; more pressingly, no extant play set in Thebes contains an off-stage assembly scene or formalised group decision. Argos is a space where off-stage group decisions can be played out in the style of a democratic assembly; these decisions, and the competing influences of elite characters, can be scrutinised and their flaws exposed. This is an under-appreciated element of Euripides' innovative approach to Orestes' trial. Moving the trial to Argos is a radical shift, given how closely Aeschylus aligns it with the formation of Athenian legal institutions; the new Argive setting signals, and perhaps even enables, Euripides' closer focus throughout *Orestes* on the group which makes the decision.[272]

To varying degrees, these plays are also indebted to stereotypes surrounding the psychology of group decisions, which (as demonstrated in Chapter 1) also influenced many fifth- and fourth-century prose texts. However, the handling of these stereotypes in tragedy is different to many prose texts, and often undercuts these stereotypes. In Euripides' *Suppliants*, the most obvious anti-democratic stereotypes are placed in the Herald's speech, allowing Theseus to argue against them memorably; however, similar stereotypes underpin Theseus' criticisms of Adrastus' government. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, stereotypes about group psychology motivate Pelasgus' decision to consult the *dêmos*, as well as his strategy for guiding the assembly's decision. In Euripides' *Orestes*, stereotypes relating to group decision-making are repeated faithfully by several characters, but these stereotypes are undercut by the forceful depiction of the off-stage *dêmos*. These tragedies play with these stereotypes by placing them in the mouths of multiple characters, who exemplify several different political alignments. The anti-

[272] For the wider implications of Argos as tragic setting, cf. Saïd (1993). Easterling (1997b: 33) suggests that *Orestes* "offer[ed] an appropriate sort of image of the community for the troubled Athenians of 408 BC but did not compel either the contemporary audience […] to identify themselves too closely with that image"; my interpretation of *Orestes* reinforces hers.

democratic Theban Herald and the Athenian hero Theseus share some similarities in their views of group decision-making, as do the pro-democratic Pelasgus and the less democratically aligned Danaus. Tyndareus moves quickly from highlighting the importance of an independent democratic verdict to declaring his intent to manipulate the trial.

The fact that a variety of different voices are heard articulating connected stereotypes enables us to see a multifaceted, complex view of how group decision-making functions. Surviving prose accounts of group decision-making tend to favour a binary approach: a *dêmos*, for example, is either an ideal rational decision-maker or irrational and easily manipulated. In prose, orators who adopt arguments aimed to inspire their audience's emotions are typically depicted as incompatible with idealised collective politics. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, by contrast, the strategies Pelasgus uses to guide the *dêmos*' decision are depicted as a normal part of how an assembly functions. He shows acute awareness of the importance of emotions, visual images and even a selective approach to the context of the decision in ensuring that the assembly votes in his favour. The *dêmos* makes its own decision by a spontaneous unanimous vote; however, Pelasgus has framed the debate in a way which makes dissent difficult. Although many scholars have justly found the assembly's decision unsatisfactory, nowhere in the text is that decision problematised. The decision's disastrous consequences, as well as the increasingly monarchic attitudes of both Pelasgus and Danaus, might imply that this is a flawed assembly. However, implication is not the same as explicit condemnation. Rather than explicitly depicting a manipulated and therefore flawed assembly, Aeschylus' approach is more nuanced: it depicts Pelasgus' careful guiding of the assembly's decision as a normal part of democratic decision-making, handled by a ruler who overtly values democracy in principle. Though the Danaids urge him to manipulate the *dêmos* cynically, Pelasgus consistently claims that the *dêmos*' independence is important, but he increasingly understands that a certain outcome is crucial to avoid a disastrous transgression of suppliant sanctity. Far from simply

depicting a *dêmos* being manipulated, Aeschylus places the events leading up to the assembly under a microscope, giving us a complex and perhaps even slightly sympathetic portrayal of why a ruler might choose to push a *dêmos* in a certain direction. There is a grey area between idealised and corrupted group decision-making in politics, and it is left to the audience to identify the boundary between the two.

Euripides' *Orestes* also confronts its audience with the unclear grey area between a manipulated and independent group decision. Identifying whether a jury has been manipulated by a cunning orator is not as easy as prose texts suggest: we are left unsure what exactly has contributed to the jury's decision. Menelaus claims that he will be able to manipulate the jury, but seems to remain silent during the trial itself; the Messenger claims that the jury has been manipulated, but his bias is made clear and encourages us to doubt his depiction of the trial. Furthermore, in his depiction of the Argive *dêmos*, Euripides highlights a factor whose importance in jury trials is acknowledged in fifth-century prose, but often overlooked in analyses of group decision-making in tragedy: long-term community-wide opinion. We *feel* the *dêmos*' presence looming off stage, almost a tangible physical threat to Orestes and those who support him. Euripides' pointed and menacing depiction of the *dêmos*' hostility encourages us to doubt elite characters' ability to influence the outcome of the trial, while simultaneously underlining how different his approach is to the rarefied and neat trial of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. In the trial itself, the dice are loaded against Orestes; but is this a result of cunning manipulation by individual characters, or a collective voting body whose feelings have been growing throughout the play? It is impossible to prove the latter for certain; however, given the partisan lens through which the Messenger reports on the trial, Euripides places an emphatic question-mark over the claims that individuals have manipulated the outcome.

Chapter 3: Collective Political Decision-Making in Aristophanes

Often situated in what is at least nominally a representation of contemporary Athens, Old Comedy is able to depict the off-stage *dêmos* more directly than tragedy, and often comments directly on its ability to make decisions (such as, famously, in the opening scene of *Acharnians*).[273] This chapter focuses on the two surviving works by Aristophanes which contain an extended depiction of an off-stage political group decision: the meeting of the assembly in *Assembly-Women* and the *boulê* in *Knights*. It demonstrates that Aristophanes' depictions of off-stage group decisions often hinge on stereotypes very similar to the range of stereotypes found in prose texts, discussed in Chapter 1. Aristophanes tends to apply these stereotypes in blunt and comically uncompromising fashion. In general, this means that Aristophanes' off-stage political groups conform closely to their stereotypical depiction in prose texts, and in some cases are pushed to even greater extremes. However, this chapter contends that Aristophanes was interested not only in condemning the *dêmos'* thought processes, but in reflecting on why the *dêmos* thought the way it did. *Assembly-Women* and *Knights* set up a tension between collective and individual decision-making. These plays both depict a decision being made by both an off-stage political collective (respectively, the assembly and the *boulê*) and subsequently by an on-stage individual, who in some way is case as a representative of the off-stage *dêmos*. This enables Aristophanes to contrast the off-stage group decision with the on-stage individual's discussion of that decision, and causes elaborate and surprising contrasts to emerge: Blepyrus in *Assembly-Women* handles the same decision much more logically than his off-stage compatriots, while the on-stage Dêmos in *Knights* paradoxically demonstrates that rational self-awareness underpins the stereotypically emotional construction of the off-stage *dêmos*.

[273] For an up-to-date survey of the difficulties in discerning Aristophanes' own political views, cf. Rosen (2020).

The argument that the *dêmos* in *Knights* is portrayed as a dupe to be exploited by orators is hardly new. However, Aristophanes' pervasive interest in group decision-making runs deeper than has previously been acknowledged. This chapter's first section analyses the off-stage *boulê* scene which preludes the on-stage appearance of Dêmos himself. This scene's importance has not properly been appreciated: its tumultuous noise and deeply flawed argumentation are not merely a stock depiction of a political group being bamboozled. Rather, the language used in this scene exemplify the innovative ways in which Aristophanes, specifically, depicts the discourse of group decision-making. Furthermore, by establishing an unexpected level of mimicry between orator and group, Aristophanes sets up the counter-intuitive, symbiotic relationship between *dêmos* and politicians which Dêmos will subsequently acknowledge explicitly. Scholarship on the *dêmos* in *Knights* has focused primarily on the presentation of Dêmos on stage; as such, it has neglected to discuss the off-stage assembly-scene which precedes it, and which depicts the interaction between orator and audience.

The second section discusses how the off-stage *boulê* in *Knights* affects the portrayal of Dêmos himself. I propose a new way to interpret, firstly, Dêmos' self-awareness and complicity in his own exploitation, and secondly Dêmos' abrupt rejuvenation. I argue that Dêmos is initially portrayed with a stereotypical psychology that closely resembles the psychology of the venal and emotional *boulê*. However, his psychology steadily changes, demonstrating an increasing tendency to engage logically with and question the arguments which individual characters present. This culminates in Dêmos, paradoxically, demonstrating the ability to rationalise and be complicit in the way orators manipulate him. Furthermore, this highlights Aristophanes' interest in the psychology exhibited specifically by groups. We find statements in *Knights* which claim that people think differently when gathered into the *dêmos* and when separated

into individuals. The fact that Dêmos, as an individual character, exhibits logical abilities which are beyond the off-stage collective *dêmos* is a paradoxical enactment of this same trope.

Much like *Knights*, Aristophanes' *Assembly-Women* is, in part, an extended meditation on what drives an assembly's decision-making and how to exploit it; as in *Knights*, in sustained fashion, we see the assembly through the eyes of the orator who plans to persuade it (in this case, Praxagora). In this vein, *Assembly-Women* has a sustained interest in psychologising the Athenian *dêmos*, and frequently touches on the idea that people think differently when in groups. However, *Assembly-Women* also offers a number of different perspectives through which to view group decision-making, with some of these perspectives mediated by gender. Praxagora's initial rehearsal, followed by Chremes' report of the actual assembly, depict the assembly making decisions in stereotypical fashion which resembles the portrayal of the *boulê* in *Knights*. The crucial point comes in the *agôn* between Praxagora and Blepyrus: Praxagora adopts a very different persuasive mode with Blepyrus, and he both posits and responds to logical argumentation in a way that sets him in contrast with the assembly collectively. This contrast implies that individuals and collectives could be envisioned as engaging in different ways with the same proposal. Immediately following this, *Assembly-Women* contains a scene in which two anonymous citizens debate the implications of Praxagora's policy and whether or not they should comply with it. This scene emphasises *Assembly-Women*'s consistent interest in contrasting collective and individual decision-making, and depicts decisions made by the *dêmos* as a process enacted in a number of locations rather than confined to the assembly's votes.

The third part of this chapter demonstrates how these conclusions might be applied productively to other plays by Aristophanes, even those which do not explicitly depict a *dêmos* or other collective political institutions. It argues that the Chorus of *Birds* is depicted in ways which evoke the comically stereotyped Athenian *dêmos* by drawing on the stereotypes that

surround group decision-making. In *Birds*, Aristophanes seems to be interested in what makes the Chorus fall in love with Pisthetaerus' proposal, and enables us to see the emotional effect of his rhetoric. This may well be a signal that, even early in *Birds*, the political atmosphere has not truly moved far from Athens. As such, understanding Aristophanes' depictions of off-stage groups can contribute to our understanding of his on-stage groups.

Section A: The Off-Stage *Boulê* in *Knights*

This section argues that the stereotypes about group political decision-making, found across *Knights*, culminate in the off-stage *boulê* scene. This *boulê* demonstrates many of the stereotypes whose presence in prose texts was charted in Chapter 1, applied in deliberately heavy-handed comic fashion: they are vulnerable to flattery, easy for unscrupulous orators to manipulate and keen to hunt for scapegoats. However, Aristophanes does more than just repeat prose stereotypes. He repeats forms of the verbs χάσκω and κράζω to create a vivid image of the *boulê* boiling over with sound, which is at once less coherent and more overwhelming than the *thorubos* often described in prose texts (Chapter 1 E1). By using these verbs of both the orator and the group, Aristophanes subtly implies that orators display the same intellectual abilities as the groups they address.

It is well-established that the *dêmos* in *Knights*, embodied by the character Dêmos, is vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous individuals: ὑποπεσὼν τὸν δεσπότην | ᾗκαλλ', ἐθώπευ', ἐκολάκευ', ἐξηπάτα (47-8). Already, this echoes contemporary prose discourse on the *dêmos* being vulnerable to manipulation: flattery is considered a key way in which political groups are vulnerable to unscrupulous orators (Chapter 1 D2).[274] *Knights* contains several

[274] Cf. Scholtz (2004: 274-6) for the political resonance of *kolakeia* in *Knights*, e.g. Dem. 8.34. Yunis (1996: 266) compares the rhetorical strategy depicted in Demosthenes 3.22 to the flattery used in *Knights*.

stereotyped statements about the dangers of democracy and the malignant orators who plague it (191-3):

> ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ
> ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους,
> ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἀμαθῆ καὶ βδελυρόν.

The vocabulary of οὐ … μουσικοῦ … ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους might have been taken straight from a tract such as that of the Old Oligarch.[275] This is hardly surprising: *Knights* is partly a sustained attack on the Paphlagonian's lack of moral scruple in persuading the *dêmos*. This chapter, though, scrutinises in detail the portrayal of the *dêmos*, how it thinks and what drives its decisions. Here, for instance, the presentation of Dêmos hints at a wider awareness of group psychology (752-5):

> … ὁ γὰρ γέρων
> οἴκοι μὲν ἀνδρῶν ἐστι δεξιώτατος,
> ὅταν δ᾽ ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ καθῆται τῆς πέτρας,
> κέχηνεν ὥσπερ ἐμποδίζων ἰσχάδας.

This suggests that the *dêmos* thinks differently when gathered as a group to make a decision on the Pnyx, compared to being separated into its constituent individuals across the city.[276] The idea that individuals' thought processes are different when they are in a group underpins the idea that the *dêmos*' psychology, as a group, can meaningfully be analysed.

[275] Osborne (2020: 33) observes this vocabulary-level similarity. Brock (1986: 25) suggests that the point at which Dêmos admits his complicity in being manipulated (1111ff.) is reminiscent of the Old Oligarch's (1.1, 1.6-9) accusations. Conversely, Scholtz (2004: 281) suggests that the *dêmos* of *Knights* is much more passive and less commanding than the *dêmos* criticised by the Old Oligarch.
[276] For the inherent paradox of imagining Dêmos "at home", away from the Pnyx, cf. Zumbrunnen (2012: 94).

Before the personified Dêmos appears on stage, an off-stage assembly-scene takes place. Importantly, this is a gathering of the *boulê*, not the *dêmos*;[277] however, its depiction of group decision-making and the influence of unscrupulous orators is readily applicable both to the *boulê* and the *dêmos* in full assembly.[278] Despite its central and, in plot terms, arguably pivotal position within the play,[279] this scene has been under-discussed, and encapsulates many of the characteristics which Aristophanes attributes to the *dêmos*' decision-making processes.

ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἔνδον ἐλασίβροντ' ἀναρρηγνὺς ἔπη
τερατευόμενος ἤρειδε κατὰ τῶν ἱππέων,
κρημνοὺς ἐρείπων καὶ ξυνωμότας λέγων
πιθανώταθ'· ἡ βουλὴ δ' ἅπασ' ἀκροωμένη
ἐγένεθ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ψευδατραφάξυος πλέα,
κἄβλεψε νᾶπυ καὶ τὰ μέτωπ' ἀνέσπασεν.
…
τὴν κιγκλίδ' ἐξήραξα **κἀναχανὼν** μέγα
ἀνέκραγον· …
οἱ δ' εὐθέως τὰ πρόσωπα διεγαλήνισαν·
εἶτ' ἐστεφάνουν μ' εὐαγγέλια· κἀγὼ 'φρασα
αὐτοῖς, ἀπόρρητον ποιησάμενος, ταχύ,
ἵνα τὰς ἀφύας ὠνοῖντο πολλὰς τοὐβολοῦ,
τῶν δημιουργῶν ξυλλαβεῖν τὰ τρύβλια.
οἱ δ' ἀνεκρότησαν καὶ πρὸς ἔμ' **ἐκεχήνεσαν**.

[277] Rhodes (1972: 40-41) uses this scene as source material for the procedures of the *boulê*; for potential problems with this approach, cf. Osborne (2020: 33-4).
[278] Osborne (2020: 38). Schwab (2011: 116n498) considers this scene the closest extant analogue to the trial in *Orestes*.
[279] Osborne (2020: 40).

ὁ δ᾽ ἐπινοήσας, ὁ Παφλαγών, εἰδὼς ἄρα
οἷς ἥδεθ᾽ ἡ βουλὴ μάλιστα ῥήμασιν,
γνώμην ἔλεξεν· “ἄνδρες, ἤδη μοι δοκεῖ
ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς ἀγαθαῖσιν εἰσηγγελμέναις
εὐαγγέλια θύειν ἑκατὸν βοῦς τῇ θεῷ.”
ἐπένευσεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ἡ βουλὴ πάλιν.
κἄγωγ᾽ ὅτε δὴ ‘γνων τοῖς βολίτοις ἡττώμενος,
διηκοσίησι βουσὶν **ὑπερηκόντισα**,
τῇ δ᾽ Ἀγροτέρᾳ κατὰ χιλίων παρῄνεσα
εὐχὴν ποιήσασθαι χιμάρων εἰς αὔριον,
αἱ τριχίδες εἰ γενοίαθ᾽ ἑκατὸν τοὐβολοῦ.
ἐκαραδόκησεν εἰς ἔμ᾽ ἡ βουλὴ πάλιν.
ὁ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἀκούσας ἐκπλαγεὶς ἐφληνάφα.
κᾆθ᾽ εἶλκον αὐτὸν οἱ πρυτάνεις χοἱ τοξόται,
οἱ δ᾽ **ἐθορύβουν** περὶ τῶν ἀφύων ἑστηκότες·
ὁ δ᾽ ἠντεβόλει γ᾽ αὐτοὺς ὀλίγον μεῖναι χρόνον,
“ἵν᾽ ἅτθ᾽ ὁ κῆρυξ οὐκ Λακεδαίμονος λέγει
πύθησθ᾽· ἀφῖκται γὰρ περὶ σπονδῶν” λέγων.
οἱ δ᾽ **ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος** ἅπαντες **ἀνέκραγον**·
“νυνὶ περὶ σπονδῶν; ἐπειδή γ᾽, ὦ μέλε,
ᾔσθοντο τὰς ἀφύας παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀξίας.
οὐ δεόμεθα σπονδῶν· ὁ πόλεμος ἑρπέτω.”
ἐκεκράγεσάν τε τοὺς πρυτάνεις ἀφιέναι·
εἶθ᾽ **ὑπερεπήδων** τοὺς δρυφάκτους πανταχῇ.
…

οἱ δ᾽ **ὑπερεπῄνουν ὑπερεπύππαζόν** τέ με 680

ἅπαντες οὕτως ὥστε τὴν βουλὴν ὅλην

ὀβολοῦ κοριάννοις ἀναλαβὼν ἐλήλυθα.

In comic and exaggerated fashion, this passage suggests the types of approach likely to persuade an audience making a political decision. It is explicitly suggested that the audience is instantly amenable to trivial bribery (Chapter 1 D2):[280] the offers of anchovies and oxen, which prove compulsive to the audience (656, 662), reinforce the subsequent claim that whoever bribed the citizens would always sway Dêmos (1350-54). Indeed, the effectiveness of bribery forms the triumphant closing note of the Sausage-seller's account of the assembly (682). Moreover, the Paphlagonian is portrayed as controlling the audience by manipulating their mood. At the start, he wins their support by uniting them against a rival group: the Knights (627). As a collective of politicians with much in common, the assembly can easily be guided into out-group derogation.[281] Subsequently, it is implied that the Paphlagonian knows the types of argument which appeal to the *boulê*: εἰδὼς ἄρα | οἷς ἥδεθ᾽ ἡ βουλὴ μάλιστα ῥήμασιν (652-3). ξυνωμότας λέγων (628), the accusation of conspirators as scapegoats, is a frequent stereotype in prose depictions of groups (Chapter 1 C3). He is, for the time being, successful: ἡ βουλὴ … ἐγένεθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ψευδατραφάξυος πλέα (629-30) conveys the idea of the audience's minds becoming overgrown with lies. The Sausage-Seller's subsequent triumph lies, not in persuading the *dêmos* with argumentation, but in altering their mood: κἄβλεψε νᾶπυ καὶ τὰ μέτωπ᾽ ἀνέσπασεν (631), οἱ δ᾽ εὐθέως τὰ πρόσωπα διεγαλήνισαν (646). The audience's joy is sufficient that they spontaneously vote for the Sausage-Seller to be honoured (647). The Sausage-Seller's next gambit leads to even greater admiration and applause: οἱ δ᾽ ἀνεκρότησαν

[280] Sommerstein (1981: *ad loc.*); Reckford (1987: 116). Cf. the recasting of jury-pay as a trivial bribe (Scholtz 2004: 281) in *Eq.* 51, *Eccl.* 205-8.

[281] Schwab (2011: 142). For a brief modern account of in-group favouritism and out-group derogation, cf. Hewstone *et al.* (2002: esp. 578-80).

καὶ πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ἐκεχήνεσαν (651). More importantly, once excited, the audience refuses to hear counterarguments (671): a frequent motif surrounding groups whose emotions have been stirred up (Chapter 1 D1).

Perhaps the most pervasive impression we receive from this off-stage assembly-scene is noise. The Sausage-Seller's promise sparks a *thorubos* (666) and the *boulê* demands are conveyed by shouting (ἀνέκραγον, ἐκεκράγεσαν). Subsequently, their collective responses are conveyed with a series of verbs prefixed ὑπερ- (ὑπερεπήδων, ὑπερεπήνουν, ὑπερεπύππαζον) implying uncontrolled excess. In addition, the *boulê* both thinks and speaks as one collective body: their shifts in mood are depicted as uniform and collective. In line 631, as the collective mood darkens, the verbs and adjectives slip between singulars and plurals, implying that conceptually they are neither a secure singular body nor a group of distinct individuals:[282] their mood shifts in unison, but is variously depicted across individuals' distinct faces. Subsequently, they shout ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος (670). A similarly powerful example is ἐπένευσεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ἡ βουλὴ πάλιν (657): ἐπινεύω (here, again, a singular form) creates a sense of them nodding as one body.

Furthermore, the audience's uncontrolled excess is prefigured and encouraged by the speakers' characteristics. The Sausage-Seller's rhetorical strategy is conveyed by ὑπερηκόντισα (659): outbidding (literally: overshooting) what the Paphlagonian promised. This echoes the ὑπερ-compound verbs used of the audience's reaction. Earlier, he finds the Paphlagonian hurling metaphorical thunder, lightning and mountains (626-8) in a Titanomachic depiction of noise, frenzy and excess.[283] This is reminiscent of the Paphlagonian's earlier threat likening himself to an uncontrollable weather system (430-1). This ongoing imagery runs concurrently with the depiction of the *dêmos*' favour as a turbulent ocean (509-11, 542-4). It is important to note the

[282] Schwab (2011: 142n596).
[283] As Edmunds (1987: 5-16) comprehensively demonstrates, the Paphlagonian is frequently depicted as causing a disturbance, communicated by ταράττω and its cognates; one of the regular uses of ταράττω refers to stirring up bodies of water.

interdependency and mirroring of these motifs. The orator (as oceanic feature) is uncontrollable, excessive and unpredictably dangerous; the *dêmos* consequently acquires the same characteristics in its own right. The way the Sausage-Seller speaks also echoes his audience's responses: his ἀνέκραγον (642) prefigures the audience's response in kind (670).

The vocabulary of this passage implies a connection between orator and audience: the *boulê* acquires similar vocal characteristics to the orators who address them. This scene exemplifies the vocabulary which Aristophanes frequently uses to depict groups in political decision-making contexts. Κράζω and its most frequent compound form ἀνακράζω are very Aristophanic words.[284] Both are almost always used pejoratively; they demonstrate loud, uncontrolled or uncontrollable shouting, often described with contempt by others.[285] Aristophanes often uses κράζω to denote sounds made by animals.[286] Κράζω plays an important role in the political soundscape of *Knights* especially: it and its compounds are found more commonly in *Knights* than anywhere else in Aristophanes.[287] It is relatively unusual that this verb is used to introduce direct or indirect speech, since the shouting it usually denotes is incoherent. In this passage, as previously mentioned, ἀνακράζω is used twice. In line 642, it unusually introduces the Sausage-Seller's direct speech to the audience; in 670, it introduces the audience's direct speech in response. Here, then, it is hinted that both are participating in incoherent, uncontrolled discourse, despite the overtly coherent words that emerge. This is a common motif in Aristophanes' depictions of off-stage assembly scenes. In *Assembly-Women*, the off-stage assembly ἐθορύβησαν κἀνέκραγον ὡς εὖ λέγοι (431). In *Birds*, as the birds form

[284] The simplex κράζω is attested 29 times in Aristophanes; its attestation elsewhere in the Classical period is negligible (once in Sophocles, once in Lysias, twice in Xenophon, once in the pseudo-Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound*). ἀνακράζω is more common in Xenophon (13), found 7 times in Aristophanes and once in Antiphon. κατακράζω is attested in the Classical period only at *Eq*. 287, presumably as a neologism designed to convey excess through harsh-sounding consonants: κατακεκράξομαί σε κράζων.
[285] E.g. *Vesp*. 415, where τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀκούσατ᾽, ἀλλὰ μὴ κεκράγετε are cast as mutually exclusive. Other examples include *Vesp*. 198, 1287, *Thesm*. 222, *Plut*. 722, *Nub*. 1386. The only usage in Attic tragedy has a similar force: *Aj*. 1236.
[286] E.g. *Ach*. 804, *Ran*. 258, *Vesp*. 226.
[287] Landfester (1967: 35n90).

into a group reminiscent of a political assembly, they are described as διακεκραγότες.[288] Κράζω can be used of individuals as well as groups; nonetheless, it seems that Aristophanes primarily uses κράζω to denote the noise made by groups, as seen contemptuously through the eyes of individuals.[289] Depicting assemblies (and group decisions in general) as occasions filled with incoherent noise is not unique to Aristophanes: the association of collective decision-making with *thorubos* is a regular motif in prose texts (Chapter 1 E1). However, such *thorubos* is often depicted as double-edged: the disruption it enables can hinder decision-making, but can also inform and improve it by voicing collective dissent. Aristophanes sometimes uses κράζω in close proximity to words suggesting *thorubos* (*Knights* 670, *Eccl*. 431); however, his view of both concepts seems to be much more negative than their depiction in prose texts. In Aristophanes' conception, the collective sound made by assemblies hinders rather than aids decision-making, and even has some resemblances (given Aristophanes' other uses of κράζω) to animal noise.

As well as sounds made by off-stage political groups, Aristophanes regularly uses κράζω for those who address such groups, as in line 642.[290] After all, having an unpleasant voice is earlier included in the "recipe" for an unscrupulous orator (218). In lines 285-7, κράζω is repeated to denote a shouting-match: again, it connotes noise rather than coherent argumentation. It is also frequently used for the Paphlagonian,[291] who describes himself as κεκραγὼς καὶ δίκαια κἄδικα (256); the Chorus talks of him κέκραγας, ὥσπερ ἀεὶ τὴν πόλιν καταστρέφεις (274).[292] He equates εὐθέως κέκραγα (863) with ἔπαυσα τοὺς ξυνωμότας (862), redefining it as a positive characteristic. However, as already explained, the overtones of κράζω are negative;

[288] This unusual compound is elsewhere in the Classical period attested only at *Eq*. 1403: πόρναισι καὶ βαλανεῦσι διακεκραγέναι. Here, it refers to an argument, probably in a dismissive and contemptuous sense ("bickering") rather than in a political sense.
[289] Cf. *Ach*. 182, 335, *Vesp*. 226, 415, *Peace* 345.
[290] Cf. Landfester (1967: 34-5), who connects these aural motifs to ἀναίδεια.
[291] This is a quintessential characteristic of Cleon throughout Aristophanic comedy. He is introduced as ἅρπαξ κεκράκτης Κυκλοβόρου φωνὴν ἔχων (*Eq*. 137); cf. *Ach*. 380, *Vesp*. 596, 1228, *Peace* 314; Brock (1986: 18n8).
[292] Cf. *Eq*. 486-7: διαβαλεῖ | ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας καὶ κράγον κεκράξεται.

furthermore, this evokes the Paphlagonian's previous attempt to turn the political audience against the Knights by ξυνωμότας λέγων (628). When used of the *dêmos*, as a negative analogue to the political concept of *thorubos*, Aristophanes' use of κράζω makes intuitive sense; it is rather more counter-intuitive, though, to use κράζω of the speakers who address the *dêmos*. After all, the stereotypical default model of interactions between orator and assembly depicts the orator as intelligent and cunning, deploying well-constructed and sophisticated arguments in order to win over the unintelligent and gullible assembly (Chapter 1 D1), whereas the *dêmos* wins arguments by overwhelming opponents with noise and drowning out speakers who oppose them. In a twist on stereotypical anti-democratic thought, however, Aristophanes makes the orator just as unsophisticated and loud as the assembly he addresses. The *dêmos* proves easily susceptible to the orator not because of his intellect and cunning, but because he speaks on their level, mirroring their volume and type of discourse.

Another important element of Aristophanic vocabulary used of groups in political contexts is the verb χάσκω,[293] which also underlines the mimicry between orator and audience in this assembly-scene: it is used of the Sausage-Seller opening his mouth wide to shout (641) and of his listeners gaping back at him in amazement (651). This verb has Homeric pedigree, and is found used in two senses in Homeric epic. One of its senses is formulaic (and accounts for all the uses of χάσκω as a finite verb in Homeric epic): it is found in the death-wish formula τότε μοι χάνοι εὐρεῖα χθών (*Il*. 4.182) and variants thereon.[294] The second Homeric sense of χάσκω (accounting for all the uses of χάσκω as a participle) refers to humans gaping. This always occurs at a point when a human has been struck by something unexpected and deadly.[295] When

[293] Arrowsmith (1973: 138n10) suggests that "an essay could be written on Aristophanes' use of the concept of "gaping," and its application, in comic derision, to the Athenian citizenry in the *ecclesia*".
[294] *Il*. 4.182, 6.281-2, 8.150, 17.417. An elegant variation on this formula is found in *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 16: χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγυια, where the earth *literally* gapes open to swallow Persephone.
[295] *Il*. 16.350 (Erymas being struck and killed by Idomeneus), 16.409 (Thestor knocked from his chariot and killed by Patroclus), 20.168 (a simile-lion which has just been wounded in battle); *Od*. 12.350 (a person dying by sudden drowning).

applied to humans, then, the Homeric heritage of χάσκω evokes unexpected tragedy. The fact that humans "gaping" is always conveyed in participle form further underlines the passivity which the verb already conveys: they are always in the middle of gaping until the more important finite verb conclusively happens to them. Aristophanes, though, uses χάσκω to cover a far broader semantic range. It can be used to denote speech, usually where the speaker is being treated with contempt.[296] It can be used to depict the physical gaping of various bodily orifices.[297] Most often by far, though, it is used insultingly to depict people – both groups and individuals – looking foolish, gullible or vulnerable to being taken advantage of.[298] In this regard, χάσκω carries the memory of the second Homeric use: this connection is further demonstrated by the fact that most incidences of χάσκω in Aristophanes are participles.[299]

Like κράζω, χάσκω and its rarely-attested compound forms are found in *Knights* more often than in any other Aristophanic work.[300] In line 651, the *dêmos* gapes at the Sausage-Seller in amazement; in line 755, Dêmos κέχηνεν witlessly on the Pnyx. Later, πρός σε κεχήνῃ (804) suggests the Demos' helpless dependence on the Paphlagonian. Dêmos risks his food being stolen ὅταν σύ ποι ἄλλοσε χάσκῃς (1032). A subsequent accusation says to Dêmos that πρὸς τόν τε λέγοντ' ἀεὶ | κέχηνας (1118-19). Finally, and memorably, the Sausage-Seller describes Athens as τῇ Κεχηναίων πόλει (1263).[301] However, χάσκω is also used to denote the speech of individuals addressing the *dêmos*. The Sausage-Seller reports himself κἀναχανὼν μέγα (641) before a political audience. Later, a ring depicts λάρος κεχηνὼς ἐπὶ πέτρας δημηγορῶν (956).[302]

[296] *Vesp*. 342; cf. Soph. *Aj*. 1227.
[297] *Ach*. 30, *Vesp*. 1493, *Lys*. 629, *Eq*. 380.
[298] Examples abound. E.g. *Ach*. 133, *Peace* 57, *Lys*. 426, *Ran*. 990, *Av*. 165, *Eq*. 261. Cf. Sommerstein (1981: *ad* 261, 755); Scholtz (2004: 279).
[299] Cf. especially *Ach*. 10, *Nub*. 172 and *Nub*. 996, which both mimic the Homeric tradition of χάσκω depicting a person gaping and about to be struck by an unexpected misfortune.
[300] Brock (1986: 20) cites χάσκω in particular as Dêmos being characterised as "impenetrably dim". Also noteworthy is the rare verb μακκοάω "I gape, I am stupid", used of the *dêmos* at *Eq*. 62 and 396.
[301] Cf. Henderson (1990: 277).
[302] Χάσκω is often used to depict the sounds made by birds, as will be discussed subsequently: cf. *Av*. 20, 51, 165, 307-8.

As previously stated, the use of χάσκω as a verb of speech normally confers a pejorative sense on the speaker, and these are no exceptions. The gull is meant to be haranguing the *dêmos*; the Sausage-Seller's report of the assembly is filled with self-awareness as a caricatured unscrupulous orator.

The patterns formed by χάσκω across *Knights* are similar to those formed by κράζω. In many ways, too, their implications are similar. Both verbs are pejorative, and evoke animal noises (χάσκω is often used of birds, κράζω of frogs).[303] However, these are very different verbs. Κράζω denotes a form of active political participation and, on some level, engagement; χάσκω, by contrast, seems to convey a gormless passivity, drawing on the way in which χάσκω participles tend to be used of humans in Homer. As such, χάσκω is a jarringly unnatural word to use of speech. Χάσκω and κράζω are not merely two sides of a coin, caricaturing the alternate speaking and listening that takes place in an assembly; rather, the gormless passivity inherent in χάσκω characterises speech in the assembly too. Furthermore, the characteristics of orator and political audience bleed into each other: the orator howls and the assembly howls back; the orator gapes stupidly and the assembly gapes back. This takes place within the overall context of the Sausage-seller being able to manipulate his audience; however, in the distorted soundscape of the assembly, it is not obvious that we should view the orator as stereotypically cunning. Rather, the orator descends into the maelstrom of incoherent noise that the *dêmos* creates, and, rather startlingly, "gapes" back at his listeners.[304]

This section argues that the off-stage *boulê* in *Knights* exemplifies some of Aristophanes' unique political vocabulary. On the surface, we encounter the *dêmos* of parody and clichéd anti-democratic thought: likely to make decisions propelled by their emotions, vulnerable to

[303] Cf. *Ran*. 258, 265.
[304] *Pace* Arrowsmith (1973: 138n10), who highlights the "*eloquent* demagogue appeals of accomplished political rhetoricians" (emphasis mine).

bribery and flattery, bereft of the χρηστοί who would guide it safely. In this regard, Aristophanes' satire resembles anti-democratic thought in contemporary or near-contemporary prose sources. Aristophanes, however, is also interested in the mechanisms by which orators take advantage of the *dêmos* in this fashion. Our prevailing impression of the assembly is uncontrolled noise, emotion and excess. Particularly fascinating, though, is the way in which the orators play into this. The pejorative verbs which consistently describe the assembly's noise are also used for the orators' communication with the assembly. This conveys Aristophanes' disdain for the political discourse of the assembly as a whole: not only is the audience capable only of shouting and gaping, but the orators only shout and gape back at them. In *Knights*, Aristophanes avoids the stereotyped model of a silver-tongued orator: the model he provides is rather more subtle, with orators mirroring the *dêmos*' mode of communication.

Section B: Dêmos on Stage in *Knights*

In many ways, the off-stage assembly prefigures Dêmos' arrival. Both are amenable to bribery. When addressing both, the orators try to blame misadventures on individual scapegoats (e.g. 893ff.). However, there are hitherto unnoticed ways in which the off-stage assembly prefigures aspects of the on-stage Dêmos. Firstly, the assembly's psychological homogeneity and even unity (they think, utter opinions and undergo mood changes in unison) foreshadows Dêmos' paradoxical entrance as a single character. Secondly, several scholars have noted the political implications of Dêmos being stuffed with food by the orators who compete for his attention:[305] this has similar implications to the modern metaphor of "being stuffed with tripe". It is possible that the off-stage assembly's gaping prefigures this: with their foolish gaping, the *dêmos* becomes vulnerable to having all sorts of rubbish stuffed down their throats. Thirdly, if the orator consistently mimics his audience's characteristics (which is what Aristophanes'

[305] Whitman (1964: 92-5); Littlefield (1968: 12-15).

handling of the verbs κράζω and χάσκω seems to suggest), this implies that the *dêmos* has the power to mould the orator into their desired image by adopting the characteristics that they want him to imitate. This may lay the groundwork for Dêmos' important revelation that he is both aware of and complicit in his ongoing manipulation by unscrupulous orators (1111ff.).[306] Dêmos' complicity also evokes a motif found in prose texts: the idea that the *dêmos* is partly responsible for moulding unscrupulous orators (Chapter 1 D1). What Dêmos conveys verbally has arguably already been demonstrated by the way the assembly interacts with orators off-stage.

The longer Dêmos appears on stage, though, the more differences emerge between him and the easily-duped off-stage body he represents. As previously noted, lines 752-5 indicate an important duality in the presentation of the *dêmos*: the shrewd apolitical ἀνδρῶν … δεξιώτατος (753) at home, set against the gaper (755) who assembles at the Pnyx. Early on, Dêmos himself seems amenable to manipulation: he rapidly turns against the Paphlagonian in the early exchanges between the Paphlagonian and the Sausage-Seller. A startling transition, though, can be seen in Dêmos' attitude to the oracles. Initially, Dêmos seems to be more interested in hearing flattery than true predictions (1011-13):

> ἄγε νυν ὅπως αὐτοὺς ἀναγνώσεσθέ μοι,
> καὶ τὸν περὶ ἐμοῦ 'κεῖνον ᾧπερ ἥδομαι,
> ὡς ἐν νεφέλῃσιν αἰετὸς γενήσομαι.

Subsequently, though, Dêmos begins to engage critically with the prophecies (1021-2):

> ταυτὶ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι λέγει.
> τί γάρ ἐστ᾽ Ἐρεχθεῖ καὶ κολοιοῖς καὶ κυνί;

[306] For discussion, cf. Scholtz (2004: 279ff.).

As Littlefield suggests, the statement that Dêmos must protect the dog and the threat of κατακρώζουσι κολοιοί (1020) are meant to overawe Dêmos into submission. Dêmos, though, responds by asking what these oracular metaphors mean; this wrongfoots the Paphlagonian, who cannot answer Dêmos' question about the κολοιοί, and rather lamely and almost prosaically repeats that he is the dog (1023-4):[307]

> ἐγὼ μέν εἰμ᾽ ὁ κύων· πρὸ σοῦ γὰρ ἀπύω·
> σοὶ δ᾽ εἶπε σῴζεσθαί μ᾽ ὁ Φοῖβος τὸν κύνα.

Even before the rhetorical opening which this grants the Sausage-Seller, the repetition of ἐγὼ … εἰμ᾽ ὁ κύων … μ᾽ … τὸν κύνα, and the large number of pronouns (and other monosyllables) across these two lines lend them an uncomfortable, bumbling, frantic feel. The Paphlagonian has been caught off guard, seemingly because he does not expect Dêmos to engage with his pronouncements critically. The frightening image of the cawing birds, combined with the authority inherent in an oracular pronouncement, are expected to quell Dêmos. Not only does Dêmos interrogate these prophecies; he also, in a threatening evocation of group violence which reminds us of his paradoxical group/individual status, picks up a stone to defend himself with (1028-9). Later, too, Dêmos shows an increased propensity for critical engagement: πῶς δῆτα τοῦτ᾽ ἔφραζεν ὁ θεός; (1048) τί τοῦτο λέγει, "πρὸ Πύλοιο"; (1059). Another important scene is reproduced below (1063-75):

> Ἀλ: ἀλλ᾽ οὑτοσὶ γάρ ἐστι περὶ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ
> ὁ χρησμός, ᾧ σε δεῖ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν πάνυ.
>
> Δῆμ: προσέχω· σὺ δ᾽ ἀναγίγνωσκε, τοῖς ναύταισί μου 1065
> ὅπως ὁ μισθὸς πρῶτον ἀποδοθήσεται.

[307] Littlefield (1968: 19).

Ἀλ: “Αἰγεῖδη, φράσσαι κυναλώπεκα, μή σε δολώσῃ,
λαίθαργον, ταχύπουν, δολίαν κερδώ, πολύιδριν.”
οἶσθ᾽ ὅ τι ἐστὶν τοῦτο;

Δῆμ: Φιλόστρατος ἡ κυναλώπηξ.

Ἀλ: οὐ τοῦτό φησιν, ἀλλὰ ναῦς ἑκάστοθ᾽ ἃς
αἰτεῖ ταχείας ἀργυρολόγους οὑτοσί,
ταύτας ἀπαυδᾷ μὴ διδόναι σ᾽ ὁ Λοξίας.

Δῆμ: πῶς δὴ τριήρης ἐστὶ κυναλώπηξ;

Ἀλ: ὅπως;
ὅτι ἡ τριήρης ἐστὶ χὠ κύων ταχύ.

Δῆμ: πῶς οὖν ἀλώπηξ προσετέθη πρὸς τῷ κυνί;

Here, Dêmos is inexperienced and not especially clever, but teachable. He initially fails to understand the Sausage-Seller’s prophecy (1069) but subsequently asks questions to interrogate the premises of the Sausage-Seller’s interpretation. Dêmos’ increasingly critical approach to orators may well foreshadow his subsequent self-awareness and, even later, his rejuvenation.[308] Dêmos’ subsequent instructions to the Sausage-Seller (κἀναπαιδεύειν πάλιν, 1099) simultaneously summarise the teacher-pupil relationship which has emerged during the above exchange, and foreshadows Dêmos’ later rejuvenation through the motif of a return to childhood.

The complexity of Dêmos is his duality. He can ostentatiously fall for the Sausage-Seller’s trick of stealing the gifts the Paphlagonian provided (οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ τοῦ παραθέντος ἡ χάρις,

[308] For an early survey of literature on the difficult ending of *Knights*, cf. Landfester (1967: 83-9); for a possible connection between Dêmos’ rejuvenation and the *pharmakos* complex, cf. Bennett/Tyrrell (1990).

1205) despite asking the Sausage-Seller πῶς ἐπενόησας ἁρπάσαι (1202). He eagerly, almost performatively, pokes fun at the role of the dupe, but is duped nonetheless. He begins to engage critically with orators' arguments, but only after being manipulated into turning against the Paphlagonian. Dêmos, then, contains elements of both the gullible, gaping off-stage *boulê* and the enlightened, rejuvenated Dêmos who returns to the stage. Even now, though, there are hints that this is still the same gullible Dêmos as before: to those attuned to Aristophanes' reception of prose stereotypes, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος … | ἀλλ᾽ οἵ σε ταῦτ᾽ ἐξηπάτων (1356-7) closely resembles the stereotypical orator encouraging the *dêmos* to blame a scapegoat rather than its own decision-making process.

Though a section of this length cannot treat Dêmos in the detail which this complex character deserves, it is clear that the off-stage assembly scene has a more complex relationship with the on-stage Dêmos than has previously been observed. The mirroring of κράζειν and χάσκειν between orator and assembly implies that this isn't just a stereotypical story of the cunning orator manipulating the stupid *dêmos*; on a deeper psychological level, the *dêmos* draws the orator into giving them what they want and being more like them. This foreshadows the complicity which Dêmos will later reveal. There are superficial similarities between the psychology of Dêmos and the earlier off-stage group whom he represents: its willingness to be bribed and to "gape" for whatever rubbish an unscrupulous orator wishes to stuff into him. However, Dêmos' psychology develops as his presence continues. The off-stage group is dominated by noise, and their ability to engage with orators' speeches and make decisions is impaired by excessive emotion and desire for reward: a stereotypical trait of group psychology according to prose thought. At first, Dêmos is similar; however, he increasingly demonstrates the ability to engage rationally with the proposals placed before him. Indeed, his attempt to ask logical questions of the Paphlagonian's deliberately opaque proposal, which is designed to appeal to Dêmos' emotions, proves the Paphlagonian's undoing. This helps us to understand

that the initial appearance of Dêmos as gullible dupe is more complex than has previously been appreciated. Dêmos steadily begins to interrogate the premises which orators offer him: oracles which are meant to be taken at face value are instead debated and scrutinised. His rejuvenation, then, is the culmination of a steady process of development. Moreover, this forms part of a pattern which will also be found in *Assembly-Women*. Off-stage, the *dêmos* is stereotypically liable to manipulation; subsequently, when an individual representing the *dêmos* appears on stage, his ability to interrogate orators' arguments proves better-developed than the massed *dêmos*' ability to do so.

Section C: *Assembly-Women*

In *Assembly-Women,* Athens is memorably characterised as a collective: its major fault is that it always τι καινόν <γ'> ἄλλο περιηργάζετο (220).[309] This section argues that Aristophanes wishes not only to suggest that the *dêmos* is like this, but to explore the psychology that may lie behind it. *Assembly-Women* has a sustained interest in the *dêmos'* collective psychology and encourages the audience to think about the reasons for its decisions.[310] Firstly, in the initial 'rehearsal scene' with the Chorus, Praxagora comments on the assembly's psychological tendencies with a view towards persuading them. Though comically exaggerated, her depiction of the assembly echoes a number of stereotypes found in contemporary prose discourse. The second relevant passage is the assembly's reported meeting, which seems to confirm Praxagora's previous comments: the assembly shouts down speakers in an *ad hominem* fashion,

[309] This does not occur frequently enough to be termed a stereotype, but nonetheless exists as a trope in prose texts: cf. Thuc. 3.38.5 μετὰ καινότητος μὲν λόγου ἀπατᾶσθαι ἄριστοι, Thuc. 1.70.2 οἱ … νεωτεροποιοί.

[310] Existing scholarship tends to elide the importance of the *dêmos*' thought processes in *Assembly-Women*. Ober (1998) discusses how Praxagora is able to persuade the assembly and various other parties on a thematic level (dealing with her assumption of the male gender, for example) but does not discuss the language and argumentation used in the off-stage assembly scene itself. Rothwell (1990: xi) suggests that the idea of Πειθώ in Athenian democracy anticipates the 20th-century idea of the hold which a demagogue's "charismatic" leadership exerts on followers. McClure (1999: 237-8) argues that *Assembly-Women* combines traditional stereotypes of female deception with contemporary fears of unscrupulous orators to conjure an image of women manipulating the assembly to create a fundamentally self-interested new regime, drawing on Foley's (1982) influential reading of the women's regime in *Assembly-Women* as the *oikos* writ large.

and is convinced by comic insults rather than logical argumentation. Most importantly, however, the play gives us a third way of assessing the assembly's psychology. After persuading the assembly, Praxagora also persuades her husband Blepyrus (who had stayed at home and missed the assembly) to support the new regime. The strikingly juxtaposed contrast between Praxagora's approaches to persuading the assembly and Blepyrus offers an unparalleled chance to compare the representations of individual and group decision-making processes when both are faced with a similar question. Our attention is drawn to how logically Blepyrus engages with Praxagora's proposals, implying differences between the decision-making psychology of the assembly and an individual; in turn, Praxagora responds by encouraging Blepyrus to reason with her counterarguments, selecting a very different persuasive strategy to that which she adopted in the assembly.

The theme of characters analysing the assembly's decision continues with a scene in which two unnamed characters argue over how to respond to the vote. The fact that two individuals continue debating the assembly's decision reminds us that collective decision-making is a process, which takes shape both before and after the assembly, not an isolated instance (also something about how it demonstrates the idea of individuals thinking differently when not in a group?). This is rarely apparent in Attic prose, which acknowledges both collective and individual cognition but not individual minds as constituents of a group. Having used Blepyrus to depict the differences between group and individual decision-making, *Assembly-Women* then demonstrates how the two intersect.

Assembly-Women begins with Praxagora meeting the Chorus of women in order to teach them to impersonate men in the assembly: consequently, this scene has been interpreted as a rehearsal scene.[311] It contains commentary on the assembly's psychological tendencies and

[311] For detailed discussion of this scene as rehearsal, cf. Slater (2002: 207-34); also McClure (1999: 239).

how best to persuade them, which (as well as being comically humorous) reflects ancient perceptions of the assembly more widely.[312] Early on, the assembly is compared to drunkards (137-42):

τὰ γοῦν βουλεύματα
αὐτῶν, ὅσ᾽ ἂν πράξωσιν ἐνθυμουμένοις,
ὥσπερ μεθυόντων ἐστὶ παραπεπληγμένα.
καὶ νὴ Δία σπένδουσί γ᾽· ἢ τίνος χάριν 140
τοσαῦτ᾽ ἂν ηὔχοντ᾽, εἴπερ οἶνος μὴ παρῆν;
καὶ λοιδοροῦνταί γ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐμπεπωκότες, …

The assembly makes decisions 'like the ravings of drunkards' (ὥσπερ μεθυόντων … παραπεπληγμένα, 139) and 'yell at each other like drunks' (λοιδοροῦνταί γ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐμπεπωκότες, 142). These blunt stereotypes (which, notably, describe the assembly experiencing extreme emotions as a single collective) create the impression of frenzied irrationality.[313]

Praxagora then comments on the assembly's venal nature (186-8):

ὁ μὲν λαβὼν ἀργύριον ὑπερεπῄνεσεν,
ὁ δ᾽ οὐ λαβὼν εἶναι θανάτου φήσ᾽ ἀξίους
τοὺς μισθοφορεῖν ζητοῦντας ἐν τὴκκλησίᾳ.

The venal self-interest of voters is a running joke throughout *Assembly-Women*,[314] and affects individuals (cf. 205-208) as well as the assembly collectively. Lines 186-188, though, go further: they interrogate how bribery affects the psychology of voters in relation to each other.

[312] Some elements of Praxagora's discourse in the rehearsal scene have been interpreted as containing sinister oligarchic overtones: cf. Sheppard (2016: 465-6).
[313] Tacon (2001: 181-2) observes that the very presence of archers in the Assembly suggests that the *dêmos* sometimes needed to be restrained (see below).
[314] McClure (1999: 248).

Those who have been bribed offer their praise, described in terms connoting an excess of emotion,[315] whereas those who do not receive money (187-188) experience extreme mistrust for their compatriots. This portrays the assembly as rife with mutual mistrust and suspicion, and desperate to find scapegoats even within its own body – a motif which recurs in prose accounts of collective decision-making (Chapter 1 C3). Immediately afterwards, Praxagora satirises the *dêmos*' changeable emotions, with particular emphasis on anger (195-6, 199):

> ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽, **ἤχθοντο**, τῶν δὲ ῥητόρων 195
> ὁ τοῦτ᾽ ἀναπείσας εὐθὺς ἀποδρὰς ᾤχετο.
> …
> Κορινθίοις **ἄχθεσθε**, κἀκεῖνοί γε σοί· 199

Here, the group's collective opinions come across as superficial: there is little evidence that the implications of a given policy are being thought through. They seem to make decisions based on emotional rather than intellectual reasoning: a trope which recurs in prose texts (Chapter 1 C1). Specifically, the emotion in question is anger: ἤχθοντο (195), ἄχθεσθε (199). Their abrupt anger with the speaker who proposed the alliance makes him flee for his life (195-196) which, again, evokes groups' tendency to seek individual scapegoats. Anger is a recurrent trope in fifth-century prose discussions of group decision-making (Chapter 1 C2).

Praxagora's initial assessment of the *dêmos*' psychology presents them as extremely emotional, and suggests that their collective emotions influence their decision-making. In the preview of Praxagora's arguments, we begin to understand how she tailors her mode of persuasion accordingly (215-18):

[315] This is the force of ὑπερεπήνεσεν (cf. *Eq*. 680). Elmer (2013: 4-6, 34-6, 184-5) suggests that the verb ἐπαινέω usually depicts community-wide consensus, and hence solidarity, in decision-making contexts; as such, it is striking that the verb here connotes division, a strong consensus in a sub-group that is emphatically not shared by another sub-group.

πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ τἄρια 215
βάπτουσι θερμῷ κατὰ τὸν ἀρχαῖον νόμον
ἀπαξάπασαι, κοὐχὶ μεταπειρωμένας
ἴδοις ἂν αὐτάς.

Logically, this argument (the first of a series of analogies drawn by Praxagora) is unsatisfactory. It does not try to persuade the assembly by explaining the specific policies which the women will institute; rather, it uses a nostalgic, emotional vision of the women washing their wool to argue that they are *the right kind of people* to preside over Athens, and the perfect antidote to the Athenians' desire for innovation.[316] This implies that arguments which appeal to the *dêmos* on a shallower, emotional level are more likely to persuade them.

Praxagora plans to adopt a similarly tailored mode of persuasion when dealing with counterarguments: she avoids logically engaging with the other speakers, instead planning to win over the audience through comic insults. She plans to rebut Cephalus through mockery: φήσω παραφρονεῖν αὐτόν … ἀλλὰ καὶ μελαγχολᾶν (250-251). Neocleides is to receive similar treatment: τούτῳ μὲν εἶπον εἰς κυνὸς πυγὴν ὁρᾶν (255). Rather than engaging with opposing arguments, Praxagora plans to insult her opponents in comic *ad hominem* fashion, implying that this type of counterargument will appeal to the assembly. Indeed, it is assumed that her opponents will treat her similarly (254). This presentation of the assembly is typical in comedy;

[316] This recalls Lysistrata's extended metaphor of wool-working for untangling Athenian politics (*Lys.* 567ff.). False, overly-concrete analogies and tenuous connections between the concrete and the abstract are a set-piece of comedy ('comic logic'). As such, it is difficult to take these arguments as evidence of their listeners' psychology. Even by the standards of comic logic, though, Praxagora's analogies seem obfuscatory. Lysistrata attempts to explain what the women will do; Praxagora only claims that the women are the right sort of people to do it. Sheppard (2016: 470-72) argues that Praxagora represents contemporary political discourse on returning to the ancient laws of Athens, highlighting this passage especially.

however, it also follows a strand of thought found in Attic prose texts, which imagines that the assembly is typically turned against sensible speakers by witty, entertaining insults.[317]

Praxagora's women then depart to infiltrate the assembly, which her husband Blepyrus misses; fortunately, his friend Chremes describes events in the off-stage assembly. Chremes' report confirms Praxagora's assumptions concerning the modes of persuasion which are best-suited to the assembly's psychology. The first speaker is shouted down before he can speak, simply for being a 'squinter' (γλάμων, 398).[318] This suggests that the *dêmos* is persuaded by *ad hominem* attacks on speakers rather than assessing their arguments, as Praxagora previously anticipated. Euaion's speech is then described, in terms suggestive of a man skilled in persuading his listeners: Εὐαίων ὁ δεξιώτατος (408).[319] He is naked, but still persuades the assembly that he is wearing a cloak, and secures unanimous support (423): in short, he persuades the assembly to ignore the evidence of its senses.[320] The implication of Aristophanes' representation is that the *dêmos* is easily swayed into bad decisions by a clever orator, and can just as easily be turned against a sensible proposal by insulting its proponent, exactly as Praxagora predicted (indeed, here they do so spontaneously). These motifs are central to Attic prose depictions of group decision-making (Chapter 1 D1).

The rest of the scene further confirms Praxagora's predictions concerning the assembly's behaviour: the scene is dominated by shouting and emotions. When the 'young man' (Praxagora in disguise) suggests handing power to the women, the urban faction utters their support through the typical noise-making associated with large groups: ἐθορύβησαν

[317] Cf. Dem. 19.46 (Philocrates' one-line jibe undermines Demosthenes' logical argument). This forms part of the broader stereotype of groups preferring entertaining, flamboyant speeches to logical reason, e.g. Dem. 19.35, Pl. *Ap.* 38D-E.
[318] Tacon (2001: 184) cites this as an example of *thorubos*. She notes that the assembly could not shout such a complex statement in collective unison, but the idea of them doing so would presumably strike a chord with the audience.
[319] This echoes the earlier praise of Praxagora as speaking δεξιῶς (241).
[320] Ober (1998: 142).

κἀνέκραγον ὡς εὖ λέγοι (431). The rustic faction expresses dissent similarly: ἀνεβορβόρυξαν (433). The use of a stereotypical dichotomy between urban and rural electorates aligns Praxagora with the sophisticated, immoral rhetoric often associated with urban speakers.[321] As in *Knights*, this sets *thorubos*, which is frequently used in prose texts to describe collective noise during assemblies or trials (Chapter 1 E1), alongside a compound form of *krazdô*, a specifically Aristophanic verb for collective shouting (cf. *Av.* 306, *Eq.* 285-287). In this passage, there is no suggestion of logical or even coherent debate: the battle between opposing factions is conducted through volume of noise alone. Moreover, Praxagora's speech involves τὰς μὲν γυναῖκας πόλλ᾽ ἀγαθὰ λέγων, σὲ δὲ | πολλὰ κακά (435-436),[322] which does not imply a sustained or sophisticated argument; rather, it suggests that her argument consists simply of praising the women and insulting the men, inviting her audience to engage on a shallower cognitive level. At this point, Chremes' unreliability as narrator might be at fault (perhaps he is incapable of remembering the details of Praxagora's argument, and so reduces it to praise and blame). It makes sense for Praxagora to claim simply that the women are *better*, given that she is arguing for the women to be put in charge of Athens; however, this argument seems strikingly simple when compared with Praxagora's subsequent interaction with Blepyrus alone (see below). It therefore seems as though this approach is tailor-made in its simplicity to appeal to the assembly: the insults delivered against Blepyrus, again, recall the comic character assassination which Praxagora predicted would convince the voters, and draw on wider contemporaneous perceptions of the assembly's psychology.

Praxagora's faction wins the vote (457). It is possible that Praxagora simply triumphs by bringing a large number of supporters to the assembly, thus ensuring numerical superiority.

[321] Cf. Eur. *Or.*, in which the Messenger lavishes praise on the 'farmer who rarely has contact with the city or the circle of the marketplace' (919-20).
[322] σέ here is a comic *aprosdokêton*: the subsequent exchange reveals that Blepyrus stands as synecdoche for men in general.

Chremes explicitly says that her opponents were the minority (434), and that the orator κατεῖχε τῇ βοῇ (434), implying that this was victory by volume rather than persuasion.[323] Previously, moreover, it is said that the disguised women packed the assembly, to the extent that some men were unable to claim their attendance fee (388).[324] It is possible that Praxagora's faction won simply because they formed the majority of voters: they were guaranteed victory without persuading any assembly-goers to change their mind. In itself, this would be a somewhat damning indictment of decision-making by democratic assembly: it suggests that the winner would not be the best case, but the case which persuaded more of its core supporters to turn up. However, Chremes suggests that Praxagora won a victory by persuasion, because of the assembly's psychology: this is the only new thing that has never yet been tried (456-457).[325] The actual decision-making process (455-457) is described in such cursory terms as to make it seem a formality, implying a spontaneous and perhaps unanimous vote in favour of Praxagora's policy by those present. Furthermore, if we follow Canevaro's evidence that decision by consensus (rather than simple majority) was the norm in the Athenian assembly,[326] the audience would likely have assumed that Praxagora persuaded the dissenting minority, rather than simply outvoting them. It is likely, then, that the minority who initially opposed Praxagora's policy were either persuaded to support her, or were cowed into silence by the sheer number of their opponents.

Praxagora's success, then, seems to confirm her initial assessment of the psychology which governs the *dêmos*' decision-making process, and consequently the routes through which they can be persuaded. Debate is conducted primarily through volume of noise. To judge by their

[323] This is the view taken by MacDowell (1995: 321). For possible evocations of both Pericles and Cleon in the phrase κατεῖχε τῇ βοῇ, cf. Sheppard (2016: 468).
[324] The sheer size of the influx of women is emphasised using a compilation of words connoting vast numbers: πλεῖστος ἀνθρώπων ὄχλος (383), ἀθρόος (384), λευκοπληθής (387).
[325] Slater (2002: 234) argues that victory is attained not by numbers alone, but by the persuasive force that the illusory disguised supporters convey.
[326] Canevaro (2018).

treatment of previous speakers, the *dêmos* proves either unwilling or unable to engage with specific details of proposed policies: as a result, Praxagora does not provide any, but relies on shallower modes of persuasion by praising women and insulting men (435-436). Praxagora's triumph in the assembly implies that this onslaught of entertaining insults and collective noise is sufficient to win over her detractors.

The problem lies in how we know that we can interpret these tropes as reflections on group psychology. Some would dismiss Praxagora's depiction of the assembly, and the persuasive mode she adopts, as simply comic logic: the *dêmos* is portrayed as hunting for scapegoats, enjoying the spectacle of abuse and averse to logic simply because this is funny. This would be insufficient: the tropes Aristophanes uses have their roots in wider prose discourse. Therefore, something beyond just comic humour is at play here. Crucially, moreover, two separate scenes subsequently enable us to compare the decision-making of an individual with that of the off-stage assembly. The first, in which Praxagora persuades her husband, enables us to compare how a group and an individual think when faced with the same decision, and suggests that different modes of persuasion are suited to different types of audience. The second, in which two anonymous citizens argue about whether to comply with the new laws, reimagines democratic decision-making as an ongoing process which continues outside the physical assembly space.

After winning over the assembly, Praxagora persuades her husband Blepyrus.[327] Blepyrus' motivations are self-interested: he is concerned not for the city, but for how much work he will have to do (460).[328] He is also presented as unintelligent and slow to grasp Praxagora's argument: he asks for several points to be repeated, and requires multiple descriptions of private

[327] McClure (1999: 250) notes that Praxagora's language abruptly casts off her feminine persona and becomes markedly rhetorical, appropriate to (for example) an assembly, when she explains the implications of her policy to Blepyrus.
[328] For the connection between Blepyrus' self-interest and use of obscenity, cf. McClure (1999: 250-52).

property being abolished (588-607) before he understands. However, Blepyrus' decision-making process is presented as strongly contrasting to the assembly's. When Praxagora expresses delight at the assembly's outcome, his first reaction is to ask why (559): he instinctively begins to interrogate Praxagora's plan. Similarly, he asks *why* owning money will no longer be useful (604). Furthermore, Praxagora responds to Blepyrus' engagement by adopting a very different persuasive process to what she used in the assembly. Previously, she simply proposed handing over all power to the women (430); here, though, she explains her plan in detail (588-594). Of course, Aristophanes would likely have wanted to avoid making his audience sit through the same arguments twice; however, he did not need to include Praxagora explaining her plan to Blepyrus at all. Though Blepyrus is a constituent member of that same *dêmos*, and is characterised as stupid, Praxagora believes that he will be persuaded by precise details and explanations, whereas she used appeals to emotion and insulting character assassination to win over the *dêmos* in assembly.

Praxagora's choice of persuasive strategy is seemingly justified when Blepyrus begins analysing the logical implications of her policy. His objection that some people may hold 'concealed wealth' (602) is an important potential flaw in Praxagora's plans to abolish private property (597-600). Later, Blepyrus finds logical arguments against sexual communism: he asks how they'll stop individual men from bribing women to sleep with them (611-613) and how they'll stop the prettiest women from receiving disproportionate attention (615-616), eliciting further explanation from Praxagora.[329] Blepyrus steadily becomes less sceptical as he realises, for example, that Praxagora's policy will reduce theft (οὐδ' αὖ κλέπτης οὐδεὶς ἔσται, 667) and will be particularly beneficial to him personally.[330] The cross-examination continues extensively, with Praxagora responding to Blepyrus' questions and finally spelling out a vision

[329] Other examples include *Eccl*. 635-6, 655-6, 662-4.
[330] Saïd (1996: 309), citing *Eccl*. 705-706, 710.

of what her policy will mean for him (689-709). At last, Blepyrus' queries are exhausted, and he is convinced.

Though stupid, Blepyrus interrogates Praxagora's arguments logically and considers potential consequences. This type of decision-making is alien to Aristophanes' presentation of the assembly.[331] In his unimaginative and banal way, Blepyrus engages with Praxagora's proposal and asks what it might mean for him and those like him; the assembly, on the other hand, avoids active engagement with the proposal. As a result, Praxagora adopts a different process. Instead of trying to persuade Blepyrus using comic insults and minimal explanation of her policy, she lays out her proposal in full and allows his questioning to elicit further information. Through this contrast, *Assembly-Women* compares individual and group decision-making processes: the same type of person thinks differently, and is influenced by different types of argument, when gathered into an assembly compared to engaging in individual discussion.

The theme of how individuals within the *dêmos* respond to the *dêmos*' decision continues beyond the Blepyrus scene, though the focus moves away from Praxagora's persuasive methods. As Praxagora's edict reverberates across the city, two anonymous individual men discuss the edict's implications for them personally.[332] One plans to contribute his possessions (730-745); the other prefers to wait and see what others are doing first (746-755).[333] This scene depicts members of the *dêmos* who think differently when they are placed outside the assembly; furthermore, it also shows how individuals might think differently *due to* perceiving themselves as part of a collective. Even the man who does not wish to contribute his possessions waits to

[331] Ober (1998: 132) elides this important point by arguing that Praxagora calms Blepyrus' and Chremes' fears by playing on their desires, similar to her strategy in the assembly.
[332] This scene has been insufficiently discussed. A short recent treatment by Halliwell (2020: 128-33) discusses how an Athenian audience might have viewed both men's attitudes, and highlights the importance of analysing Aristophanes' politics through "small-scale" scenes such as this. For possible identifications of the two characters, cf. Olson (1991), Sommerstein (2007: *ad loc*.).
[333] Halliwell's (2020: 129) statement that "the utopia somehow seems to need people to decide individually whether or not to go along with its requirements" is perhaps an overstatement: citizens can debate a decision made in assembly, and consider the possibility of dissent, without implying that the new regime might be overturned as a result.

see what the collective decides (τὸ πλῆθος ὅ τι βουλεύεται, 770; cf. 788-789). He states explicitly that the commands of authority figures do not influence him (767); he considers it important, though, to comply with the group (and indeed to see if the group changes its mind: he explicitly psychologises the *dêmos* by depicting them as changeable, 797-8). The first speaker is overtly motivated by devotion to the laws (759), but is also acutely aware of the majority's will (λέγουσι γοῦν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, 773). Aristophanes is depicting a process that would today be understood as social conformity: the first speaker not only complies with the social pressure he perceives around him, but has changed his beliefs in line with this pressure.[334]

Previous analyses of this scene have focused on whether the cynical speaker demonstrates a flaw in Praxagora's policy or is bound to fail.[335] I instead propose a subtler reading of the scene as a depiction of collective political decision-making as an ongoing process between the *dêmos* in assembly and individual *dêmos*-members outside it.[336] The two anonymous characters represent two different ways of responding to society-wide pressure: one feels potentially forced into social compliance, while the other conforms more deeply and instinctively. Their namelessness perhaps encourages us even more strongly to consider them as members of a collective.[337] The dialogue between these characters anatomises the *dêmos*' decision, showing us the different ways individual members might understand their participation in a community-wide policy. Consequently, this scene offers an unusually detailed perspective on the *dêmos*' decisions as a process, rather than a one-off event. As noted previously, Attic prose sources

[334] For the distinction between compliance and conformity, cf. Cialdini/Goldstein (2004). An alternative analysis (first posited by Kelman [1958]) interprets compliance as a specific type of conformity which does not necessarily entail changing one's beliefs; according to Kelman's model, the enthusiasm with which the first speaker plans to contribute his possessions would suggest that he represents the internalisation type of conformity.
[335] E.g. Sommerstein (2007: 21).
[336] Christ (2008: 178-82) adopts a different though equally nuanced reading of this scene, as depicting the tension between collective responsibility and individual selfishness.
[337] For a reading of the cynical second citizen as a prototypical Athenian everyman who exemplifies widespread values, cf. Christ (2008: 178-82).

tend to depict either individual or collective 'minds', not the activity of individual minds within a collective: this encourages a binary approach, contrasting group and individual psychology without considering the interactions between them. However, as well as depicting aspects of group decision-making psychology, Aristophanes' *Assembly-Women* portrays the psychologies of individuals interacting with and responding to the groups of which they form a constituent part. This depicts how collective decisions take shape over time outside the physical assembly space. Loraux observes that, after the assembly which places them in power, the women begin restructuring Athenian politics without engaging in any more deliberation or voting;[338] this scene, though, reminds us that such deliberation could be conducted disparately even if the *dêmos* did not gather physically.

Aristophanes' *Assembly-Women* encourages us to view the assembly's decision-making process from various angles: it is analysed in advance by Praxagora, reported by Chremes, and contrasted with Blepyrus' individual decision-making process (and Praxagora's very different approach to persuading him). Finally, the two unnamed citizens' conversation demonstrates how members of the wider population react to the decree. It is difficult to reconstruct the assembly's psychology through the distorting lens of comic logic. However, Aristophanes' portrayal of the assembly encourages us to consider why, on a psychological level, the assembly votes for Praxagora's radically innovative policy. *Assembly-Women* portrays the assembly as swayed by their emotions, inclined towards anger, quick to seek scapegoats from among their number, and capable of turning against a speaker based on witty insults alone. These motifs, found both in Praxagora's hypothesis and Chremes' report of the off-stage assembly, echo Attic prose stereotypes concerning the *dêmos*' psychological tendencies. Blepyrus' very different decision-making process implies that the psychological traits demonstrated by the Athenian assembly are specific to their nature as a group. Like the on-

[338] Loraux (1993: 222).

stage version of Dêmos in *Knights*, Blepyrus is presented as lacking the intellectual tools to understand Praxagora's policy. However, he engages critically with the proposals before him, pointing out plausible (if comically trivial) problems that might result from Praxagora's policies. In response, Praxagora abandons the crowd-pleasing abuse and insults which she used in the off-stage assembly, and instead explains the projected consequences of her proposals in detail.

Section D: *Birds*

This chapter identifies recurring themes which characterise Aristophanes' interest in group decision-making. It has focused on plays in which group decisions can readily be compared with individual decision-making: the idea that an individual from within a group (or, as in the case of *Knights*, an individual character who personifies a group) would reason differently to the group as a collective is foundational to group psychology. However, the conclusions this chapter reaches are more widely applicable to Aristophanes' surviving works, including those which are not set in Athens or explicitly depict a *dêmos* or equivalent institutional decision-making group. Here, I demonstrate how our understanding of *Birds* (whose Chorus strikingly resembles a parodied *dêmos* confronted with a stereotypical charismatic orator) can be developed by applying our understanding of Aristophanes' interest in constructing group psychology.[339]

Existing readings have struggled to identify in *Birds* a single overarching narrative relating to contemporary politics.[340] Set far from Athens, *Birds* contains no explicit portrayal of an

[339] Arrowsmith (1973: 143) briefly suggests a resemblance between the birds, intoxicated by dreams, and the Athenian *dêmos*.

[340] Considerable debate has arisen over the extent to which and precision with which *Birds* can be read in historicist fashion as alluding to contemporary politics. For a summary of past attempts and a recent attempt to posit a new historicist reading of *Birds*, cf. Hall (2020). Several scholars have argued for specific references to the events and characters of the Sicilian expedition (beginning with Süvern [1827]) or to contemporary sophists (e.g. Sidwell [2009]). Newiger (1983), Ničev (1989) and Arrowsmith (1973) suggest a less precise political allegory pointing to general political forces governing Athenian imperialism. I follow (amongst others) Konstan (1995) in arguing that it is difficult to justify reading overarching political allegories into *Birds*, although specific political allusions

assembly; however, it contains a single speaker charismatically articulating a vision for a new state, and persuading his audience (the Chorus) to enact his vision. In dramatic terms, the group on stage is a Chorus; that said, as this section will demonstrate, the play goes out of its way to reimagine the Chorus as a far larger, amorphous crowd of listeners; furthermore, the uses of the verbs χάσκω and κράζω make them resemble the assemblies of *Knights* and *Assembly-Women*. The Chorus' decision is led astray by their emotions, which both Tereus and Pisthetaerus manipulate in order to convince them. *Birds* does not explicitly reveal why the Chorus proves so keen to adopt Pisthetaerus' propositions; I argue that the presentation of group decision-making psychology in *Birds* is very similar to the portrayals of the *dêmos* in both *Assembly-Women* and *Knights*: in light of our conclusions concerning *Assembly-Women* and *Knights*, we can understand how Pisthetaerus takes advantage of the birds' psychology. *Birds*, therefore, allows us to see on stage the methods of persuading political groups which could only be reported from off-stage in *Assembly-Women* and *Knights*. The *agôn*, which is literally one-sided,[341] has received relatively little close discussion compared to the rest of *Birds*: this part of the play, though, showcases the psychology behind the Chorus' decision, and Pisthetaerus' ability to manipulate it.

Even though the members of the avian Chorus are initially (and unusually, for a Chorus) described individually from 267ff., their numbers quickly swell into an impenetrable mass (294ff.). Their sheer numbers are emphasised early in the comedy: φῦλα μυρία (231), πάντα … φῦλ[α] (253), κακὸν | ὀρνέων (294-5), νέφους (295).[342] Moreover, Gelzer argues that the Chorus' complex movements at (e.g.) 307 make it impossible to see what the birds are doing and where they are going,[343] which accentuates the impression of an amorphous group on stage.

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are likely present. As it is difficult to map the entire plot and characters of *Birds* onto a specific series of political events, as any close allegory will become self-contradictory (Konstan [1995: 31]).

[341] As noted by e.g. MacDowell (1995: 206).

[342] Cf. στρούθων νέφος (*Av*. 578).

[343] Gelzer (1996: 206).

The audience, then, is encouraged to imagine the Chorus as a much larger group than appears physically on stage: unsurprisingly, given that they are meant to represent all birds, and the future population of a putative *polis*.[344] Furthermore, the characterisation of the Chorus echoes depictions of the *dêmos* in Aristophanes' other works. Much like the *dêmos* of *Knights*, the birds on stage are frequently characterised by the gaping of their beaks. Of course, these are birds rather than mortals, and the sounds they make are sometimes denoted using the verb χάσκω without any particularly pointed connotations (e.g. 51). However, as at 20 and 165, the use of χάσκω often seems to imply foolishness or gullibility. On occasion (307-8) it gives a more threatening, animalistic sense: the birds open their beaks and gape in hostility and potential hunger.[345] On other occasions, furthermore, the humans who address the birds are found to be "gaping" in foolishness: Euelpides (264) and again in an anecdote he tells (503). As in *Knights*, speakers and audience alike both "gape" at each other, implying similarities in their modes of discourse. Here, especially at line 503, this may have the function of Euelpides subtly reminding the birds that he is like them. Moreover, as with the off-stage *boulê* in *Knights*, the Chorus in *Birds* is often depicted using the verb κράζω. One of the first things that strikes the two mortals who encounter the vast throng of birds is the sound they make: οἷα πιππίζουσι καὶ τρέχουσι διακεκραγότες (306).

The Chorus is also depicted as emotionally volatile. When they first enter, they are hostile (325ff.) and try to kill the humans (343ff.):[346] their ὀργή is explicitly noted (402). This anger, as in Praxagora's characterisation of the *dêmos* in Assembly-Women, evokes typical portrayals of the dêmos in prose sources (Chapter 1 C2). However, Tereus draws them from one emotional

[344] On the frequency of ξυν- compounds which convey the idea of political unity and community, as well as their potentially darker undertones, cf. Telò (2020: 219-20).
[345] Slater (2002: 137) observes briefly that "their gaping beaks indicate at once their hostility and also their ultimate gullibility". Arrowsmith (1973: 138n10) notes the political resonance of this motif.
[346] Bloodlust is a consistent part of the Birds' characterisation. Much later, when they describe their power over other living creatures (1058-70), they focus on their ability to kill, repeating the verb κτείνω (1063, 1067). They are similarly keen to condemn Philocrates to death (1075).

extreme to another. They switch from fury to excitement as they await Pisthetaerus' speech, and promise not to harm him before he even outlines his case (445), underlining the scale of their emotional reversal.[347] The Chorus-leader interrogates Tereus with a specific question: λέγει δὴ τίνας λόγους (416). Tereus does not answer this question, but responds evasively: ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν (417). The Chorus-leader presses further, suggesting specific motives the men might have (418-21); again, Tereus replies evasively (λέγει μέγαν τιν᾽ ὄλβον οὔτε λεκτὸν οὔ- | τε πιστόν, 422-3), makes sweeping promises (σὰ πάντα καὶ τὸ τῇδε καὶ | τὸ κεῖσε, 424-5) and avoids specifics. The scale of the birds' emotional reversal is highlighted in the following passage (426-33):

Χο: πότερα μαινόμενος;

Ἔπ: ἄφατον ὡς φρόνιμος.

Χο: ἔνι σοφόν τι φρενί;

Ἔπ: πυκνότατον κίναδος,

σόφισμα, κύρμα, τρῖμμα, παιπάλημ᾽ ὅλον. 430

Χο: λέγειν λέγειν κέλευέ μοι.

κλυὼν γὰρ ᾧν σύ μοι λέγεις

λόγων ἀνεπτέρωμαι.

Instead of being told what the men's plans are, the Chorus is only told that these plans are indescribably wonderful: their question is not answered. Tereus exclaims how φρόνιμος Pisthetaerus is, providing no evidence for this claim. This appeal to a speaker's credentials rather than actual policy is reminiscent of Praxagora's speech, which revolved around praising women and criticising men; indeed, it is the converse approach to insulting all the opposing

[347] Konstan (1995: 42) points to the ease with which the humans defended themselves using only cooking equipment; however, Tereus' persuasion seems to have been the crucial factor in deterring the attack. Gelzer (1996: 207) comments briefly that "equipped with all the tricks of the sophists and the orators, [the hoopoe] gets [the Chorus] to agree to an armistice."

speakers. Consequently, the Chorus-leader is carried away by excitement, demonstrated by the eager repetition of λέγειν λέγειν (431), and begs to listen to Pisthetaerus (432-4). In fact, the Birds have abandoned their principles. Previously, the birds justified killing the humans by comparing them to wolves (369); now, they listen to the humans on the grounds that their cunning is comparable to a fox's (κίναδος, 429). This metaphor aptly implies that Pisthetaerus may be planning to take advantage of his listeners;[348] furthermore, the interplay between these two closely related images emphasises that nothing has changed, other than the birds being manipulated emotionally into forgetting their principles by this tempting depiction of Pisthetaerus as a clever man.

Pisthetaerus is consistently portrayed as a stereotypical unscrupulous orator.[349] His name alludes to persuasion;[350] furthermore, the motifs of sophistry which surround Pisthetaerus' speech are closely related to those which typically describe a manipulative orator.[351] Tereus describes Pisthetaerus as καινὸς γνώμην | καινῶν ἔργων τ᾽ ἐγχειρητής (256-7). Καινός is an evocative term: some years later, Praxagora would complain that *dêmos* perennially τι καινὸν <γ'> ἄλλο περιηργάζετο (*Eccl*. 220). Beyond this, though, Pisthetaerus also uses stereotyped aspects of group psychology to persuade the Chorus. In an aside, Pisthetaerus reveals his plan to appeal to the Chorus' emotions (ὅ τι τὴν τούτων θραύσει ψυχήν, 466), strongly evoking the stereotype that groups are easily swayed into making decisions by their emotions (Chapter 1 C1). He begins with eye-catching flattery (Chapter 1 D2): οὕτως ὑμῶν ὑπεραλγῶ, | οἵτινες

[348] A similar note is struck by the ambiguity of πιστόν ("unbelievable" / "not believable") in the promised ὄλβον … οὔτε πιστόν (*Av*. 422-423).
[349] Cf. Arrowsmith (1973: 138n10); Ničev (1989: 27ff.). Slater (2002: 138) adopts a different approach, arguing that Pisthetaerus' position as the Chorus' teacher (δίδαξον, 438) combines the role of *chorodidaskalos* with political persuasion. By retraining the Chorus onstage, Pisthetaerus simultaneously persuades them of their role in his new city. Slater likens Pisthetaerus' position to Praxagora's, who acts as *chorodidaskalos* while 'rehearsing' to persuade the *dêmos*. *Pace* Dunbar (1996: 63), who reads the oratorical motifs in Pisthetaerus' characterisation as a natural and amusing part of the play's theatrical context.
[350] Hubbard (1991: 160).
[351] For these motifs, cf. Hubbard (1991: 162ff.); Sidwell (2009: 420) discusses lines 427-33. Elsewhere in Greek drama, stereotypes of sophistry are closely connected to motifs drawn from the world of manipulative, unscrupulous oratory: in *Clouds*, for example, the idea of the bad argument defeating the good is overtly appropriate for both intellectual and oratorical contexts (the point, after all, is to win court cases).

ὄντες πρότερον βασιλῆς (466-7). The argument that the birds once used to be kings is designed with emotion in mind: it works by making them desperately desire something that they had not previously wanted.[352] Not only is it built on flattery; it uses false analogies and dubious logic (e.g. 484-92 on the cock). Pisthetaerus' argument that the gods, too, fly using wings smacks of facile but invalid syllogism, and Ἶριν δέ γ᾽ Ὅμηρος ἔφασκ᾽ ἰκέλην εἶναι τρήρωνι πελείῃ (575) is particularly weak.[353] Subsequently, he adduces the fact that people can swear by a bird as proof of the birds' divinity, but uses Lampon – who swears in order to deceive (521) – as his example.[354] His speech flatters the birds so utterly that they want to become his slaves.[355] Having set up a rose-tinted vision of the past, Pisthetaerus then stirs the birds to action against their current persecution (523-538): he sets up the image of a crowd of bird-catchers, throwing stones at the birds. Much like the Paphlagonian in *Knights*, Pisthetaerus is able to use the in-group favouritism shown by his audience (whose exceptionally unified nature has been observed by Konstan) and turn this into out-group derogation against the humans.[356] The emotional effect of these words on the Chorus is clear: ἐδάκρυσά γ᾽ ἐμῶν πατέρων | κάκην (540-41). This confirms the intention which Pisthetaerus previously made clear in line 465: the birds are not merely persuaded by the speech, but emotionally enraptured.[357]

As Pisthetaerus' ideal state is constructed in the sky, the rest of *Birds* enables us to see some consequences of a surrogate *dêmos* being swayed in this fashion. Much of the debate

[352] Konstan (1995: 38, 40).
[353] A strand of thought characterises Pisthetaerus' flashy but weak arguments simply as "comic logic", e.g. MacDowell (1995: 206), but this underestimates the pervasive motifs which evoke unscrupulous oratory in Pisthetaerus' speech.
[354] Slater (2002: 139).
[355] Slater (2002: 139n28) argues convincingly that οἰκετεύσω (547) entails slavery.
[356] Konstan (1995: 42); cf. Hewstone *et al*. (2002: 578-80); Ibid. 586 for the importance of (perceived) threat in intergroup bias.
[357] Slater (2002: 139), who however overemphasises the birds' intoxication (the motif of Eros in 703-707 does not particularly reflect the birds' intoxication, contrary to Slater's argument).

concerning politics in *Birds* revolves around two specific passages, rightly flagged as crucial by Dunbar (1583-5; 1707-8):[358]

Πι:	ὄρνιθές τινες	1583
	ἐπανιστάμενοι τοῖς δημοτικοῖσιν ὀρνέοις	
	ἔδοξαν ἀδικεῖν.	1585
Ἄγγ:	ὦ τρισμακάριον πτηνὸν ὀρνίθων γένος,	1707
	δέχεσθε τὸν τύραννον ὀλβίοις δόμοις.	1708

Τύραννος (1708) sets the tone for Pisthetaerus' new regime.[359] By eating the dissenters, Pisthetaerus confirms the birds' earlier fear of being hunted by humans (335) and contradicts his own previous condemnation of mortals who find inventive methods to cook and eat birds (530-38).[360] I argue that Slater and Dunbar both impose a false dichotomy on lines 1583-5: that this is either a horrifying cannibalistic betrayal or an insignificant humorous footnote. I posit a middle ground: this is an entertaining but simultaneously worrying motif of an unscrupulous orator preying, quite literally, on a befuddled *dêmos*. Similarly, when Pisthetaerus marches in as a τύραννος on his χρυσαυγεῖ δρόμῳ (1710), wielding Zeus' thunderbolt (1714), we see realised the frequently-cited fear that today's unscrupulous democratic orator is tomorrow's tyrant (Chapter 1 D1-2).[361] Initially, Pisthetaerus vigorously denies the suggestion of ἀριστοκρατεῖσθαι … ζητῶν (125), but in the end becomes a τύραννος, and is even deified (with the birds reduced to a chorus of admirers) at 1743ff.[362]

[358] Dunbar (1996: 66) notes that such allusions to specific political institutions are rare in *Birds*.
[359] A point emphasised by Ničev (1989: 28). Dunbar's (1996: 69-71) attempt to explain the discrepancy with δημοτικοῖσιν (1584) as a comical footnote which the audience would barely notice is insufficient.
[360] Ničev (1989: 27-8); *pace* Slater (2002: 148-9). Telò (2020: 223-27) argues fascinatingly that cannibalism-related motifs begin much earlier in the play.
[361] Cf. Ničev (1989: 27ff.); Bowie (1996: 170); Sidwell (2009: 239), who argues that *Birds* matches Plato's conception (*Resp*. 565a-576) that democracy develops into tyranny. It is also possible that the reference to divine democracy making bad decisions (1570-71) and the Chorus encouraging judges to steal from the democracy (1111-12) encourages the audience to view the play with the idea of flawed democracy in mind.
[362] Konstan (1995: 42); Telò (2020: 241-2). Griffith (1998: 29) connects Pisthetaerus' marriage to Basileia with Athenians' fascination with individual monarch figures, a thread he traces through tragedy.

Charting the motifs that surround the decision-making processes of off-stage assemblies in both *Knights* and *Assembly-Women* enables us to read *Birds* in a more subtly political light. This primarily affects our reading of the under-studied *agôn* in which Pisthetaerus persuades the Chorus. The Chorus can be analysed as a *dêmos* in another guise: their psychology closely resembles the political groups satirised in *Knights* and *Assembly-Women*. They are surrounded by the sounds closely associated with assembly gatherings, signalled by the verbs κράζω and χάσκω. Much like the off-stage *boulê* of *Knights*, the birds' emotions shift (often in swift, volatile fashion) as a collective; they are easily driven to murderous anger (like the *dêmos* as presented in prose sources) but just as easily drawn out of it. The arguments which hold currency with the birds revolve around flattery, false analogy and (most prominently) emotional manipulation: Pisthetaerus is well-placed to take advantage of the birds' emotional volatility and drive him into a frenzy of delight for his policies. The fact that the "*dêmos*" is on stage allows us to see a group's emotional response to an unscrupulous orator charted much more vividly than in *Knights* or *Assembly-Women*. We see the dangerous implications of the *dêmos'* decision-making psychology being so open to manipulation in the fact that Pisthetaerus becomes a *tyrannos*-figure, preying on the birds in the process.

Section E: Conclusions

Aristophanes' off-stage assembly scenes evoke many stereotypes which are also seen across various prose genres. The *boulê* of *Knights* and the *dêmos* of *Assembly-Women* are both propelled by their emotions into unwise decisions, venal and excessively influenced by flattery, eager to seek scapegoats, easily misled by unscrupulous orators. Aristophanes is unabashedly direct in his depiction of intensely stereotyped political collectives. The atmosphere of such assemblies is dominated by *thorubos*; however, Aristophanes uses verbs which fall outside the typical political lexicon (κράζω and χάσκω) to give his off-stage assembly-scenes a unique soundscape which simultaneously implies stupidity and animalistic incoherence. *Knights* does

this with particular intensity, using these verbs to characterise the speech and intellect of *boulê*, Athens in general and the individual orators alike. Not only do Aristophanes' unscrupulous orators take advantage of a gullible and easily deceived *dêmos*; the implication is that they are made for each other, and that orators adopt a level of discourse which imitates their audience's uproar.

However, the value of Aristophanes' assembly-scenes does not merely lie in blunter restatements of stereotypes found in prose political thought. Like tragedy, the assembly-scenes of comedy allow unseen aspects of a collective political decision to be played out. Euripides' *Orestes* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants* focus particularly heavily on the preliminary negotiations before an assembly meets, and show us elite individuals considering whether and how best to influence the *dêmos*. In Aristophanes, by contrast, we see non-elite characters such as Blepyrus and the two anonymous citizens; they react to the decision, discuss it, process it in their own terms and debate whether to comply. In this fashion, democratic decision-making is understood as a process rather than a single event, as non-elite characters within the *dêmos* continue to engage with the city's collective decision, and their roles within it, even when the assembly is no longer physically gathered. These aspects of collective decision-making would have been a normal part of life in Athens: non-elite members of a *dêmos* would likely be thinking about the assembly's collective verdict, how it affects them and to what extent they should comply with it, in private spaces with friends and family members. No other texts show us this aspect of democracy, or imagine how a democratic decision might look from this viewpoint. Though Aristophanes is far from unproblematic source material, it nevertheless anatomises democratic politics in a way that exposes it to consideration from under-represented viewpoints.

Both *Assembly-Women* and Knights demonstrate a tendency to highlight contrasts between individual and collective decision-making. In *Knights*, it is explicitly stated that Dêmos thinks differently when at home and when on the Pnyx. Strictly speaking, now that Dêmos has been

comically personified, this is not a contrast between a group and an individual; however, it aligns neatly with the heavily stereotyped *boulê* scene and the learning process depicted by the individual Dêmos who appears on stage. The on-stage version of Dêmos increasingly demonstrates an ability to reason logically and spot flaws in the promises made by the Paphlagonian. Furthermore, casting the Dêmos as an individual character enables him to declare that his gullible and emotionally volatile nature are entirely self-aware and deliberate, remodelling the psychological characteristics of a collective into an individual's conscious and calculated strategy. Unlike Knights, *Assembly-Women* nowhere states explicitly that the psychology of the *dêmos* is different to the psychology of its individual components. However, it makes this implicitly clear by demonstrating that the *dêmos* can make a decision seemingly unanimously, after which an anonymous citizen explains his unwillingness to comply, or by showing the *dêmos* won over conclusively by one mode of persuasion, after which Blepyrus is gradually persuaded by completely different types of argument. It is striking that both *Knights* and *Assembly-Women* adopt a similar structure with their off-stage assembly scenes: the collective makes a quick decision, after which an individual on stage makes the same decision but in response to a thorough exposition of argumentation. By reusing this format, Aristophanes achieves several possible goals: he ensures that his protagonists have a chance to explain their arguments in detail, without missing an opportunity to depict an off-stage political group and stereotype it ruthlessly. However, the fact that there is always an individual to be persuaded on stage means that Aristophanes achieves more than just thorough exposition of the arguments: both Blepyrus and Dêmos, as (respectively) individual component of a political collective and individual personification of a political collective, provide very different perspectives on the group decisions we have just had reported.

However, not every group in Aristophanes is an off-stage, clearly defined political group. This chapter's final section has demonstrated how less tightly-defined groups may be more clearly

understood through application of our conclusions drawn from *Knights* and *Assembly-Women*. Though the title creatures of *Birds* are a Chorus in a seemingly apolitical setting, their numbers are imagined as large and vague, and they are confronted with an extremely political decision: the choice of a new leader. Pisthetaerus has frequently been interpreted as a stereotypical unscrupulous orator; he is matched by the Chorus, which is depicted using many of the same stereotypes which characterise the off-stage political groups of *Knights* and *Assembly-Women*. *Birds* also evokes other political tropes found in prose texts: Pisthetaerus' progress from demagogue to unchallenged monarch mirrors the template described by Plato,[363] and relies heavily on Pisthetaerus' ability to manipulate the Chorus.

[363] As discussed in Chapter 2 Section B: Pl. *Resp*. 564-9, 568C.

Chapter 4: Off-Stage Populations

As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, Aeschylus' and Euripides' surviving works demonstrate an interest in collective decision-making, which is showcased at length in their depictions of large off-stage groups and often maps closely onto democratic processes. No such scenes are found in Sophocles' extant works; however, Sophocles' plays often highlight off-stage groups with a more amorphous role. This chapter discusses groups which do not appear in formalised decision-making settings such as assemblies or trials, but instead are naturally present in the tragedy's setting, such as the city's inhabitants. For the purposes of this chapter, these groups will be termed 'populations'. On-stage characters' depiction, use, and misuse of off-stage populations in Sophocles has never previously been studied,[364] and forms the focus of this chapter. Euripides also depicts off-stage populations; however, these populations are almost always armies, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. I argue for interpreting these armies as a different form of 'population' rather than as a military group, because they are rarely depicted actively on campaign in Euripides; however, they pose different problems and lend themselves to analysis in a different light to the more generic populations of Sophocles, hence the separate chapters.

This chapter argues that populations hold considerable significance in several tragedies, even though there is often no formal way for their views to be heard on stage.[365] In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, many political readings have focused more on Oedipus himself than the city around him;[366] however, several of the play's critical scenes are conducted in front of the entire Theban

[364] Schwab's (2011: 63-7) survey of crowds in Sophocles is limited to *Ajax* and *Trachiniae*. As he focuses primarily on frequency of crowd-related vocabulary (which, he observes, is much lower in Sophocles than in Aeschylus or Euripides), he discusses occasions of collective *activity*, but tends to omit fascinating examples of collective presence and passivity, hence his omission of Sophocles' handling of populations.
[365] As with assemblies of the *dêmos*, there is no way to portray an entire city's population *directly* on stage; cf. Carter (2010: 56ff.) for indirect ways to portray the population on stage, some of which (59-63) involve the spectating audience.
[366] E.g. Knox (1954, 1957).

population, and several characters demonstrate acute awareness of the population's presence and suggest that it influences (or should influence) their words and actions. In *Antigone*, the population's support is perceived as important: Creon repeatedly emphasises his credentials as acting with the population's weight behind him, a claim which Antigone and Haemon contest. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, a critical scene of confrontation between Creon, Oedipus and Theseus includes multiple allusions to the views of their city's respective populations, which are intended to bolster their authority in claiming Oedipus.

The second strand of this chapter argues that the fact that off-stage populations cannot easily have their views represented on stage is not merely a limitation, but a feature. The populations' opinions and desires are difficult to interpret and act on, often consciously so, and characters sometimes explicitly discuss their inability to hear the population's views. This particularly makes itself felt in *Antigone*, in which the population's importance leads characters to compete over who is following the population's views, but the overtly-expressed difficulty in interpreting these views undercuts every character's rhetoric. In *Antigone*, the disjunct between population and characters becomes a regular motif and is actively problematised. Several characters claim that they are acting on behalf of the *polis* or its population, or otherwise claim to know where the population's allegiance lies. Unlike in *OT*, though, the population is interpreted as wanting different things by different people (and on occasion, with striking inconsistency, as wanting different things by the same people). As a result, we gradually learn that we cannot take any character's portrayal of the population's wishes at face value. In both *OT* and *Antigone*, the Chorus is cast as only a partial representative of the wider population;[367]

[367] Sophocles' choruses are often considered more secure and risk-free in their existence than the choruses of Aeschylus and Euripides, who tend to be more marginal in their identity and more invested in characters' fates: cf. Foley (2003: esp. 8-16), Calame (2020: 776). Generalisation, though, is difficult: in *Ajax*, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate, the Chorus is menaced by the Achaean army of which it forms a constituent part (cf. Kitzinger 2012: 389-94).

even Haemon's crucial revelation that the population opposes Creon is unverifiable and draws greater attention to the impossibility of verification.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, similarly, we are presented with several elite individuals on stage, all of whom claim to have the population behind them. Here, unlike in *Antigone*, their claims are not mutually exclusive: Creon claims the Theban population's support, whereas Oedipus and Theseus claim Athens' support. Again, we are forced to confront the problem of verifying individual characters' claims about off-stage populations' loyalties: Theseus' claim that Creon *cannot* represent the Thebans' wishes makes this problem explicit and crucial to the political interpretation of *OC*. As well as Theseus' direct challenge, Polyneices' depiction of the Theban population being manipulated encourages us to reconsider the reliability of Creon's representation. In *OC*, then, we are again forced to confront the impossibility of verifying characters' claims about populations and remember how high the political stakes of such claims are. Creon's claim to represent the Theban population is marked as potentially deceptive from multiple angles, which (although Athenian politics is not portrayed in the same dysfunctional light) nevertheless might encourage us to scrutinise Theseus' representation of Athens more closely.

By definition, almost every extant tragedy contains some form of human population. This chapter closes by discussing a different type of setting: plays in which the population is absent. This is the case in two plays by Aeschylus, in which the fighting-age adult male population has departed to fight abroad, leaving behind an atmosphere of emptiness and collective weakness. In both plays, the Chorus alludes to the threat of an uprising in the vacuum left behind; this threat is unfulfilled, as *Persians* ends with Xerxes' local authority seemingly unshaken, while Aegisthus' punishment will come at the hands of Orestes rather than the Argive population. I argue that the absence of an adult male population contributes to the atmosphere of a dysfunctional and declining *polis* in both *Agamemnon* and *Persians*; it is not only connected to

the Asian, un-Greek setting of *Persians*, as has previously been suggested. The Chorus' unfulfilled fears (or, in *Agamemnon*, their unrequited hopes) for a popular rebellion further emphasise the fact that there is barely any population left to rebel.

Section A: *Antigone*

Characters in *Antigone* frequently allude to the population's feelings and justify their actions by claiming that they are acting in the *polis*' interest, most prominently Creon in his opening speech (162ff.). However, acting in the *polis*' interest and doing what the population wants are not necessarily the same thing. *Antigone* forces us to confront this difference. As the play continues, it becomes increasingly clear that claims made about the population's opinions and allegiances cannot be taken for granted. Ismene's, Creon's and Haemon's depictions of the population's views clash with each other and contain internal inconsistencies. *Antigone*, then, highlights the impossibility of relying on characters' reports of the population's views. This has implications for our political understanding of *Antigone*: it confirms that Antigone cannot be treated in uncomplicated fashion either as an idealised martyr fighting against a tyrannical Creon, or a dangerous rebel overturning legitimate state law.[368]

Characters in *Antigone* frequently demonstrate their preoccupation with the population's will. Ismene feels constrained to obey the population: τὸ δὲ | βίᾳ πολιτῶν δρᾶν ἔφυν ἀμήχανος (78-9).[369] Already, though, the characters' distance from the population, and the difficulty in interpreting their will, makes itself felt. Ismene's statement echoes her previous claim, ἀπόρρητον πόλει (44), which makes it teasingly ambiguous whether it is forbidden *to* the city

[368] Hester's (1971) review of scholarship on *Antigone* charts the popularity of the former view of the play. For analyses which adopt the latter approach, to varying extents, cf. Knox (1964), Sourvinou-Inwood (1989); for a broad overview of scholarship, cf. Euben (1997: 154n39). Arguments for Creon as appearing reasonable *throughout* the play are relatively rare, e.g. Calder (1968). In their most extreme forms, both of these interpretations are too simplistic, and a line between them should be found: the approaches adopted by Foley (1995), Liapis (2013) and especially Holt (1999) are noteworthy in this regard, though Holt's closing treatment of tragedy (687-90) is too brief.

[369] Griffith (1999: *ad* 78-9) equates βίᾳ πολιτῶν with ἀπόρρητον πόλει (44), but the latter's meaning is much more ambiguous than the former.

or forbidden *by* the city.[370] This indicates, perhaps, that Creon's edict carries the force of both; however, it also underlines the fact that the population's will is difficult to interpret – by the time it reaches the tragic stage, it has already drifted into terse ambiguity through transmission by various voices. Subsequently, Ismene warns that κάκιστ᾽ ὀλούμεθ᾽, εἰ νόμου βίᾳ | ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν (59-60). The counter-intuitive, almost paradoxical ψῆφον τυράννων hints that Creon's edict is partially democratic.[371] The power dynamics of Thebes, then, are cast in a flickeringly uncertain light. Ismene's ambiguous statements about the population's power underpin her belief that the unburied Polyneices is what the population of Thebes wants (78-9) – a belief that will turn out to be a misconstrual of the people's will.

Creon diligently casts himself as a servant of Thebes. He enters articulating his concern for τὰ … πόλεος (162).[372] His initial speech is preoccupied with the city's well-being: he highlights the importance of his role as ὅστις πᾶσαν εὐθύνων πόλιν (178), claims that τοιοῖσδ᾽ ἐγὼ νόμοισι τήνδ᾽ αὔξω πόλιν (191), and states his allegiance to ὅστις εὔνους τῇδε τῇ πόλει (209). Though it is less prominent, Creon's loyalty to the *polis* is underpinned by his concern for the citizens: οὔτ᾽ ἂν σιωπήσαιμι τὴν ἄτην ὁρῶν | στείχουσαν ἀστοῖς (185-6).[373] However, the prevailing image of Creon as representing the entire city's wishes is undercut immediately after the guard's first report. Creon depicts dissent in the city as follows (288-92):

[370] Griffith (1999: *ad loc*.); Liapis (2013: 83n13); Sommerstein (2017: 278).
[371] Knox (1964: 63); Liapis (2013: 83). Griffith (1999: *ad* 59-60) suggests that ψῆφος is used loosely of a ruler's decision, citing *Ant*. 632 (where Creon is likely using the word to enhance the legitimacy of his command, in contrast to Haemon's anger) and *OT* 607.
[372] For some problematic elements in the initial legitimacy of Creon's edict and position, cf. Euben (1997: 154-7), Lane/Lane (1986: 169-73). Barker (2006: 4) suggests that Creon immediately comes across as tyrannical as we expect a deliberative persuasive process, rather than a monologue and unilateral edict. However, Barker misinterprets κοινῷ κηρύγματι πέμψας (161) as "he sent a public summons for our discussion": although σύγκλητος (160) often denotes a deliberative gathering (Dem. 18.37: σύγκλητος ἐκκλησία), this does not seem to be the sense here. Similarly, I disagree with the contention of Lane/Lane (1986: 170) that "the elders, uneasy about the ban and afraid of Creon, state […] that the decree is his responsibility alone". The point of 211-14 seems rather to confirm that Creon has the power to make such a unilateral decree.
[373] A similar note is sounded by [ἡ πόλις] ἐστὶν ἡ σῴζουσα (189), which Cairns (2016: 83) interprets as the city ensuring the safety of its citizens. Griffith (1999: *ad loc*.) notes the echo of Pericles' words in Thucydides, which makes the connection to the citizens' well-being clearer: ὠφελεῖν τοὺς ἰδιώτας ἢ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τῶν πολιτῶν εὐπραγοῦσαν (Thuc. 2.60.2).

ἢ τοὺς κακοὺς τιμῶντας εἰσορᾷς θεούς;
οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα καὶ πάλαι πόλεως
ἄνδρες μόλις φέροντες ἐρρόθουν ἐμοὶ
κρυφῇ, κάρα σείοντες, οὐδ᾽ ὑπὸ ζυγῷ
λόφον δικαίως εἶχον, ὡς στέργειν ἐμέ.

ἐρρόθουν ἐμοί (290) is a vivid depiction of a collective seething against Creon's edict: the verb suggests a widespread roaring noise. The same verb is previously used to describe the clamour among the guards, who all believe each other responsible for burying Polyneices: λόγοι δ᾽ ἐν ἀλλήλοισιν ἐρρόθουν κακοί (259).[374] Then, the situation almost escalated to violence (κἂν ἐγίγνετο | πληγὴ τελευτῶσ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὁ κωλύσων παρῆν, 260-61); here, therefore, the same verb connotes danger, a hint that the Thebans are on the brink of violent rebellion.[375] This is only a clearly-defined faction within the city, rather than the city's entire population; nonetheless, it firmly undercuts the previous statements (such as those of Ismene) implying that the entire population was behind Creon, and demonstrates the difficulty of trusting such statements about the population's loyalty.

Creon's statement, though, is marked as untrustworthy. Firstly, whether the rebellious Theban faction is fact or fiction, we know that Creon's identification of the culprits, as well as his belief that bribery has taken place (295-6), is incorrect.[376] Secondly, Creon's depiction of the rebellious faction is aimed to prove a point – he wishes to debunk the Chorus' suggestion that the gods are responsible (278-9). Furthermore, he speaks in anger: he explicitly states his anger at the Chorus' words (παῦσαι, πρὶν ὀργῆς καί με μεστῶσαι λέγων, 280), calls them foolish

[374] This is a striking verb to use of collective human sound: Griffith (1999: *ad* 289-94) notes that ῥοθέω is not elsewhere used of human voices in Attic Greek, although some cognates are.
[375] For the connection between these *stasis*-related motifs and archaic poetry, cf. Juffras (1988: 73).
[376] For discussion of Creon's error in attributing Polyneices' burial to plural male agents rather than a single woman, cf. Foley (1995: 137); Holt (1999: 677-80). Notably, Holt argues that Creon's misattribution comes across as wrong but plausible given the information he has.

(281) and their words οὐκ ἀνεκτά (282). Finally, the internal inconsistencies in Creon's imaginary account (secret resistance, which nevertheless causes an uproar) make it feel unreliable in its sheer hyperbole. Creon's initial self-portrayal aimed to assure his audience of his loyalty to the city, and (indirectly) the city's loyalty to him. His insistence that a faction in the city opposes him, on the other hand, is intended to prevent the Chorus from entertaining a far more threatening notion: that the gods themselves are against Creon. Both Creon's allusions to the Theban population are uses of them for a purpose; both undercut the other; by this point, neither strikes the audience as fully trustworthy.

A radically different depiction of the population's feelings will soon be offered, though, and Antigone gives a preview of this (502-510):

Ἀν: καίτοι πόθεν κλέος γ᾽ ἂν εὐκλεέστερον
κατέσχον ἢ τὸν αὐτάδελφον ἐν τάφῳ
τιθεῖσα; τούτοις τοῦτο πᾶσιν ἀνδάνειν
λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν, εἰ μὴ γλῶσσαν ἐγκλῄοι φόβος. 505
ἀλλ᾽ ἡ τυραννὶς πολλά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ εὐδαιμονεῖ
κἄξεστιν αὐτῇ δρᾶν λέγειν θ᾽ ἃ βούλεται.
Κρ: σὺ τοῦτο μούνη τῶνδε Καδμείων ὁρᾷς.
Ἀν: ὁρῶσι χοὗτοι, σοὶ δ᾽ ὑπίλλουσιν στόμα.
Κρ: σὺ δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπαιδῇ, τῶνδε χωρὶς εἰ φρονεῖς; 510

Antigone claims that the Chorus opposes Creon: the deictic τούτοις … πᾶσιν (504) likely indicates the Chorus.[377] σὺ … μούνη τῶνδε Καδμείων (508), then, is illogical, as Griffith points out: Antigone is not one of the elders who form the Chorus.[378] Antigone's words do not directly challenge the prevailing view that the population sides with Creon: as will subsequently be

[377] Griffith (1999: *ad* 504-5).
[378] Griffith (1999: *ad* 508-9).

explained, the Chorus is not aligned with the wider population and should not be expected to represent their views. Nevertheless, Antigone's claim that this watching group has different opinions to what they have themselves said foreshadows subsequent scenes, which will cast intense doubt on the population's views too.

Haemon's appearance on stage, then, becomes critical in more ways than has previously been understood.[379] Haemon provides us with the clearest indication yet that Ismene's and Creon's depictions of the population's views cannot necessarily be taken at face value. Haemon's portrayal of the population is the most vivid we have heard so far; comparable in the intensity of its language to Creon's depiction of the rebellious faction, Haemon's portrayal describes not just the population's opinion but their emotion:

τὸ γὰρ σὸν ὄμμα δεινὸν **ἀνδρὶ δημότῃ** 690
λόγοις τοιούτοις οἷς σὺ μὴ τέρψῃ κλύων·
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἀκούειν ἔσθ᾽ ὑπὸ σκότου τάδε,
τὴν παῖδα ταύτην οἷ᾽ ὀδύρεται πόλις,
πασῶν γυναικῶν ὡς ἀναξιωτάτη
κάκιστ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἔργων εὐκλεεστάτων φθίνει· 695
ἥτις τὸν αὑτῆς αὐτάδελφον ἐν φοναῖς
πεπτῶτ᾽ ἄθαπτον μήθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ὠμηστῶν κυνῶν
εἴασ᾽ ὀλέσθαι μήθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ οἰωνῶν τινος·
οὐχ ἥδε χρυσῆς ἀξία τιμῆς λαχεῖν;
τοιάδ᾽ ἐρεμνὴ σῖγ᾽ ὑπέρχεται φάτις. 700

Haemon's very first statement – that τὸ … σὸν ὄμμα δεινόν (690) might restrict the citizens from speaking their minds – directly challenges our previous impressions of the population, by

[379] The interchange between Creon and Haemon is extremely complex politically. For example, Griffith (1998: 65-74) offers a reading of this scene which explores the clashes between *oikos* and *polis* as power structures.

suggesting that Creon not only does not but *cannot* know what the population thinks.[380] He claims that the population's allegiance is firmly with Antigone. The population is imagined as experiencing collective emotions in unison: ὀδύρεται πόλις (693). The rumour which spreads through the population is, as often in Attic drama, made the subject of the verb, giving it a sense of independent agency; it is described in terms that connote impenetrable darkness (ὑπὸ σκότου, 692; ἐρεμνὴ σῖγ᾽, 700). The motifs of darkness and concealment perhaps echo Creon's previous suggestion that a faction was plotting against him secretly; however, Haemon attributes this feeling to the entire population, depicting them as lamenting in unison and even quoting them as if quoting a single voice. It is striking, moreover, that Haemon adduces rumour as his source: the play was set in motion by Ismene asking τί τοῦτ᾽ αὖ **φασι** πανδήμῳ πόλει | κήρυγμα θεῖναι τὸν στρατηγὸν ἀρτίως (7-8). Subsequently, Haemon continues appealing to the population's authority to reinforce his words (732-40):

Κρ: οὐχ ἥδε γὰρ τοιᾶδ᾽ ἐπείληπται νόσῳ;

Αἵ: οὔ φησι Θήβης τῆσδ᾽ ὁμόπτολις λεώς.

Κρ: πόλις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀμὲ χρὴ τάσσειν ἐρεῖ;

Αἵ: ὁρᾷς τόδ᾽ ὡς εἴρηκας ὡς ἄγαν νέος; 735

Κρ: ἄλλῳ γὰρ ἢ ‘μοὶ χρή με τῆσδ᾽ ἄρχειν χθονός;

Αἵ: πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ᾽ ἑνός.

Κρ: οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομίζεται;

Αἵ: καλῶς γ᾽ ἐρήμης γ᾽ ἂν σὺ γῆς ἄρχοις μόνος.

Κρ: ὅδ᾽, ὡς ἔοικε, τῇ γυναικὶ συμμαχεῖ. 740

[380] As Griffith (1998: 71-2) observes, this model of communication is far from the face-to-face and open communication integral to democratic politics. Euben (1997: 160-61) emphasises Creon's unwillingness to listen to viewpoints other than his own.

Haemon does not deny Creon's assertion personally; instead, he responds οὔ φησι Θήβης τῆσδ' ὁμόπτολις λεώς (733). This begins a short passage which debates where the balance of power in Thebes should lie. Haemon suggests that Creon's assertion of individual power is childish (735) and states πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ' ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ' ἑνός (737). Creon, meanwhile, brusquely dismisses the idea that πόλις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀμὲ χρὴ τάσσειν ἐρεῖ (734), and asks οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομίζεται (738).[381]

In the end, it is unclear what exactly changes Creon's mind. Teiresias threatens him with personal suffering within his household and the enmity of the gods. However, Teiresias also warns him that τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις (1015) and, even more ominously, that ἔχθρᾳ δὲ πᾶσαι συνταράσσονται πόλεις (1080). As Creon's mind changes, and the tragedy's final events unfold, he is under pressure from the wrath and pain of *multiple* off-stage πόλεις.[382] This is important, because Teiresias is the only character whose portrayal of the population is treated as both accurate and impartial. Haemon's report of the Thebans' emotions is far from impartial, given what is at stake to him personally.[383] Holt argues (against Sourvinou-Inwood) that Haemon's report is meant to be taken at face value,[384] suggesting that audiences were used to treating messenger speeches and narrative flashbacks as true and depending on them to report geographically or temporally distant events. It is unclear, though, that Haemon (as Antigone's betrothed) can be equated with messenger-figures, who tend to be rather more impartial; furthermore, I argue, the interchange of conspicuously unverifiable views concerning the

[381] This encounter is reminiscent of, and reverses, the debate between the Danaids and Pelasgus in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, in which the Chorus argued that σύ τοι πόλις, σὺ δὲ τὸ δήμιον (370). Griffith (1999: *ad* 737-8) notes this parallel, although the statement in *Suppliants* receives a much less negative reception than he implies.
[382] Griffith (1999: *ad loc*.) interprets this strange statement as a reference to all the cities that previously supplied soldiers for the attack on Thebes, demonstrating far-reaching political consequences.
[383] Sourvinou-Inwood (1989: 144-45) goes so far as to argue that Haemon's report of the citizens' views is meant to be disbelieved; cf. Griffith (1998: 72n162). This, though, is inconsistent with the merit which the Chorus finds in his views (724-5), as Foley (1995: 136) points out.
[384] Holt (1999: 682-3); cf. Karakantza (2011: 40) who also takes Haemon's words at face value as an indication of *stasis*. Barker (2006: 7-8, 14) argues that Haemon exemplifies the democratic value of listening to marginal voices, and interprets Haemon's quotation of the population's views as unproblematically confirming Creon's tyrannical character. Earlier treatments, such as Lane/Lane (1986: 176-7) also tend to take characters' statements about the population's feelings at face value.

population's allegiances throughout *Antigone* has primed us to suspect Haemon's contribution to this discourse. Apart from Teiresias' warning, every one of the many claims made about the population's feelings and loyalties across *Antigone* is either explicitly questioned, implicitly undercut or intuitively questionable.

Haemon's words raise an important point: they highlight a crucial paradox in tragic portrayals of the population. We are expected to understand that the population holds authority over characters; however, we cannot directly hear the population's voice, so we depend on these same characters to represent its views.[385] On-stage characters frequently regard themselves as acting in the *polis'* interests; most prominently Creon, but also Antigone.[386] There is a distinction, though, between rhetorically claiming the *polis*' interests and genuinely hearing the *polis*' collective voice from off stage. As the play proceeds, successive characters come on stage to provide refracted hints of the population's voice; this provides an alternative perspective to Creon's and Antigone's claims to represent the population, and at times makes these claims deeply problematic. Even Antigone's claims that the Chorus secretly opposes Creon are subsequently undercut by her own suggestion that she has acted βίᾳ πολιτῶν (907) – a direct verbal echo, and apparent confirmation, of Ismene's words (79), which simultaneously contradicts Antigone's previous claims.

We might expect the Chorus to play a role in reporting and representing the population's views. This, too, does not work straightforwardly: in *Antigone*, the Chorus only has a limited ability to represent the off-stage population's will.[387] They are differentiated from the population by

[385] Carter (2010: 74) makes a similar point, observing that Haemon's revelation forces the audience to re-evaluate their assumptions concerning Creon's rule and the support he receives from the population. I argue that it forces the audience to re-evaluate their ability to interpret the population's opinions in general.
[386] τούτοις τοῦτο πᾶσιν ἀνδάνειν | λέγοιμ' ἄν (*Ant*. 504-5), a sentiment repeated at 509; however, Antigone seems to change her interpretation of the Thebans' will at 907. Cf. Foley (1995: 136); Liapis (2013: 84).
[387] Kitzinger (2012: 394-9) demonstrates how Sophoclean choruses' identity is often used to justify their lack of agency, or to align their opinions more closely with one or another character. For a (perhaps too one-dimensional) approach which focuses on the Chorus' dramatic identity within the play, cf. Gardiner (1987).

their age (e.g. 160, 216, 681) and their status as a council of Theban elders convened by Creon himself (160).[388] Creon distinguishes the Chorus from the rest of the population (ἐκ πάντων δίχα, 164). Antigone addresses them, contemptuously, as ὦ πόλεως | πολυκτήμονες ἄνδρες (842-3), later as Θήβης οἱ κοιρανίδαι (940).[389] Haemon's final words on stage, ὡς **τοῖς θέλουσι τῶν φίλων** μαίνῃ συνών (765), may well be a stinging reference to the Chorus, casting them not as representatives of the population, but a small, elite circle who (in Haemon's opinion) stand by Creon until the bitter end.

In *Antigone*, there is not a consistent sense of the population's nearby presence. Characters only occasionally show awareness that the entire city's eyes are on them.[390] However, the population's wishes are frequently used by characters on stage to justify their action or inaction. In *Antigone*, characters have limited evidence on which to base their claims about the population's feelings: the play repeatedly makes these claims clash and compels its audience to re-evaluate its conclusions about the Theban population. Ismene's beliefs that the population sides with Creon are undercut by ambiguities; Creon's self-portrayal as a servant of the people is at odds with his depiction of factions conspiring against him, which simultaneously challenges Ismene's earlier claims; Haemon's statement that the people are against Creon problematises our ability to read the off-stage population through any ruler, and his own words are themselves scarcely impartial. The distance between population and characters, then, is an ongoing motif in *Antigone*, challenging our ability to read the *polis* itself.

[388] Burton (1980: 85-6); Foley (1995: 143); Holt (1999: 683); Goldhill (2012: 86). This is also Gardiner's (1987: 82-4) approach, although Gardiner's claim that the Chorus' "ode to man" indicates, by omission, tacit approval of Creon's actions takes this argument too far. On the other hand, Kitzinger (2012: 398) suggests that the Chorus establishes distance between itself and both Creon and Antigone, enabling it to remain critical of them both. Relatively few scholars have argued that the Chorus is, partly or fully, on Antigone's side from the beginning: Kirkwood (1958: 205-9) suggests a deliberately ambiguous Chorus, while Schwinge (1971) argues that they side completely with Antigone. Sommerstein (2017: 280) argues that the Chorus' limited enthusiasm for Creon's decree (lines 211-14) demonstrate that they already side with Antigone.

[389] Griffith (1999: 56).

[390] Creon (657, 662); Antigone (937-43). Eurydice's address ὦ πάντες ἀστοί (1183) is a striking exception: I cannot agree with Gardiner (1987: 96) that this addresses the Chorus, which would mean an awkward lurch away from their previous status.

Section B: *Oedipus at Colonus*

This section seeks to demonstrate that off-stage populations form an important strand in *OC*. During a critical scene, the confrontation between Oedipus and Creon, several characters attempt to bolster their position by claiming that they have the support of their respective populations. These claims suggest that the off-stage population could be construed as a source of justification for elite individuals and a way of enhancing their authority, even when acting outside the *polis*. However, like *Antigone*, *OC* challenges our ability to interpret the wishes of an off-stage population, and encourages us to doubt claims made about their desires. Theseus explicitly contests Creon's claim with his famous and much-discussed statement that Creon *cannot* be supported by the Theban population in an act so immoral. I argue for interpreting these lines as placing a question-mark over Creon's previous statement and encouraging the audience to doubt not only what Creon says, but what *can* be said about an off-stage population's demands and how on-stage characters use these demands to enhance their authority. Furthermore, Polyneices claims about the Theban population offers another model for understanding such claims: instead of either lying or telling the truth about what the population wants, a character could be claiming authority based on persuading a population through unscrupulous means. The cumulative effect, I argue, is to create an atmosphere of doubt about on-stage characters' claims surrounding off-stage populations. This doubt is more easily applied to Creon; however, it also might encourage us to doubt the readiness with which Theseus claims he holds the backing of the Athenian population against Creon, and (more broadly) to consider what elements of Creon's Thebes might be present in Theseus' Athens.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, when Creon asks Oedipus to return to Thebes, he appeals to Oedipus' loyalty to Thebes itself (e.g. 757-8, 760). However, he also cites the Theban population as a source for his own authority. He declares that he has been sent οὐκ ἐξ ἑνὸς στείλαντος, ἀλλ' ἀστῶν ὑπὸ | πάντων κελευσθείς (737-8). He reinforces this appeal by ventriloquising the

population: πᾶς σε Καδμείων λεὼς | καλεῖ δικαίως (741-2). Later, he calls on the authority of Thebes in a more threatening tone: πόλει μαχῇ γάρ, εἴ τι πημανεῖς ἐμέ (837). Oedipus responds with a similar claim. His reference to πόλιν τέ μοι | ξυνοῦσαν εὔνουν τήνδε καὶ γένος τὸ πᾶν (772-3) is not only an appeal laden with pathos, but a reminder that he too has a city-wide collective to support him.[391] Later, Oedipus rightly observes that Creon is trying to flatter not only Theseus, but also Athens itself (1003-4); he expresses confidence in οἵων ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἥδε φρουρεῖται πόλις (1013). Theseus mobilises πάντ[α] ... λεών (898) to stop Creon,[392] echoing Creon's previous appeal to πᾶς … Καδμείων λεώς (741).[393] The Chorus, too, urgently summons πᾶς λεώς to Oedipus' aid (884). It is telling that λεώς is so frequently the term used to denote the populations of both Thebes and Athens: λεώς is a non-specific term without particular political resonance. These references to populations, then, evoke simply the sheer force of their collective willpower (and, in Theseus' case, their physical numbers) to enhance characters' authority.

Understanding the power attributed to off-stage populations affects our interpretation of *OC*. It has been noted that the Athens portrayed in *OC*, if not exactly democratic, is at least proto-democratic.[394] Political coexistence is emphasised: the Chorus summons Theseus and delegates decisions to him (292-301),[395] while Theseus celebrates rituals in unison with the citizens.[396]

[391] A similar note is struck by Oedipus' reference to his previous sufferings, for which he seems to attribute partial responsibility (oddly) to the city itself: κακᾷ μ' εὐνᾷ πόλις οὐδὲν ἴδριν | γάμων ἐνέδησεν ἄτᾳ (*OC* 525-6).
[392] Λεώς is a politically unmarked term (see Introduction D); however, the follow-up ἄνιππον ἱππότην τε (899) may well underline the demotic nature of Theseus' collective support, as Hesk (2012: 175) suggests, without using the more marked term *dêmos*.
[393] The population being summoned here is that of Athens, not Colonus alone: Theseus is the ruler of Athens, and it is Athens whose help Oedipus requests (e.g. 260). From an early stage, Colonus and Athens are conflated politically: cf. Easterling (1997b: 34). For the significance of the setting being Colonus rather than Athens itself, cf. Allison (1984), Edmunds (1996).
[394] In this regard, I follow Blundell (1993: 295). Finglass (2011: 46) and Saïd (2011: 97) argue that Theseus is emphatically portrayed as a sole ruler: he makes decisions on his own authority, and is frequently described using vocabulary that highlights his kingship. However, he is very much a king who coexists with democracy, even if Markantonatos' (2007: 159) "Theseus, the legendary democratic leader *par excellence*" may be something of an overstatement.
[395] This symbiosis is reminiscent of Isoc. 10.35-6, as Blundell (1993: 295) notes. Furthermore, as Easterling (1997a: 275) observes, this scene enables the primordial kingship of Athens to be combined with democracy: the plural form ἄνακτας may well give this delegation a more democratic flavour.
[396] Blundell (1993: 290); Vidal-Naquet (1988: 338).

Several references are made to the *polis* itself holding power (e.g. 47-8). Furthermore, the Chorus themselves are positioned as arbiters in the dispute between Oedipus and Creon.[397] In this light, the fact that powerful individuals can cite the Athenian population as their source of authority makes sense; however, it is striking that Creon treats the Theban population in the same fashion. The fact that both off-stage populations are adduced as sources of authority and power, in close proximity, might imply a level of political similarity between Thebes and Athens, which in turn lends weight to interpretations of Thebes in *OC* as an Athenian *alter ego*, rather than its direct antithesis.[398]

Subtly, then, Athens and Thebes are aligned: these are both places where a population can hold some power, or where power can be attributed to a population by individual leaders, in similar fashion. This helps us to navigate the depiction of Theban politics in *OC*, which is a complex task. In particular, the lines in which Theseus differentiates Creon's impiety from that of Thebes have been much discussed (919-23):

> καίτοι σε Θῆβαί γ᾽ οὐκ ἐπαίδευσαν κακόν·
> οὐ γὰρ φιλοῦσιν ἄνδρας ἐκδίκους τρέφειν,
> οὐδ᾽ ἄν σ᾽ ἐπαινέσειαν, εἰ πυθοίατο
> συλῶντα τἀμὰ καὶ τὰ τῶν θεῶν, βίᾳ
> ἄγοντα φωτῶν ἀθλίων ἱκτήρια.

These lines undercut Creon's claim that he holds the support and authority of the Theban population – a reversal, perhaps, as emphatic as that signalled by Haemon in *Antigone*. Some have doubted whether these lines should be taken at face value: Zeitlin argues that Theseus is

[397] Knox (1964: 158); Blundell (1993: 298).
[398] Blundell (1993: 303-5). For Thebes as the antithesis of Athens in *OC*, cf. (e.g.) Tzanetou (2012: 123). For Thebes as the antithesis of Athens more generally, cf. Zeitlin (1990a), although Easterling (1989: 11-14) offers an important contrasting perspective on the endurance of Thebes as a city.

simply being naïve about the Theban population.[399] I argue, though, that interpretation of these lines need not fall along binary lines: they are there not to be simply trusted or mistrusted, but to cast doubt on how to interpret appeals to the population's authority. Greater light can be shed upon them by assessing them in light of Polyneices' subsequent statement, which tends to be elided in scholarship (1295-8):

> ἀνθ᾽ ὧν μ᾽ Ἐτεοκλῆς, ὢν φύσει νεώτερος,
> γῆς ἐξέωσεν, οὔτε νικήσας λόγῳ
> οὔτ᾽ εἰς ἔλεγχον χειρὸς οὐδ᾽ ἔργου μολών,
> πόλιν δὲ πείσας.

These lines show how it is possible for both Theseus and Creon to be correct: a population which is not innately immoral may be persuaded to support a ruler's immorality. Polyneices suggests that the city has been wrongfully persuaded to support Eteocles.[400] As usual, we should be suspicious of how a character who has much at stake personally characterises the views of an off-stage population: we have no reason to trust Polyneices' account of events either. Nevertheless, these lines remind us that we must temper Theseus' faith in the innate morality of a population by considering what happens when individuals redirect and misuse populations' power.[401] If the Theban population can be manipulated into supporting tyrants' acts, then Athens' nascent democracy might be similarly vulnerable.[402] Ironically, Polyneices subsequently suggests that he intends to use a similar method to maintain his army's loyalty:

[399] Zeitlin (1990a: 167): a view rightly rebutted by Easterling (1989: 14) and Finglass (2011: 49-50). Sommerstein (2017: 285) argues only that we receive insufficient information to judge between these competing assertions about Theban politics.
[400] Kamerbeek (1984: *ad loc.*). Juffras (1988: 147) notes broadly that this appeal to the *polis* is set in contrast with traditional, mythologised ways of deciding politics.
[401] Here, my interpretation is similar to Easterling's (1997a: 278) suggestion that events in Thebes highlight the innate vulnerability of the *polis*.
[402] Blundell (1993: 298) highlights a similar underlying fear in Theseus' suspicion of a Theban fifth column (1028-33).

οὐδ᾽ ἀγγελοῦμεν φλαῦρ᾽· ἐπεὶ στρατηλάτου | χρηστοῦ τὰ κρείσσω μηδὲ τἀνδεᾶ λέγειν (1429-30).

Theseus' optimistic words, then, demonstrate that the goodness of Theban democracy might not prevent it from being manipulated to support nefarious acts. This is made even more pressing by the fact that (as Blundell argues) a crucial characteristic of the Chorus, which represents Colonus' population, is their ability to be persuaded;[403] the same is true of Theseus, and this is crucial in enabling their acceptance of Oedipus. In contrast to this positive demonstration of persuasion, Creon's presence is a case study of persuasion used illegitimately:[404] he is firmly cast in the role of the clever but deceitful orator.[405] Oedipus' words hint at his fear that Creon's deceptive speech may win over the Chorus (802-3), and the manipulation of the Theban population which Polyneices reports provides the deadly answer to Antigone's innocent rhetorical question λόγων δ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι τίς βλάβη (1187).

The moments at which Theseus and (especially) Creon claim population-wide support hold unappreciated significance. As in *Antigone*, a character's claim that he has the full support of the Theban population (here: Creon) is explicitly challenged by another character (here: Theseus), making it overtly problematic that the population's views cannot be heard directly on stage. Theseus' disagreement raises a crucial question: how can we find out what an off-stage population thinks, and when can we trust the characters who claim to pass on this information? The answer is not simply, as some have felt, that Theseus is being naïve; nor, though, are we given enough cues to conclude that Creon is simply lying. Rather, I argue that the latter stages of *OC* create an atmosphere of suspicion over Creon's claims, but we are confronted with the impossibility of knowing that Creon lies, and the possibility that he

[403] Blundell (1993: 296).
[404] Vidal-Naquet (1988: 336); Blundell (1993: 297).
[405] Buxton (1982: 140-41); van Nortwick (2015: 98).

genuinely represents the Thebans' wishes. Polyneices' portrayal of a manipulated Theban population demonstrates that a grey area between Creon's claim and Theseus' rebuttal is possible, and implies that an individual's claim of popular support may be untrustworthy even if it is technically true. However, even Polyneices has an evident vested interest in portraying Eteocles' government as illegitimate, and his explicit intention to tell his army only selective information makes him difficult to trust.

In *OC*, then, the difficulty of reading the Theban population's views confronts us directly. It would be plausible to interpret this as emphasising the distance between Thebes and Athens: Creon's untrustworthy representation of an easily corruptible population contrasted with Theseus' legitimate government by consent. This would not be far from the truth: we are given explicit cues to doubt Creon's representation of his population, not Theseus'. However, Creon and Theseus both evoke the population's support in close proximity to each other, and using remarkably similar language; furthermore, Theseus' statement about Thebes is that Θῆβαί … οὐ … φιλοῦσιν ἄνδρας ἐκδίκους τρέφειν (919-20), and subsequently that σὺ δ' ἀξίαν οὐκ οὖσαν αἰσχύνεις πόλιν (929). We are explicitly reminded that Thebes is far from an unusually depraved city, and the fact that Creon's claim of popular support is scrutinised so thoroughly encourages us also, albeit to a lesser extent, to scrutinise Theseus' handling of the off-stage Athenian population. On a very subtle level, the Thebes of *OC* is a warning to Athens.

Section C: *Oedipus Tyrannus*

In *OC,* characters endow populations with the power to enforce their authority, which lends significance to the debate over whether those characters are representing the populations accurately. In *Antigone,* considerable explicit and implicit debate over the population's views demonstrates that, despite Creon's claims to the contrary, the population's allegiance carries considerable weight. This section argues that *Oedipus Tyrannus* demonstrates the Theban

population's power in a different way, with less emphasis on the difficulty in interpreting the population's wishes. *OT* handles the population strikingly and uniquely: Oedipus' proclamation cursing the wrongdoer is made before the entire city. This is an explicit indication that we should imagine the Theban population as present to hear Oedipus' proclamation. Such a scene is unparalleled in extant tragedy, meaning that we have no established framework for interpreting it. I argue that the population's presence adds considerable tension to this politically charged scene: the population hears characters' invocations of Thebes' well-being, and stands ominously present while Oedipus accuses Creon of fomenting conspiracy.

This has substantial implications for our understanding of the play, because *OT* has not previously been read as a play in which the Theban population has a powerful presence. Its title, regardless of whether it was assigned during Sophocles' lifetime,[406] reminds us that the play has long been considered to have important political implications;[407] however, scholarship tends to avoid readings of *OT* which focus on the broader city around Oedipus.[408] Even Knox's more political approach focuses primarily on allusions to Athens rather than depictions of Thebes.[409] It is easy to see why this is the norm: governance of the *polis* is not as explicit a concern in *OT* as in, for example, *Antigone*. Furthermore, throughout the play, the wellbeing of Thebes (which was initially prominent) is side-lined as Oedipus' identity, origin and suffering become increasingly central, while Oedipus' propensity for independent action draws

[406] For brief discussion of the play's title, cf. Finglass (2018: 165-6).
[407] Oedipus is insistently and emphatically referred to as a *tyrannos*: cf. Knox (1954, 1957: 53). Even if we dispute Knox's (1957: 67ff.) radical argument that Oedipus is depicted as a microcosm of the character of Athens (adopted by Raaflaub [2012: 484]), Knox is right to emphasis the tyranny-related motifs that surround Oedipus, and the significance of prominent individuals within the Athens of the time (1957: 23).
[408] For example, Finglass (2018: 40-82) analyses *OT* as suppliant drama, recognition tragedy, *nostos*-play, foundling narrative, work of theodicy and tragicomedy, but avoids large-scale thematic frameworks which place the *polis* at its heart. Of course, many of Finglass' frameworks are political in their own ways (especially discussion of suppliants and theodicy, which touch on elements of Athenian ideology and identity); Goldhill/Hall (2009: 18) remind us that it is important to avoid adopting an excessively narrow definition of "politics".
[409] In suggesting, for example, that Oedipus personifies the *polis tyrannos* (1957: 67ff.) or that Oedipus' investigation is rooted in Athenian legal frameworks and witness examination (1957: 79ff.). For the latter, cf. Greiffenhagen (1966), including his important caveat on p151.

the focus onto him.[410] By understanding the population's proximity to the scene in which Oedipus, Teiresias and Creon interact, we learn more about Oedipus' portrayal as a ruler.

Early in *OT*, the Theban population looms large. The plot is initially propelled by the city's collective suffering, which has summoned Oedipus: πόλις δ' ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει, | ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων (4-5).[411] The plague, we are told, affects the entire population (νοσεῖ δέ μοι πρόπας | στόλος, 169-70) and the death toll is uncountably vast (πόλις ἀνάριθμος ὄλλυται, 179). The city's suffering is depicted vividly as a collective malaise: πόλις γάρ, ὥσπερ καὐτὸς εἰσορᾷς, ἄγαν | ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρα (22-3). The idea of the city being unable to lift its head imagines suffering as (quite literally) a single body. Characters' obligations to the *polis* are an important propelling factor behind the plot:[412] consequently, the city's needs become a touchstone which characters use to justify their actions, or prove others unjustified. Oedipus particularly emphasises what he sees as Teiresias' ingratitude to πόλει | τῇδ', ἥ σ' ἔθρεψε (322-3).[413] His subsequent accusations are in a similar vein: ἡμᾶς προδοῦναι καὶ καταφθεῖραι πόλιν (331), σὺ τήνδ' ἀτιμάζεις πόλιν (340). The Chorus' steadfast belief in Oedipus' innocence, meanwhile, is rooted in their perception of him as ἠδύπολις (510). Jocasta criticises both Creon and Oedipus for arguing γῆς | οὕτω νοσούσης (635-6). Notably, characters at times appeal to the information held collectively by the *polis* as a community: the population holds knowledge which might confirm the story of Laius' death (848-50).

Discussing and focusing on the *polis* is not the same as depicting its population. However, *OT* also contains more concrete references to the Theban population: the characters are acutely aware of it as a collective of people, not just a *polis* in the abstract (16-21):

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[410] Knox (1957: 11-12).
[411] Such public, collective scenes do not usually open Sophocles' plays, as far as we can judge from the surviving works, as Segal (2001: 73) observes. Burian (1977a: 83, 91-4) summarises discussion of this opening scene's staging and argues convincingly that a relatively large group of suppliants would have been on stage.
[412] Knox (1957: 23). Subsequently, Knox (1957: 189) interprets Oedipus' urgent desire for exile (1436ff.) as demonstrating concern for the city's well-being.
[413] Knox (1957: 24).

οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς·
ἱερεὺς ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἵδε τ᾽ ἠθέων
λεκτοί· **τὸ δ᾽ ἄλλο φῦλον** ἐξεστεμμένον
ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ, πρός τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς
ναοῖς, ἐπ᾽ Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντείᾳ σποδῷ.

Initially, the Chorus is depicted as the on-stage representatives of the entire Theban population, whereas the wider population is introduced off stage as τὸ … ἄλλο φῦλον (19), a vague and unpolitical noun which emphasises universality.[414] Subsequently, the population is imagined on stage for Oedipus' proclamation (216ff.). Oedipus summons them with the words ἄλλος δὲ Κάδμου λαὸν ὧδ᾽ ἀθροιζέτω (144), and addresses his proclamation πᾶσι Καδμείοις (223; cf. 273). Some have argued that the Chorus is understood as symbolising the entire population for this scene.[415] I argue against this interpretation: although the Chorus was previously present to request Oedipus' help on the population's behalf, its reference to τὸ … ἄλλο φῦλον and list of locations in Thebes (19-21) emphasises the fact that the Chorus represents, but does not depict on stage, a very large off-stage collective.[416] The use of unpolitical, universal terms such as φῦλον and λαός highlight this. Furthermore, as the play progresses the connection between Chorus and population grows weaker: caught between exploring the viewpoints of Oedipus and the city more broadly, the Chorus seems to become more strongly aligned with Oedipus himself.[417] The Chorus' also holds high status (911, 1111, 1223),[418] and therefore does not lend itself easily to being seen as an on-stage depiction of the entire population.

[414] Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.).
[415] Knox (1957: 16); Burton (1980: 141); Gardiner (1987: 97-9).
[416] Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.) notes that the list of locations in Thebes emphasises the fact that the supplication is city-wide.
[417] Budelmann (2000: 219-27). This mirrors a wider shift in the play's focus: cf. Finglass (2018: 47-8). Budelmann (2000: 208-19) notes that references to the *polis* steadily decrease across the play.
[418] Burton (1980: 138); Gardiner (1987: 97-8).

Oedipus' call for information is uttered in the presence, we imagine, of the entire Theban population. His curses are given further weight by the fact that all of Thebes is present. After this, strikingly, there is no indication that the watching population departs, and (though some subsequent events must be understood to take place in a private setting) there are nonetheless hints that the population remains watching from off stage. These hints affect how we view subsequent events: the stakes of each scene become different when we imagine them being played out in front of the silent Theban population. Even before the proclamation scene, characters' awareness of their audience is highlighted. When Creon first enters, he is worried about the size of his audience: εἰ τῶνδε χρῄζεις πλησιαζόντων κλύειν (91) presumably refers to the Chorus' presence.[419] Oedipus replies ἐς πάντας αὔδα (93), encouraging Creon to speak publicly and widening the scope beyond the Chorus: ἐς πάντας foreshadows Oedipus' subsequent willingness to speak before the entire city. Later, Jocasta also focuses on the public nature of Oedipus' and Creon's quarrel: she asks them to go inside (οὐκ εἶ σύ τ' οἴκους σύ τε, Κρέον, τὰς σὰς στέγας, 637) an arena more suitable for such ἴδια ... κακά (636).

The population's presence raises the stakes of the confrontations between Teiresias, Oedipus and Creon. Teiresias threatens Oedipus with the population's collective enmity: **οὐδεὶς** ὃς οὐχὶ **τῶνδ**' ὀνειδιεῖ τάχα (373). This threat is particularly charged in the aftermath of the population's desperation for help and their presence to hear Oedipus' proclamation and curse; furthermore, the deictic indicates an imaginary nearby collective which may well encompass the entire Theban population, given that the scene has not changed since the proclamation.[420]

[419] Knox (1957: 24-5) concurs that Creon's vague initial summary of the oracular message (87-8) is designed, with his unexpectedly large audience in mind, to reassure them without revealing the exact oracular message.
[420] It is possible here that the deictic τῶνδε refers to the Chorus, as (I argue) is the case with several similar examples in *Antigone*. ὀνειδίζω does not seem to be used elsewhere with genitive of accusation (although, for partitive genitive referring to the accusations, cf. *OT* 1423: ὡς ὀνειδιῶν τι τῶν πάρος κακῶν). Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.) seems to elide the deictic with his translation "there is nobody who will not soon be casting them against you". Given that this is still the same scene as Oedipus' proclamation to the full population of Thebes, it is possible to interpret this statement (with its powerful statement of universality within a specific group) as referring to the population, not the Chorus.

Awareness of the population's recent presence also affects our reading of the *agôn* between Oedipus and Creon. Here, too, there are hints which imply performance to the wider population. Creon begins by addressing ἄνδρες πολῖται (513).[421] This is most likely an address to the Chorus,[422] as well as any other citizen who happens to be around (since Creon is speaking in public). However, given how acutely we remember the entire population being present for Oedipus' proclamation, the idea of public speech inherent in this address already has high stakes. Furthermore, the more political language ἄνδρες πολῖται implies a contest for political leadership of the city, which makes sense given the context of Oedipus accusing Creon of conspiracy. Even if this is formally addressed to the Chorus, I suspect that this contains a hint that Creon sees himself as presenting to a wider audience than the Chorus alone – especially since, as Carter acknowledges, Creon must have received the news of Oedipus' allegations from citizens elsewhere in the city.[423] Indeed, Creon subsequently articulates his fear: εἰ κακὸς μὲν **ἐν πόλει**, | κακὸς δὲ πρὸς σοῦ καὶ φίλων κεκλήσομαι (521-2), confirming that he has heard news of Oedipus' accusations spreading through the city. Later, Oedipus' words ὦ πόλις πόλις (629) are not easy to interpret;[424] I interpret them, though, as an appeal *to* the listening city, a request that they pass judgement on Creon.

The strong sense of performance before Thebes (which at the very least includes the Chorus and may well extent to the entire Theban population), underlines this scene's high political stakes.[425] Oedipus accuses Creon of plotting to seize power; Creon explains why power thus

[421] This is a relatively unusual collocation. Elsewhere in tragedy, it is used to address the Chorus (*OC* 1579, Aesch. *Ag*. 855); in prose, it is used of wider audiences (Antiph. 1.1.4, Xen. *Hell*. 2.4.13, 2.4.20, 7.1.30, 7.3.5), but generally the data is too limited to draw firm conclusions.
[422] So Burton (1980: 139); Carter (2010: 72). Carter argues that "this cannot be taken to be addressed to the citizens as a whole".
[423] Carter (2010: 72); Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.).
[424] For various possible interpretations of this cry, cf. Budelmann (2000: 212-13). Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.) prefers to interpret it as Oedipus apostrophising the state and the importance of its safety.
[425] The offstage population's presence notwithstanding, I dispute Finglass' (2018: 47) statement that "Oedipus' argument with Creon has almost no focus on the wider community".

seized would be unattractive to him (583ff.). When he first addresses Creon, Oedipus makes the following statement (540-42):

> ἆρ᾽ οὐχὶ μῶρόν ἐστι τοὐγχείρημά σου, 540
> ἄνευ τε πλούτου καὶ φίλων τυραννίδα
> θηρᾶν, ὃ πλήθει χρήμασίν θ᾽ ἁλίσκεται;

Oedipus claims that a τυραννίς can be captured using support in large numbers (πλήθει, 542), φίλοι (521) and money. Oedipus' political paradigm is reinforced later: a Messenger's statement that τύραννον αὐτὸν οὐπιχώριοι χθονὸς | τῆς Ἰσθμίας στήσουσιν (939-40) confirms that a population can place a τύραννος in power. Oedipus himself, he emphasises, has been given power by the population: he refers earlier to τῆσδέ γ᾽ ἀρχῆς οὕνεχ᾽, ἣν ἐμοὶ πόλις | δωρητόν, οὐκ αἰτητόν (383-4), likely in order to juxtapose his own legitimacy with an imagined plot by Teiresias. Soon after, Oedipus labels Creon λέγειν σὺ δεινός (545). In prose, δεινός often denotes persuasive, unscrupulous orators (Chapter 1 D1).[426] If the Theban population is imagined watching from off-stage, then this scene's stakes are raised considerably. Oedipus' fear of Creon as a δεινός speaker is not so much that Creon will persuade Oedipus, but that he will win the population's loyalty – a population which, as Oedipus clarifies, would provide crucial support in Creon's imagined bid for power.[427] Just as Teiresias used the population's presence against Oedipus, Oedipus fears that Creon too will derive an advantage from them. Interestingly, Creon's disagreement revolves around the claim that he is already popular (νῦν πᾶσι χαίρω, νῦν με πᾶς ἀσπάζεται, 596). He therefore has no wish to risk unpopularity by becoming sole ruler – nor, as he tacitly indicates, does he have any need to court the off-stage population's support.

[426] Finglass (2018: *ad loc*.) notes δεινός λέγειν as "at best an ambiguous compliment": in my view, its connotations are more specific than Finglass suggests.
[427] Knox (1957: 25-6, 74-6) emphasises the fundamentally democratic (and very Athenian) overtones of Oedipus' suspicion that people are conspiring against him; cf. Segal (2001: 76).

After he has been blinded, Oedipus remains conscious of the population: strikingly, in his blinded state, he wishes to be shown τοῖς πᾶσι Καδμείοισι (1288), a twisted echo of his proclamation to πᾶσι Καδμείοις near the start of the play. The Chorus complies: their tailpiece begins ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ᾽, Οἰδίπους ὅδε (1524).[428] As well as drawing the population's gaze to Oedipus, they remind us how the population saw him previously: οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλῳ πολιτῶν ταῖς τύχαις ἐπέβλεπεν (1526). It is even possible that, as well as gesturing to the off-stage Thebans, this address also encompasses the audience in the theatre: the people who are physically, unavoidably *looking at* Oedipus as the play ends.[429]

Who should rule Thebes, and how, is a prominent theme in the early scenes of *OT*, even if nobody is actually challenging Oedipus' position. The plot is initially motivated by Oedipus' keenness to do his duty as ruler, underlined by the openness with which he makes a proclamation to the entire city. However, the proclamation scene holds under-appreciated power by asking the audience to imagine the entire Theban population being present. The population observes passively: they do not, as with the tragedies in Chapter 2, cast votes which affect characters, nor do they threaten to charge on stage and harm characters as in several cases discussed in Chapter 5. However, simply by listening, the population's presence can be felt. This is indicated several times in the confrontations between Oedipus, Teiresias and Creon. Characters feel acutely aware that they are speaking in a public setting; furthermore, they sometimes explicitly consider how the population will react to certain words or actions. During the *agôn* between Oedipus and Creon, the political undertones are intensified: Oedipus

[428] The choral tailpiece has been subject to discussion due to the textual problems it poses: cf. Burton (1980: 182-5) and Finglass (2018: *ad* 1524-30) for an outline of these problems. Finglass argues, in my view convincingly, for interpolation here; Lloyd-Jones/Wilson (1990: 113-14) retain these lines.

[429] Carter (2010: 59, 70-72) cites *OT* 216ff. as an occasion on which the Theban population and the audience in the theatre appear to be subtly conflated, and suggests that the audience's presence adds weight to the sense of a watching multitude implied by Oedipus' address πᾶσι Καδμείοις (223). I hesitate to advance this argument; however, if one were to follow it, then the choral tailpiece would pick up on and reinforce this conflation between fictive population and theatrical audience.

highlights the population's power by reminding us that Creon's hypothetical plot would rely on the population to enthrone him.

It is unclear at what point the population imagined on stage by Oedipus' proclamation departs. Subsequently, in the same scene, several characters refer to or address onlookers, such as Creon's ἄνδρες πολῖται. These have hitherto been read as allusions to the Chorus. There is very little evidence for reading them instead as allusions to the off-stage Theban population, and it certainly cannot be conclusively the proven. Equally, the scene in which the entire population is imagined gathering to hear Oedipus' proclamation is itself unprecedented. Therefore, we are in uncharted territory here: there is no conventional point at which to assume that the population departs. I argue that this scene has far-reaching consequences for the rest of *OT*: already a play characterised by intense concern for the Theban population, this transforms it into a play enacted before the Thebans' gaze, or (to adopt a less challenging line) colours the characters' statements with hints that they are considering their self-portrayal before all of Thebes.

Section D: Impotent Populations in Aeschylus

It is relatively rare that the off-stage population can be said to be *absent* in extant tragedies. Even in the isolation of *Philoctetes*, the faraway Achaean army is observed to exert some power over Philoctetes, inspiring him with both fear and compulsion. In this section, I discuss two tragedies which stand in contrast to what has previously been discussed in this chapter, and indeed in this thesis as a whole: plays set in *poleis* characterised by the population's absence. I firstly discuss Aeschylus' *Persians*, which regularly laments the absence and destruction of the adult male population. Goldhill observes that *Persians* is frequently a poor fit for general arguments about Greek tragedy;[430] in this regard, the play is no exception, and the imagination of a Persia devoid of adult male population underlines the impression of political dysfunction.

[430] Goldhill (1988: 189).

Persians, then, indicates how the absence of a powerful off-stage population can be handled just as compellingly as its presence. Many commentators have argued that Persia's emptiness highlights its political distance from Greece, with the absence of the male population in particular implying an orientalising effeminacy. Such readings are plausible, given that it is *men* specifically whose absence is underlined, with the Persian queen temporarily in charge.[431] However, *Persians* is not the only play by Aeschylus in which the off-stage population's absence and weakness are emphasised. In many ways, *Agamemnon* creates a similar political landscape to *Persians*: what in (admittedly anachronistic) Athenian terms would be the politically active population has departed, leaving the existing regime uncertain. Furthermore, both plays handle the distant off-stage population in similar fashion. It is the Chorus, especially, which highlights the population's absence; furthermore, the Chorus expresses its political insecurity by describing the fear of a popular uprising. No such uprisings take place; indeed, they are unlikely with the adult male population overseas, making these claims strikingly paradoxical. This section, then, suggests that the off-stage population's absence can be used to highlight an existing atmosphere of political uncertainty or dysfunction, and discomfits the Chorus intensely; furthermore, this is not restricted to markedly un-Greek settings such as Persia.

The setting of *Persians* is defined through the absence (and later, the destruction: 255) of the vast military throngs who have departed to fight in Greece. The opening section highlight's the departing army's sheer size: δεινοὶ πλῆθός τ' ἀνάριθμοι (40), Λυδῶν | ὄχλος (41-2), πάμμεικτον ὄχλον (53), μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν (89).[432] Vocabulary which implicitly likens the Persian army to a fluid mass returns subsequently: Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος (406), ῥεῦμα

[431] A point well made by Hall (1993a: 117).
[432] Schwab (2011: 59) cites all of these except the last, which is omitted perhaps because of his focus on recurring crowd-related lexical items such as ὄχλος and πλῆθος.

Περσικοῦ στρατοῦ (412), ἐξ ἑνὸς ῥόθου (462).[433] For all its vastness, though, this population (in the form of the Persian army) is distant, and conspicuously lacks the ability to control events in the Persian capital. Early on, the formulae asserting the armed masses' power (δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστὰς | μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν, 88-9; ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν | στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός, 91-2) feel deliberately trite, and ironically foreshadow their ignominious defeat. In fact, the Persians consistently exemplify a misplaced faith in the power of numbers (e.g. πλήθει καταυχήσας νεῶν, 352):[434] initially, they cannot comprehend how a city without an ἀνδροπλήθεια στρατοῦ (235) can possibly harm their army, a misapprehension which the Messenger corrects in 337-8. The only crowds left to show for their power are crowds of corpses.[435] The absence of the Persian population perhaps points to deeper political dysfunction: as the Queen puts it, παῖς ἐμὸς … κακῶς δὲ πράξας, οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει (211-13).[436] The significance of οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει is twofold: it highlights the ideological distance between Persia and the democracy of Athens,[437] but also labels the Persian capital as a πόλις in which the off-stage adult male population – in Athenian terms, the people who would be politically active – is powerless. In the absence of the young men, there is barely any

[433] Saïd (1988: 329) observes that the emphasis on the Persians' vast numbers redefines them as an indistinct mass. That the comparison of the Persian army to a flood is ironic, given that the sea is later portrayed as their enemy, is observed as early as Sheppard (1911: 47-8); cf. Owen (1952: 25), Wilson (1986: 52). Goldhill (1988: 192) interprets ῥόθος as noise "as befits ῥόθος according to the usual derivation of the term".

[434] Anderson (1972: 169-70). Harrison (2000: 66-70) highlights how the Persians' obsession with numbers is depicted as working against them, and demonstrates how this draws on themes also present in Herodotus and Thucydides.

[435] πλήθουσι νεκρῶν (*Pers.* 272), πλῆθος τοσουτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν (432). More metaphorically, we also find a κακῶν … πέλαγος (433), a πλῆθος πημάτων (477) and a κλύδων | κακῶν (599-600). Harrison (2000: 70) notes that the Persians' large numbers are recast as a figurative as well as a literal weakness, including the imagery suggesting vast volumes of liquid.

[436] Hall (1993a: 117-18) argues that the adult male population's departure, highlighted with frequent *-andr-* compounds, contributes to the effeminate and orientalising depiction of Persia; cf. Bordaux (1993: 74-6). Bacon's (1961: 55) suggestion that "the Greeks […] were impressed by the teeming populations of Asia" is an oversimplification, and more broadly her argument that Aeschylus is not straightforwardly orientalising is rooted in a pre-Said (1978) understanding of what orientalism entails. Schwab (2011: 60) sees a connection between *Suppliants*, *Seven* and *Persians* through this motif: "the men in the prime of their youth are gathered offstage[;] left onstage is the actuality or potential of a crowd of women or those otherwise coded as weak." This seems to homogenise excessively: it elides the differences between the local population being an army overseas (*Persians*), a foreign army threatening the local population (*Seven*) and a much smaller interest group threatening a specific on-stage interest group (*Suppliants*).

[437] Goldhill (1988: 191); Allan/Kelly (2013: 103-4).

population left to hold power; the scattered fragments left behind can only lament their absence and eventual death.

The Chorus, though, anticipates a dangerous population-wide uprising in this power vacuum (584-97):

τοὶ δ᾽ ἀνὰ γᾶν Ἀσίαν δὴν
οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται,
οὐδ᾽ ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσιν
δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις,
οὐδ᾽ ἐς γᾶν προπίτνοντες
ἄζονται, βασιλεία
γὰρ διόλωλεν ἰσχύς·
οὐδ᾽ ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσιν
ἐν φυλακαῖς· λέλυται γὰρ
λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν,
ὡς ἐλύθη ζυγὸν ἀλκᾶς·
αἱμαχθεῖσα δ᾽ ἄρουραν
Αἴαντος περικλύστα
νᾶσος ἔχει τὰ Περσᾶν.

The prospect of Persian power collapsing into popular revolt is suggested only briefly, and is not what actually takes place during the play.[438] The political overtones of the vocabulary used here is striking: *speech* (590-94) is imagined as crucial in bringing down the existing regime. It is possible that this plays into the idea of collective rumour as a way for large groups or populations to make elite individuals vulnerable (Chapter 1 E2). However, part of its

[438] Griffith (1998: 63-4).

significance is drawn from its Persian setting: the Chorus especially fears *free* speech, a characteristic of democracy.[439]

A significant quantity of existing scholarship views *Persians* as exemplifying Greek (and specifically Athenian) patriotic pride.[440] At first glance, the handling of the off-stage population in *Persians* supports this narrative: a tyrannical ruler overreaches and thus creates a political vacuum, risking the collapse of his regime as freedom of speech erupts unfettered. This is certainly a powerful current: the Chorus' admission that the Athenians are nobody's slaves (242) makes this clear. However, *Persians* is not politically as simple as that: the fact that the predicted revolution never comes close to occurring, and that the play ends with Xerxes firmly in command of the Chorus (and, to judge from his series of commands, of Persia) should give us pause. Griffith interprets this progression as demonstrating the Athenians' preoccupation with powerful ruling figures,[441] countering traditional readings of *Persians* as depicting democracy in the ascendancy over tyranny. Without contradicting either reading, I propose that comparison with the strikingly similar political backdrop of *Agamemnon* may offer some answers.

Like *Persians*, *Agamemnon* opens in a political vacuum: leader and adult male population alike are fighting abroad (45-7).[442] Despite this, several references are made to the population's feelings, including expressions of dissent against Clytemnestra's power.[443] As in *Persians*, the most prominent of these references are made by the Chorus and prove to be unfulfilled.

[439] On the significance of ἐλεύθερα βάζειν, cf. Hall (1996: *ad loc*.).
[440] E.g. Hall (1989, 1993a), Bordaux (1993: 73-4, 78); Kennedy (2013).
[441] Griffith (1998).
[442] Podlecki (1993: 76-7) observes the physical absence, and consequent striking silence, of the Argive *dêmos* in *Agamemnon*.
[443] Griffith (1995: 76) lists these references; however, he does not mention that every use of λαός (and some uses of ἀστοί) refer either to the Achaean army or the Trojan population. Where δῆμος or its compounds are used, it refers to public feeling in Argos. References to popular feeling in Argos are too often overlooked by political treatments of *Agamemnon*, e.g. Pope (1986).

Throughout *Agamemnon*, we are reminded that the population can hold power and hold its rulers accountable – but only in theory (449-51, 457-8):

Χο: τάδε σῖγά τις βαῦ- 449
ζει, φθονερὸν δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἄλγος ἔρ- 450
πει προδίκοις Ἀτρείδαις. 451

βαρεῖα δ᾽ ἀστῶν φάτις σὺν κότῳ· 457
δημοκράντου δ᾽ ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος. 458

These lines imply that the population resents its rulers, containing a powerful verbal hint at the idea of democracy and (reminiscent, again, of the predicted popular unrest in *Persians*) the retribution which the population can claim by *speaking* against its rulers. This statement never reflects reality: neither Clytemnestra nor Aegisthus will attract the righteous ἀστῶν κότος beyond the Chorus. Later, the Chorus claims that Clytemnestra has incurred δημοθρόους τ᾽ ἀράς (1409-10), echoing the previous δημοκράντου … ἀρᾶς (458), and become a μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς (1411) – Clytemnestra, though, shows only amused contempt, quoting these same μῖσος ἀστῶν δημόθρους τ᾽ … ἀράς back at the Chorus in 1413.[444] Later, the Chorus threatens Aegisthus as follows (1615-16):

οὔ φημ᾽ ἀλύξειν ἐν δίκῃ τὸ σὸν κάρα
δημορριφεῖς, σάφ᾽ ἴσθι, λευσίμους ἀράς.

ἀράς picks up on both previous instances of ἀραί, connecting all these assertions of the population's authority; the stoning is a quintessential expression of collective violence (as discussed in Chapter 1), underlined by the neologism δημορριφεῖς. Again, this threat is

[444] The sarcastic quotation of 1409-10 in 1413 is noted by Raeburn/Thomas (2011: *ad* 1413); the recurrence of ἀραί is noted *ad* 456-8, with brief discussion.

unfulfilled: we know that Aegisthus' punishment will be death at the hands of Orestes, not δημορριφεῖς … λευσίμους ἀράς.[445] We might further note Clytemnestra's pretended fear of δημόθρους ἀναρχία (883): a disingenuous attempt to justify Orestes' absence, rather than a genuine acknowledgement of the population's power. Agamemnon cites his fear of φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει (938) as his reason for being unwilling to walk on tapestries; Clytemnestra persuades him to override this fear, and ignore the population's potential reaction, in following the path she lays down.[446] We are consistently aware, then, that the Argive population is quoted as having power, in ways that are either unfulfilled or coded as deceptive.[447] When the Chorus divides in sheer consternation, one member suggests πρὸς δῶμα δεῦρ' ἀστοῖσι κηρύσσειν (1349), but this is ignored. Here, the Chorus' fragmented and impotent nature may well remind us that the ἀστοί being mentioned are equally impotent.[448]

The motif of the Chorus predicting widespread popular resistance that does not occur is striking, partly because the Choruses in *Persians* and *Agamemnon* have much else in common. In both plays, the Chorus is marked out from the wider population. They are higher-ranking citizens;[449] their age prevents them from fighting.[450] Their political positions, relative to the

[445] Raeburn/Thomas (2011: xxxi-xxxii) note the impossibility of a public punishment, despite various mentions thereof; they point out that, by the end of the play, the Chorus' thoughts have turned to Orestes' return as their only viable hope. However, they explain this by suggesting that "Argos has no institutions for a public trial of its rulers", rather than discussing the overall powerlessness of Argos' population.

[446] *Pace* Carter (2010: 78), who suggests that Agamemnon's fear of his envious subjects is what enables Clytemnestra to persuade him to walk on tapestries. Agamemnon's reasons for walking on the tapestries have been discussed at great length: for a reading which focuses on how precisely Clytemnestra wins the debate against Agamemnon, cf. Konishi (1989). Crane (1993) and McNeil (2005) offer interesting readings which locate the carpet scene thematically in the wider context of *Agamemnon* and summarise related scholarship.

[447] In this argument, I follow Podlecki (1993: 77) who describes the Chorus' words at (e.g.) 1615-16 as "empty threats", as well as (more controversially) Griffith (1995) who argues that networks between individuals are what hold other individuals accountable in the *Oresteia*; *pace* Carter (2010: 75-6).

[448] This scene has been much discussed. Gantz (1983: 82-6) and Winnington-Ingram (1954) both argue that it contributes to the Chorus' characterisation; Taplin (1977: 323-4) adopts a similar approach, and argues that the Chorus' indecision highlights Clytemnestra's decisive entrance. Wills (1963) offers an unusual and powerful reading of the divided Choral passage as *rationalising* their own cowardice and inability to act, rather than demonstrating genuine indecision. Gould (1996: 223) emphasises the idea of a collective voice fragmenting into individual parts when unable to make sense of collective experience.

[449] For the Chorus' class in *Persians*, cf. lines 1-7; Lazani (2019: 122-7). For the Chorus' class in *Agamemnon*, cf, Griffith (1995: 76n55, 81).

[450] Lazani (2019: 167-171) notes how the Chorus' weakness in *Agamemnon* is emphasised (72-82).

individual characters of the respective plays, are very different: *Persians* ends with the Chorus obeying Xerxes' commands and escorting him out, while the Chorus of *Agamemnon* insists that Clytemnestra is μιαίνων τὴν δίκην (1669) at the play's bitter end. Both, though, come across as ineffectual Choruses, most famously with the separation of the Chorus into its constituent parts on Agamemnon's death, as well as the Persian Chorus' speechless servility on seeing Darius' ghost (694-702). The fact that both Choruses predict resistance at the hands of the strikingly absent population may well highlight their distance, in age and status, from the politically and militarily active populations of their respective cities. It may draw our attention more closely to the Chorus' inability to act as their rulers descend into disaster: just as they fail to act, they fail to predict (or, in the case of *Agamemnon*, fail to gather backup from) the wider population. More broadly, though, the idea that the population cannot hold its rulers accountable highlights the wider landscape of political dysfunction in which both these plays stand, and (I argue) does so in a way that is not necessarily un-Greek.

Section E: Conclusions

Tragedy can depict off-stage populations through multiple lenses, even outside established structures such as off-stage assembly scenes. Furthermore, tragedy is often highly self-conscious about the difficulties of depicting what the population thinks. Several tragedies confront their audiences with this interpretive difficulty, forcing us to engage with how characters represent populations.

In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the population's wish to be rescued from pollution and plague is clear. Even when the population's views are uncontroversial, their presence can still be exploited in different ways by different characters. *OT* forces us to engage afresh with the off-stage population, uniquely, by imagining them on stage for Oedipus' proclamation. This reframes the population from a suffering collective into a more prominently political entity: it allows

characters to draw directly on the population's presence, by using them to confirm information, to justify their own actions or to compel other characters. Creon is summoned on stage by information transmitted through the population – which, simultaneously, intensifies the sense of the population remaining on stage and observing proceedings even after Oedipus' proclamation. The population's presence raises the stakes of the subsequent scenes: Oedipus' altercations with Teiresias, Creon and Jocasta become public, and every address to the Chorus contains a hint at addressing the entire city behind them. After Oedipus gathers the entire city to hear his proclamation, thus increasing its power, it is cruelly ironic that the play ends with Oedipus again before the watchful eyes of the population, this time doubling and redoubling his vulnerability. After gathering support from the population's presence across the play, it makes a viciously twisted sense that Oedipus begins his exile by returning inside – only this can make him truly alone.

The complexity only increases in *Antigone*, in which the population's views are far from obvious. Even as early as Ismene's speech, there are hints that the population's views are highly elusive and diffuse, if not exactly misrepresented. These difficulties develop across the play: Creon's, Antigone's and even Haemon's depictions of the population's views are made difficult to trust fully, both by their clashes with each other and their internal inconsistencies. The population proves deeply elusive in this play: Haemon's words simultaneously highlight the impossibility of verifying what the population believes and exemplify a partisan interpretation of the population's views. There has been much discussion concerning how an Athenian audience would react to Creon's regime and Antigone's defiance, as well as the extent to which Creon is depicted as a good democrat early in the play. It is important, therefore, to note the shifting and indistinct light that is cast on how the Theban population, internally, reacts to proceedings on stage, which may warn us against assuming homogeneity in the Athenians' responses.

Oedipus at Colonus also demonstrates how characters on stage can claim the population's support to enhance their authority, as Creon does in *Antigone*. Like in *Antigone*, moreover, we are given an explicit hint that the claims previously made about the Theban population's opinions are not necessarily trustworthy. With this in mind, we might profitably reconsider how to read the relative constructions of Thebes and Athens in this play. The audience is reminded that they cannot rely on a norm of trusting on-stage characters' depictions of off-stage collectives: this automatically leads us to mistrust Creon. Theseus' representation of Athens is not exposed to the same scrutiny as Creon's of Thebes. However, if I am right in arguing that characters' representations of off-stage populations *in general* are being problematised, this may well encourage an audience to think more about how Theseus interacts with Athens, or to consider Thebes as warning to Athens.

All the Sophocles works discussed in this chapter are set in Thebes. It is perhaps no coincidence that plays set in Thebes, rather than Athens or Argos, tend not to showcase formalised off-stage group decision-making and instead depict ill-defined populations whose views are filtered unreliably onto the stage. Portrayals of Thebes do not evoke democracy, and even though Aeschylus' and Euripides' assembly-scenes are not idealised, the communication of the Thebans' wishes poses problems not found elsewhere. In some ways, then, the tragic Thebes is politically distanced from *poleis* closer to home. However, these depictions of the Theban population are not completely removed from Athens. It is difficult to imagine that Athenians would have heard Oedipus' handling of the *polis*,[451] or the rival statements of political thought expressed in *Antigone*, and not felt some resonance to their own *polis*. Several fruitful analyses have debated the "Periclean" characteristics displayed by Creon in the *Antigone*, for example.[452] *OC* is the only one of these plays which explicitly sets Thebes and Athens in

[451] For the odd combination of tyranny and democracy in the Thebes of *OT*, cf. Knox (1957: 60-63).
[452] Cf. Podlecki (1976); Ehrenberg (1954: 105ff.); Thomas (1975); Meier (1993: 196ff.).

contrast. It is entirely possible that the focus on amorphous population rather than structured group decision-making is a way of depicting issues relevant to democracy (and not just its opposite) in a setting where depicting more overtly democratic structures would be impossible by convention. Thebes' striking difference to Athens is preserved, but the depiction of off-stage collectives makes many of the political issues raised feel relevant to Athens.

Though we should be wary of drawing wider conclusions based on such a small sample, it is striking that (apart from *OC*) none of Sophocles' extant works are situated in an overtly democratic context.[453] Even in *OC*, the democracy of Athens is nascent rather than established, and no large-scale appeals to the Athenian assembly take place. There are no democratic votes in the fractured Argos of *Electra*, the desolate Lemnos of *Philoctetes*. This does not necessarily enable us to draw conclusions about how Sophocles viewed groups, either democratic or otherwise; to do so would be to make much out of the quirks of Byzantine canon-selection and manuscript survival. What it means, though, is that we need to look past structured assemblies and seek more diffuse groups such as populations in order to understand Sophocles' depiction of groups. In many ways, Sophocles' handling of populations is not dissimilar to the handling of off-stage assembly-scenes in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes*. Characters seek off-stage groups' approval, but also use them for their own ends. Characters discuss, and disagree over, how off-stage groups can be manipulated and persuaded. The plays do not make it easy for us to pass judgement on these characters: their handling of off-stage groups hover across the blurred line between corrupt political manipulation and legitimate consultation. With Sophocles' populations, the uncertainties are different: the population's views cannot be fixed

[453] Among the fragmentary works, fr. 683 (from *Phaedra*) may well be relevant as a direct comment on democracy; as often with fragmentary plays, though, it is difficult to draw conclusions without the context provided by the play's wider setting, as observed by Sommerstein (2017: 285-6).

and finalised in the same way as an assembly's can. Therefore, characters are forced to discuss *what* the population thinks, not just what decision the *dêmos* will make.

The two Aeschylus plays analysed in this chapter stand in counterpoint to these tragedies of Sophocles. Both go out of their way to create an environment in which the local population is powerless: the Chorus' vague imaginings of a popular uprising only emphasise the adult male population's absence. In Clytemnestra's Argos and Xerxes' Persia, groups do not hold elite individuals to account. In both cases, the population's absence and weakness are used to create an atmosphere of political dysfunction; in particular, given that both Clytemnestra and the Persian Queen temporarily become the preeminent ruling figures in their husbands' absence, the male population's absence and consequent weakness may serve to emphasise this reversal of social gender dynamics. I would further suggest that applying a spatial lens to these findings might prove fruitful. Both the Argos of *Agamemnon* and the Persia of *Persians* are set in contrast to Athens. The description of Salamis is prefaced with an explanation of the stark political contrasts between Athens and Persia; Clytemnestra's Argos will set up a political and familial struggle which only Athens can solve. In both cases, it is collective action that enables Athens' success:[454] it makes sense, then, that collective inaction should characterise both Persia and Argos.

[454] For the depiction of the Athenian army as a seamless collective in *Persians*, cf. Hall (1993a: 118). Podlecki (1966: 8-26) argues that the emphasis on Salamis in *Persians* is meant to highlight a "democratic" victory, as opposed to the hoplite victory at Marathon; Pelling (1997b: 9-13) is more sceptical.

Chapter 5: 'Political' Armies in Tragedy

Philoctetes is perhaps the one of Sophocles' extant works in which the population's presence (here represented by an army) is felt the least. This makes sense: *Philoctetes* is set on Lemnos, whose isolation is an important motif.[455] Even here, though, we are reminded that collectives can underwrite characters' authority: Odysseus claims that ξύμπας Ἀχαιῶν λαός (1243) supports him against Neoptolemus.[456] The army also inspires fear: the Merchant begs μή με διαβάλῃς στρατῷ (582), while Philoctetes specifically mentions δεῖξαι … ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις (630) as an example of Odysseus' cruelty. In fact, the Chorus attributes moral responsibility to the army, rather than to Neoptolemus, seeming to imply that individuals cannot be blamed for an impulse that benefits the collective: κεῖνος δ' εἷς ἀπὸ πολλῶν | ταχθεὶς τοῦδ' ἐφημοσύνᾳ | κοινὰν ἤνυσεν ἐς φίλους ἀρωγάν (1143-5). Even in *Philoctetes*, whose context is apolitical and whose protagonist is virtually synonymous with isolation, the commanding authority of the off-stage army holds characters in thrall.

Off-stage armies in Greek tragedy, then, can hold power over on-stage individuals in ways that do not simply equate to the military threat they pose. Euripides' *Helen* articulates another way to imagine armies, when Menelaus outlines the background to his presence in Egypt (393-6):

> πλεῖστον γὰρ οἶμαι — καὶ τόδ᾽ οὐ κόμπῳ λέγω —
> στράτευμα κώπῃ διορίσαι Τροίαν ἔπι,
> τύραννος οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν στρατηλατῶν,
> ἑκοῦσι δ᾽ ἄρξας Ἑλλάδος νεανίαις.

[455] βροτοῖς ἄστιπτος οὐδ᾽ οἰκουμένη (2). To an extent, the emphasis on isolation is a pointed Sophoclean innovation: both Aeschylus' and Euripides' *Philoctetes* contained a Chorus of Lemnians.
[456] This is subsequently emphasised: στρατὸν δ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν οὐ φοβῇ, πράσσων τάδε (*Phil.* 1250), τῷ δὲ σύμπαντι στρατῷ | λέξω τάδ᾽ ἐλθών, ὅς σε τιμωρήσεται (1257-8).

Menelaus imagines the army in political terms, explicitly assimilating his command to a government by consensus (ἑκοῦσι … νεανίαις), rather than a tyranny (τύραννος οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν). The reimagining of an army in political terms has good precedent: Greek historiography and Homeric epic often imagine armies in terms of dislocated *poleis*, even to the extent of engaging in collective debate.[457] This chapter argues that tragedy has a pervasive interest in armies as civilian political bodies. Furthermore, tragedy is not particularly interested in armies' role on the battlefield. When battles take place, they tend to pass by relatively briefly; tragedies devote much more time to the preludes and consequences than to events on the battlefield. In Euripides' *Heracleidae*, though the Herald's threat to return with an army is used to try to force Demophon's hand (275-283), the actual battle is dealt with briefly and conclusively off-stage. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, similarly, characters' attempts to enhance their authority by claiming the off-stage populations' support carry considerably more weight than the short and conclusive off-stage battle itself. Furthermore, off-stage armies that are continuously engaged in warfare do not tend to draw much attention in tragedy. In *Rhesus*, for example, though the Achaean army is naturally present throughout, its presence is rarely remarked on by characters.[458] In contrast, the tragedies analysed in this chapter devote much time and emphasis to armies which are not fighting. In *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*, the army no longer has a military task to perform: Troy has already been conquered. As such, the army occupies a position somewhere between a ruling democratic assembly and a conquering army: holding power and making decisions, but on behalf of a city they have conquered and will soon raze. In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the army has yet to set sail and remains frustratingly immobilised: an army without an enemy to fight, in geographical limbo between their homes and the enemy

[457] E.g. *Il.* 18.249-313, Xen. *An.* 3.1.
[458] Hector alludes early to the dangerous proximity of the Achaean army (*Rhes.* 20). Further motifs of collective disturbance can be found at 88-9, 138-9, 284f. (the latter is the Messenger's description of Rhesus' approaching army), 679, 691. Later, the size of the Trojan army poses only logistical challenges to Odysseus and Diomedes (588).

city. *Ajax* is an exception among the plays discussed by this chapter, as the events of the play take place while the army is at war; however, Ajax's madness forces the army and its leaders to engage with internal events and relationships, rather than external enemies.

This chapter demonstrates that tragedy often focuses on armies as quasi-political bodies, rather than military groups, and explores what type of power the Achaean army at Troy is understood to hold. I argue that *Hecuba* and *TW* depict the army as a democratic assembly – with the crucial difference that they command a conquered population. *Ajax* and *IA* are more complicated. Characters in *Ajax* view the army in terms which imply a democratic assembly in a single *polis*; however, Teucer reminds us that the army cannot easily be read as a single *polis*, but rather as a factional conglomerate of multiple *poleis* (which underpins how threatened the Chorus feels by the army, despite notionally sharing the army's identity). In *IA*, the army is frequently depicted as an assembly, but viewed as a threat by elite individuals such as Agamemnon, and the army's frustrated immobility soon spills over into collective violence against its leaders. This reminds us how an army's identity means they cannot always be straightforwardly treated as a civilian collective. Their purpose sometimes manifests itself as a (perceived or actual) threat of violence towards the characters on stage; furthermore, they pose a particular danger to female characters.

The complex, ambiguous terrain which lies between an armed campaign and a peacetime *polis* enables these plays to explore the various modes in which an off-stage army can possess power over characters on stage: this is neither democratic politics nor wartime violence, but bears characteristics of both. This chapter draws together the presentations of armies and their explicitly acknowledged power over individual characters in *IA*, *Ajax*, *Hecuba* and *TW*, plays where the army's presence and agency have in some cases been acknowledged individually, but never compared in this light; further, it explores the various modes in which this power is expressed, whether the army resembles either a political assembly or a wider, less cohesive

coalition. Finally, it explores how this alters our view of the plays in question, especially by demonstrating how the portrayal of specific characters (most notably Agamemnon, Menelaus and Odysseus) is articulated in political terms by being set against the intensely political off-stage army.

A large portion of this chapter discusses the complex series of lenses through which the army in *IA* is depicted. The text of *IA* is plagued with problems,[459] and some interpolations made after Euripides' death are likely to remain even in edited versions of the text. Though this thesis is interested in tendencies specific to certain authors, my overall goal is to discuss how groups were depicted in Athenian drama, not how Euripides specifically depicted groups. As such, though I acknowledge where significant textual problems are present, I argue that interpolated passages are in many cases likely to reflect near-contemporaneous approaches to depicting the Achaean army,[460] and are consequently worthy of discussion.[461] I do not discuss any passages where, in my view, the evidence is conclusive or extremely strong against them being Euripidean; however, if it were conclusively proven that any of these passages were interpolated, my overall argument would not suffer. Furthermore, the interpretive framework I offer may demonstrate compelling ways to read lines that have previously been doubted for reasons of meaning, thus assuaging doubts about their authenticity.

Section A: Fear and the Army in *IA*

The army in *IA* is perhaps the most prominent and complex of the armies discussed in this chapter.[462] This section discusses the different types of group which this army is made to

[459] For an up-to-date summary of the textual issues and relevant scholarship, cf. Collard/Morwood (2017: 50-62). For a more radical approach to the methodological problems in establishing the text of *IA*, cf. Gurd (2005).
[460] Michelakis (2006: 107) notes that some interpolations may have been necessary before the incomplete play's first performance; others, as Collard/Morwood (2017: 55) note, are likely to date from fourth-century reperformances.
[461] My approach is similar to that of Collard/Morwood (2017: 55-9) and differs, for example, from the approach of Markantonatos (2011: 191).
[462] Schwab (2011: 125); Carter (2010: 82).

resemble. I begin by demonstrating how the army is depicted as a menacing source of fear for characters on stage: I argue against those who have felt that Agamemnon's fear is primarily directed at other characters rather than the army itself. Much of the army's threatening power over characters is derived from non-violent means (such as the spread of information which might be used against characters); however, the threat of collective violence is ever-present, and almost becomes a reality after Achilles interprets the army's psychology incorrectly. The army is also cast as a particular threat to female characters, which highlights their all-male nature and foreshadows the harm they will do to the women of Troy. In some ways, however, the army is also depicted as a *polis*: Menelaus uses political language to reshape Agamemnon's rise to power and fear of the army's opposition. This, in turn, enables the army to play out darker, more threatening aspects of group politics, and encourages us to view Agamemnon, Menelaus and Agamemnon as distinct types of political figure.

The army in *IA* sits uncomfortably between two poles, removed from civilian life (805-808) and gathered together, but unable to enter battle. Both symbolically and geographically, it hovers between peacetime and wartime. This limbo is made to feel uneasy from an early stage: ἠθροισμένου δὲ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος στρατοῦ (87) and πλοῦν τ᾽ ἔσεσθαι καὶ κατασκαφὰς Φρυγῶν | θύσασι (92-3) highlight their readiness for battle,[463] while πάντ᾽ ἀφιέναι στρατόν (95) underlines Agamemnon's readiness to disband them. The army's movement (or lack thereof) propels and bookends the plot:[464] the play opens with the army's inability to sail, and ends abruptly with the army's desire to depart for Troy (ὡς στρατὸς πρὸς πλοῦν ὁρᾷ, 1624) – which, ominously, ensures that Clytemnestra cannot speak to Agamemnon before his departure. In the parodos, the Chorus demonstrates an intense preoccupation with the army: they have come

[463] Michelini (1999-2000: 54) compares the army's excitement in *IA* with the excited army preparing for the Sicilian expedition, as depicted by Thucydides.
[464] For a brief account, cf. Michelakis (2006: 44-6) whose treatment is unusual in considering the army almost as a character in its own right.

specifically to see it (Ἀχαιῶν στρατιὰν ὡς ἐσιδοίμαν | Ἀχαιῶν τε πλάτας ναυσιπόρους ἡ- / μιθέων, 171-3).[465] They dwell on their eagerness to see the army (185-91) and fleet (231-4),[466] and subsequently enumerate individual warriors with similar vocabulary of eagerness (e.g. θαῦμα βροτοῖσιν, 202). The consistent emphasis on numbers (231, 242, 253) and excited repetition of verbs of seeing (e.g. 192, 210) highlight both the army's sheer size and its hold on the Chorus' gaze. Elements of this preoccupation with the army return in later choral passages. The short choral passage from 751f. anticipates the movement of the great army which will culminate in Troy's destruction (an image which returns abruptly at 1067). As soon as Iphigenia arrives, the messenger portrays the army as excited onlookers, gathering to see the bride (427-8) and speculating about Iphigenia's upcoming wedding (430-34):[467] an about-turn in which the army, having earlier been viewed by the Chorus, abruptly become *viewers* whose collective gaze is directed at the characters on stage.[468] The off-stage army also experiences powerful collective emotions: their palpable desire to sail for Troy (οὕτω δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκ᾽ ἔρως | τῆσδε στρατείας Ἑλλάδ᾽ οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν, 808-9) offers a striking depiction of collective army-wide ἔρως, which some scholars have found reminiscent of the Athenians' desire for the Sicilian expedition in Thucydides (Chapter 1 C1).[469]

Across *IA,* it is particularly striking how the army can menace individual characters. The army's abrupt reinterpretation as viewers rather than viewed, coinciding with Iphigenia's arrival, foreshadows how the army will subsequently be depicted as a threat to female characters. As we saw previously (808-9), the army's collective desire for warfare and

[465] Michelini (1999-2000: 46) notes the Chorus' glamorised view of the army, a contrast to the cynical politics of Agamemnon's family. For a more general discussion of the Chorus as viewers, cf. Zeitlin (1993: 157-9).
[466] The Chorus' depiction of the Greek army is eroticised (Michelakis [2006: 42]), which is strikingly reversed in the erotic language used subsequently to denote the army's desire to sail for Troy.
[467] Michelakis (2006: 44).
[468] Michelini (1999-2000: 46).
[469] Wassermann (1949: 179); Dimock/Merwin (1978: 14); Michelini (1999-2000: 54).

destruction can be presented using emotional and eroticised language. This erotic vocabulary subsequently recurs with greater force (1264-72):[470]

> μέμηνε δ᾽ Ἀφροδίτη τις Ἑλλήνων στρατῷ
> πλεῖν ὡς τάχιστα βαρβάρων ἐπὶ χθόνα
> παῦσαί τε λέκτρων ἁρπαγὰς Ἑλληνικῶν·
> οἳ τὰς ἐν Ἄργει παρθένους κτενοῦσί μου
> ὑμᾶς τε κἀμέ, θέσφατ᾽ εἰ λύσω θεᾶς.
> οὐ Μενέλεώς με καταδεδούλωται, τέκνον,
> οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ κείνου βουλόμενον ἐλήλυθα,
> ἀλλ᾽ Ἑλλάς, ᾗ δεῖ, κἂν θέλω κἂν μὴ θέλω,
> θῦσαί σε·

The army's desire to sack Troy is described in powerful emotional terms; strikingly, it is then elided with their desire to slaughter Iphigenia and Agamemnon (1267-8) should their wishes be thwarted. Agamemnon creates the impression that the army's desire for violence will lead them to use the nearest available target as a scapegoat (a widespread stereotype: cf. Chapter 1 C3). Agamemnon's presentation of himself as enslaved to Greece (οὐ Μενέλεώς με καταδεδούλωται … ἀλλ᾽ Ἑλλάς, 1269-71) has often been taken as part of a sudden turn to Panhellenic ideals as justification for Iphigenia's sacrifice,[471] but (given the preceding lines) might equally emphasise his own powerlessness, an enslavement to Greece in its guise as a vast, threatening collective. At other points, too, Agamemnon fears that the army might turn against Argos and raze it to the ground (531-5).

An early allusion to the army's power comes with Menelaus' threat to show the army Agamemnon's letter (324), showing how characters can use the army's menacing presence to

[470] Lines 1269-71 are mildly suspected by Diggle's (1994a) text.
[471] Wassermann (1949: 185-6).

compel other characters. A deeper implication is that information can spread through the army extremely quickly, such that they will share collective knowledge of Agamemnon's letter as soon as Menelaus shows it to them. After all, for Menelaus' words to act as a threat, it is necessary that the letter will galvanise a meaningful proportion of the army into action against him. This seems to be reinforced by the quick spread of information when Iphigenia arrives: πέπυσται γὰρ στρατός — ταχεῖα γὰρ | διῇξε φήμη (425-6). Information is capable of spreading across the army remarkably quickly, which is what underpins their ability to coerce and compel individuals. Furthermore, this implies a vision of the army as a relatively cohesive political body: in prose texts, rumour is depicted as spreading easily and rapidly through *poleis*, forming common knowledge which can then be indicated by speakers during assemblies and trials (see Chapter 1 E2). Later, moreover, the army's love of gossip is directly connected to their being ἀργὸς ὢν τῶν οἴκοθεν (1000): a consequence of their current inability to move.

Some have disputed whether the off-stage army truly compels Agamemnon.[472] Siegel argues that Agamemnon fears individuals who might manipulate the army – most prominently Odysseus – rather than the army itself. This argument hinges primarily on the fact that the army do not find out about Calchas' prophecy and the reason for Iphigenia's presence until line 1338.[473] However, we need not see these two sources of compulsion as mutually exclusive. Even if Calchas and Odysseus are the ones informing the army (which is what Agamemnon expects to happen, as is explained in 514-27), the army's sheer size and potential for violence is still the source of Odysseus' consequent power. It is still the army, not Odysseus, which truly frightens Agamemnon; indeed, Menelaus knows this, which is why his threat to show Agamemnon's letter to the army has any force. This is especially underlined, as has already

[472] Siegel (1981: 257-8) outlines the debate helpfully. Most scholars conclude either a) that Agamemnon is weak and compelled by the army, or b) that Agamemnon (though generally weak and fearful) is pushed by his ambition and could have chosen not to sacrifice Iphigenia. Within b), it is disputed whether, by sacrificing Iphigenia, Agamemnon regains some glory. For detailed early bibliography, cf. Siegel (1981: 257n1-2).
[473] Siegel (1981: 258).

been seen, by the sense that information given to the army spreads across it almost instantaneously. Furthermore, multiple characters tell us independently about the army's impatient unrest. As such, the audience is not given a good reason to distrust Agamemnon's explicit claim that the army will be the ones who compel him to sacrifice Iphigenia. The fact that the army, led by Odysseus, subsequently threatens its leaders leads us to believe that Agamemnon's fears have been confirmed;[474] furthermore, this confirmation manifests itself as precise echoes of Agamemnon's expectations (the *thorubos* he predicts in 347 coming to pass in 1349, for example).

Before the army learns of the prophecy, Achilles gives another account of their impatience: Μυρμιδόνας ἴσχων· οἱ δ᾽ ἀεὶ προσκείμενοι … (814). Siegel takes their willingness to sail home (815-18) as evidence that Agamemnon should not consider them a threat. However, the impression created by the soldiers' words, which Achilles quotes, is far from unthreatening. They are impatient and demand release from the limbo – between Greece and Troy, between *polis* and *stratos* – in which they currently wait. The physical connotations of ἴσχων implies that their impatience makes them more threatening, rather than less. In promising to save Iphigenia, Achilles claims the ability to predict the army's reaction (1019-21):

> κἀγώ τ᾽ ἀμείνων πρὸς φίλον γενήσομαι
> στρατός τ᾽ ἂν οὐ μέμψαιτό μ᾽, εἰ τὰ πράγματα 1020
> λελογισμένως πράσσοιμι μᾶλλον ἢ σθένει.

Achilles' belief that the army will be persuaded λελογισμένως ("using reason") is perhaps meant to seem implausible,[475] given prevailing stereotypes about group psychology and the powerful emotional language which has already been used to demonstrate the army's

[474] *Pace* Siegel's (1981: 261) claim that "the army, the mass, does not exist as a real and actual threat […] for most of the play".
[475] Michelini (1999-2000: 48) suggests that Achilles comes across as naïve, compared to Agamemnon's accurate prediction of the army's reaction – a contrast which echoes their clash in the *Iliad*.

impatience. Indeed, his beliefs prove unfounded shortly afterwards. Iphigenia's announcement ἀνδρῶν ὄχλον εἰσορῶ πέλας (1338) strikes an ominous note. The danger which the army poses to the characters on stage is immediately evident. The Argives advance with considerable uproar (βοή, 1346; θόρυβος, 1349; κεκραγμός, 1357), in vast numbers (πάντες Ἕλληνες, 1352; πολλοῖσιν, 1358; μυρίοι, 1362). Even the Myrmidons turn against Achilles (1353). The army insults Achilles (1354-5, 1372) and threatens to stone him (σῶμα λευσθῆναι πέτροισι, 1350); Achilles' plan, until Iphigenia intervenes, is to fight them single-handed (1359). Odysseus' leadership is described as αἱρεθεὶς ἐκών (1364), which attributes agency to the army. Their palpably frightening presence confirms Agamemnon's earlier fears.

Section B: Women and the Army in *IA*

Though generally threatening to the characters, the army particularly menaces female characters. The first hint of this comes with Agamemnon's brief aside ὀφθῆναι κόραις | πικρόν (678-9) which dismisses his daughter.[476] That the army is an inhospitable and dangerous place for a lone woman is then restated repeatedly.[477] Agamemnon warns Clytemnestra that οὐ καλὸν ἐν ὄχλῳ σ᾽ ἐξομιλεῖσθαι στρατοῦ (735). Achilles, startled at Clytemnestra's presence, asks her τί δ᾽ ἦλθες Δαναΐδων ἐς σύλλογον, | γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀσπίσιν πεφαργμένους; (825-6). Subsequently, he promises to guard her μή τίς σ᾽ ἴδῃ στείχουσαν ἐπτοημένην | Δαναῶν δι᾽ ὄχλου (1029-30). Noteworthy, too, are Achilles' comments on the army's love of gossip (998-1001):

> σὺ μήτε σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἔξαγ᾽ ὄψιν εἰς ἐμὴν
> μήτ᾽ εἰς ὄνειδος ἀμαθὲς ἔλθωμεν, γύναι·

[476] Though this overtly refers to his daughter being seen in public, the emotional adjective πικρός might also prefigure Agamemnon's tears (684) and suggest that it is *painful* for Iphigenia to be seen by Agamemnon himself.
[477] Michelini (1999-2000: 51); Michelakis (2006: 45).

στρατὸς γὰρ ἀθρόος, ἀργὸς ὢν τῶν οἴκοθεν, 1000

λέσχας πονηρὰς καὶ κακοστόμους φιλεῖ.

We have already seen that the army's ability to pass on information, especially in the form of rumours, is pernicious to individual characters. In particular, the army's love of gossip threatens women, given the social expectation that they would avoid being mentioned in public. Therefore, Achilles casts the army's enjoyment of gossip as something which might harm Clytemnestra and Iphigenia in particular, and motivates his desire to protect them.

Startlingly, Iphigenia's sacrifice reframes the dynamic between the menacing army and the individual woman on stage. The virgin participants who accompanied sacrificial rituals (and, in several Euripidean tragedies, are the victims) occupy a difficult middle ground: although the ritual highlights their chastity, their presence also invites the male gaze in a potentially erotic way.[478] Both Iphigenia and Agamemnon cast her sacrifice in a Panhellenic light, as has frequently been noted in existing scholarship.[479] These Panhellenic motifs also seem to reframe the off-stage army: εἰς ἔμ᾽ Ἑλλὰς ἡ μεγίστη πᾶσα νῦν ἀποβλέπει (1378) picks up the fact that Iphigenia is physically watched by a vast collective. In reframing this collective as Greece itself (Ἑλλὰς ἡ μεγίστη) it remains a compelling force, but what is compelling here is the ideal of acting for and protecting Greece rather than the menacing numbers: the ever-present compulsion is being reinterpreted on Iphigenia's terms (which closely echo Agamemnon's rhetoric).[480] This is also reminiscent of the Chorus' fascinated description of the army in the parodos, which highlights their origins from all across Greece (231ff.). Soon after, she alludes to the army's presence again (1387-90):

[478] Scodel (1996: 112-4).
[479] E.g. Wassermann (1949: 185-6); Saïd (1989); Michelini (1999-2000: 54-5); Goff (2004: 354). Markantonatos (2011: 205-217) argues that Iphigenia offers an optimistic and unifying view of Panhellenism aimed to restore traditional democratic spirit and transcend the previous divisiveness in *IA*.
[480] On Iphigenia's close imitation of Agamemnon's political rhetoric, cf. Rabinowitz (1993: 49-50), Goff (2004: 354).

ἀλλὰ μυρίοι μὲν ἄνδρες ἀσπίσιν πεφαργμένοι,
μυρίοι δ᾽ ἐρέτμ᾽ ἔχοντες, πατρίδος ἠδικημένης,
δρᾶν τι τολμήσουσιν ἐχθροὺς χὐπὲρ Ἑλλάδος θανεῖν,
ἡ δ᾽ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ μί᾽ οὖσα πάντα κωλύσει τάδε; 1390

The army's vastness is still depicted as compelling Iphigenia's sacrifice; the repeated μυρίοι (1387-8) picks up the threatening μυρίοι (1362) who advanced in uproar against Achilles shortly before. Here, though, it is not their threatened violence which compels Iphigenia, but their inspiring decision ὑπὲρ Ἑλλάδος θανεῖν (1389). Indeed, Iphigenia hopes that by her action Greek women will be protected from being seized by foreign raiders: τάς τε μελλούσας γυναῖκας, ἤν τι δρῶσι βάρβαροι, | μηκέθ᾽ ἁρπάζειν (1380-81). This is an abrupt reversal of the threat which the army previously posed to women in their own land.

The army's presence remains powerful throughout the sacrifice scene. Iphigenia's reference to ἵνα τε δόρατα μέμονε δάϊ᾽ | ὄνομα δι᾽ ἐμὸν (1494-5) evokes the menace of the off-stage armed collective:[481] μέμονε echoes μέμηνε, used of the army at 1264. As Iphigenia approaches her sacrifice, the Chorus again reminds us of the army's eagerness (1519-20). They gather to see Iphigenia being sacrificed: an Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος στρατεύματος (1545) which closely echoes the phrasing used by Agamemnon to explain his fear of the army (514).[482] There remains a note of threat: Iphigenia feels the need to state πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ ψαύσῃ τις Ἀργείων ἐμοῦ· | σιγῇ παρέξω γὰρ δέρην εὐκαρδίως (1559-60). Subsequently, they marvel at Iphigenia's speech (1561-2), look at the ground respectfully (1577) and follow Calchas in crying out in wonder after her disappearance (1584).[483] During the reported sacrifice scene, Iphigenia anticipates

[481] Collard/Morwood (2017) print δόρατα μέμονε νάϊ, following Diggle (1994b: 410) in adopting Hartung's conjecture. I see no reason to alter L's perfectly sensible paradosis, especially since (as Collard/Morwood admit *ad loc.*) δόρατα in the plural elsewhere only means 'spears'.
[482] Page (1934: 193) deletes 1545 due to this repetition; I follow Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad loc.*) and Diggle (1994a) in keeping it, given that allusions to the massed army which echo previous such allusions are found relatively frequently across *IA*.
[483] For precise parallels between Iphigenia's and Hecuba's sacrifice scenes, cf. Collard/Morwood (2017: 629-34).

obtaining κλέος … μακάριον (1383-4; cf. 1398-9). In this, she has succeeded where Achilles cannot. Achilles' startling powerlessness, vulnerable even before his Myrmidons, is an implicit challenge to the Homeric dynamics of authority in the military encampment.[484] Furthermore, Iphigenia's self-characterisation as acting εὐκαρδίως (1560) is striking: as will subsequently be demonstrated in the section on Polyxena's sacrifice scene, εὐκάρδιος is a word used in tragedy to denote a Homeric hero who has fallen upon misfortune. Her self-portrayal as Φρυγῶν ἑλέπτολιν (1476) is the logical continuation of her claim to the κλέος of a Homeric warrior.[485]

The interpretation of Iphigenia's claimed κλέος is contested, given that Agamemnon and the army will be the ones who benefit from Iphigenia's sacrifice by gaining στέφανον (1529) and κλέος ἀείμνηστον (1531).[486] Rabinowitz argues convincingly that Iphigenia's sacrifice is compelled and made for a cause which has already been painted in a dubious light; furthermore, she is allowed to attain her newfound status only on the tightly restrictive terms of her society.[487] I argue that the sheer weight of the army's presence in *IA* reinforces Rabinowitz's reading of the play: having seen the fear which the army inspires in many characters, and the emphasis on the army's watchful presence during the sacrifice, it is difficult to see Iphigenia's sacrifice as possessing true agency, regardless of what she says. As has previously been discussed, Agamemnon's claim to be enslaved by Greece (1269-71) is coloured by the fact that it immediately follows a threatening depiction of the army's frenzy.[488] However, it is striking how radically characters reframe the significance of the watching army. Their presence retains

[484] Michelakis (2006: 40-41); Schwab (2011: 132).
[485] Rabinowitz (1993: 42) observes that Achilles himself changes under Iphigenia's influence, gaining a degree of heroic stature by following her example. Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad loc.*) instead see Iphigenia as evoking Helen: cf. Aesch. *Ag*. 689-90. Mirto (2015) includes this adjective in a discussion of Aeschylean echoes in *IA*.
[486] Rabinowitz (1993: 49).
[487] Rabinowitz (1993: 38-54). On the potential worthlessness of the campaign, cf. Ryzman (1989: 112). Goff (2004: 352-6) highlights problematic aspects in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and particularly highlights the fact that Clytemnestra explicitly distrusts the Messenger's speech (1616-18).
[488] Markantonatos (2011: 208-9) suggests that this leaves us deeply uneasy with Agamemnon's conception of Panhellenism.

notes of their previous menace; however, Agamemnon, Iphigenia and the Messenger recast them as a respectful audience, as representatives of the Panhellenic significance of Iphigenia's sacrifice, and as the source of Iphigenia's κλέος. By seeing the collective in a different light, characters can cast a different light in turn on their own actions.

Section C: Armed Politics in *IA*

IA encourages us to imagine the surrounding off-stage army as a *polis*. This is partly achieved by how individual characters define themselves, or are portrayed, in relation to the army. Agamemnon views himself as a βασιλεῖ καὶ στρατηλάτῃ (645); Clytemnestra later describes him contemptuously as σκῆπτρά σοι | μόνον διαφέρειν καὶ στρατηλατεῖν (1194-5). Menelaus, too, sarcastically tells Agamemnon to σκήπτρῳ νυν αὔχει, σὸν κασίγνητον προδούς (412). During the initial altercation between Agamemnon and Menelaus, we are repeatedly given hints to view the Achaean army in terms of a *polis*. Initially, Menelaus reminds us how Agamemnon acted when trying to become leader (337-345):

> οἶσθ', ὅτ' ἐσπούδαζες ἄρχειν Δαναΐδαις πρὸς Ἴλιον,
> τῷ δοκεῖν μὲν οὐχὶ χρῄζων, τῷ δὲ βούλεσθαι θέλων,
> ὡς ταπεινὸς ἦσθα, πάσης δεξιᾶς προσθιγγάνων
> καὶ θύρας ἔχων ἀκλῄστους τῷ θέλοντι δημοτῶν
> καὶ διδοὺς πρόσρησιν ἐξῆς πᾶσι, κεἰ μή τις θέλοι,
> **τοῖς τρόποις ζητῶν πρίασθαι τὸ φιλότιμον ἐκ μέσου**,
> κᾆτ', ἐπεὶ κατέσχες ἀρχάς, μεταβαλὼν ἄλλους τρόπους
> τοῖς φίλοισιν οὐκέτ' ἦσθα τοῖς πρὶν ὡς πρόσθεν φίλος,
> δυσπρόσιτος ἔσω τε κλῄθρων σπάνιος;

Though the context overtly relates to military command (337), the scene we are encouraged to imagine is set in civilian politics (e.g. δημοτῶν, 340).[489] Agamemnon is imagined canvassing frantically to "buy" (πρίασθαι, 342) voters' support, then hypocritically becoming inaccessible after attaining power (343-5).[490] The politics which Agamemnon embraces are specifically democratic in nature: we are repeatedly informed of his initial openness to *all* citizens (πάσης, 339; τῷ θέλοντι δημοτῶν, 340; πᾶσι, κεἰ μή τις θέλοι, 341).[491] Subsequently, Menelaus depicts Agamemnon's change of heart concerning his daughter's sacrifice in political terms (366-9):[492]

> μυρίοι δέ τοι πεπόνθασ᾽ αὐτό· πρὸς τὰ πράγματα
> ἐκπονοῦσ᾽ ἔχοντες, εἶτα δ᾽ ἐξεχώρησαν κακῶς,
> τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ γνώμης πολιτῶν ἀσυνέτου, τὰ δ᾽ ἐνδίκως
> ἀδύνατοι γεγῶτες αὐτοὶ διαφυλάξασθαι πόλιν.

The references to πολιταί (368) and a πόλις (369) recast Agamemnon's generalship in terms of civilian political leadership. Telling, too, is how Menelaus is portrayed politically. In the previous passage, Menelaus' heavy emphasis on Agamemnon's duties to his φίλοι (344) have an oligarchic ring to them. This is drawn out further by the contemptuous ὑπὸ γνώμης πολιτῶν ἀσυνέτου (368). Menelaus' ongoing portrayal evokes a stereotypical oligarchic politician, uttering maxims that demonstrate disdain for the *ochlos* (οὕτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον, 517).[493]

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[489] As discussed briefly by Wassermann (1949: 176) and Goff (2004: 352).
[490] Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad* 343-5a, 345b-8) see in this portrayal of Agamemnon a politician who, like Cleon (Plut. *Mor*. 806f-907b) or Pericles (Plut. *Vit. Per*. 7.4-5) renounced all friendships and retreated from the public eye after attaining office; cf. Schwab (2011: 127). The turning-point indicated by line 343 seems to emphasise how Agamemnon has turned away from the δῆμος, not only φίλοι. Furthermore, the portrayal of the army implies that Agamemnon turning away from the δῆμος is not considered as acceptable as Collard/Morwood suggest.
[491] Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad* 339-42) also translate ἐκ μέσου as "openly".
[492] These lines, as well as 373-5, have long been considered problematic for thematic reasons: cf. Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad* 366-75) for a summary of the problems. I do not find the "references […] to citizens' government and to leadership within (Athenian?) democracy" as jarring as they do, especially given the frequent assimilations of the Achaean army to an Athenian-style *dêmos* in other Euripidean works. Given *IA*'s political subtexts, I feel unable to delete these lines on thematic grounds alone.
[493] Menelaus' apparent change of mind complicates his characterisation: for a detailed treatment, cf. Ryzman (1989). Menelaus' oligarchic-coded disdain for groups, coupled with a willingness to exploit them for his own ends, is a common thread that runs through both "sides" of his characterisation in *IA*.

Despite his disdain, Menelaus is willing to exploit groups' power to achieve his goals, hence his threat to share Calchas' prophecy with the army (324) in order to force Agamemnon's hand. We will subsequently see echoes of this portrayal in other "military" Greek tragedies which put Menelaus on stage; we saw another example in *Orestes*, when Menelaus instructs Orestes on how to exploit the Argive *dêmos* (696-701).

Soon after this, the connection between army and politics is intensified (373-5):

> μηδέν᾽ ἀνδρείας ἔκατι προστάτην θείμην χθονὸς
> μηδ᾽ ὅπλων ἄρχοντα· νοῦν χρὴ τὸν στρατηλάτην ἔχειν
> πόλεος· ὡς ἀρκῶν ἀνὴρ πᾶς, ξύνεσιν ἢν ἔχων τύχῃ.

These lines contain two separate pairings of generalship and political leadership. In lines 373-4, προστάτην … χθονός is likened to ὅπλων ἄρχοντα. Lines 374-5 blends military and civilian positions with τὸν στρατηλάτην | πόλεος, with the enjambment bringing us abruptly back to the world of politics. Generalship is set in chiasmus within political leadership, highlighting the connection between two different spheres of power.

The recasting of the army as *polis* has implications for how Agamemnon himself is characterised. Agamemnon is sketched as a political leader who has ridden the wave of popular support to attain power – and now, having drifted away from the supporters he so eagerly courted, constantly looks back over his shoulder, terrified by the possibility of losing this support. He laments that τῷ τ᾽ ὄχλῳ δουλεύομεν (450). Early on, he states that τοὺς δ᾽ ἐν τιμαῖς ἧσσον ζηλῶ (19) and outlines his fear of ἀνθρώπων | γνῶμαι πολλαὶ | καὶ δυσάρεστοι (25-27).[494] Agamemnon is jumpy at any sign of public disorder, asking τίς ποτ᾽ ἐν πύλαισι θόρυβος καὶ λόγων ἀκοσμία (317). Oddly, the *thorubos* in question is only between two people, caused

[494] Cf. Schwab (2011: 125). Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad loc.*) note that δυσάρεστος is often used of *poleis*: cf. Eur. *El*. 904, *IT* 463.

by Menelaus intercepting Agamemnon's clandestine messenger. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, *thorubos* generally refers to the sounds made by a large group of people.[495] This may figure Agamemnon further into the characterisation of an elected leader who is consistently fearful of the masses, especially since it foreshadows the *thorubos* which later both drowns out Achilles' arguments and menaces him with collective violence (1349). Menelaus' caricatures encourage us to reframe Agamemnon's fear as the fear of a clichéd hypocritical politician. Subsequently, Menelaus attempts to negate Agamemnon's fear of the army: οὗτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον (517). Clytemnestra later utters similar criticism with similar phrasing: καὶ λίαν ταρβεῖ στρατόν (1012).[496] Very similar statements will be found in *Hecuba*. This echo strengthens the ongoing connection between military and civilian population, στρατός and more generic ὄχλος. Agamemnon's fear of the army, then, is double-determined:[497] they are the civilian population whose support underpins his authority, but also the armed throng whose anger risks destroying a city. Furthermore, the repeated comments about Agamemnon being in thrall to the masses evoke the strand of political thought, most famously expressed in Plato's *Gorgias*, that democratic rulers become dependent on (and effectively slaves of) the masses who support them (Chapter 1 D1).

It is in this light that we view Agamemnon's assurance that the army will force him to sacrifice Iphigenia, in the following important passage (513-35):

Με: πῶς; τίς δ᾽ ἀναγκάσει σε τήν γε σὴν κτανεῖν;

Ἀγ ἅπας Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος στρατεύματος.

Με: οὔκ, ἤν νιν εἰς Ἄργος <γ᾽> ἀποστείλῃς πάλιν. 515

Ἀγ: λάθοιμι τοῦτ᾽ ἄν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὐ λήσομεν.

[495] Schwab (2011: 127) states that "We have not yet seen a disturbance between only two people called a θόρυβος"; cf., however, Soph. *Phil*. 1263.
[496] Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad loc*.).
[497] *Pace* Schwab (2011: 131).

Με: τὸ ποῖον; οὔτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον.

Ἀγ: Κάλχας ἐρεῖ μαντεύματ᾽ Ἀργείων στρατῷ.

Με: οὔκ, ἢν θάνῃ γε πρόσθε· τοῦτο δ᾽ εὐμαρές.

Ἀγ: τὸ μαντικὸν πᾶν σπέρμα φιλότιμον κακόν.

Με: † κοὐδέν γ᾽ ἄχρηστον, οὐδὲ χρήσιμον παρόν. †

Ἀγ: ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὐ δέδοικας οὔμ᾽ ἐσέρχεται;

Με: ὃν μὴ σὺ φράζεις πῶς ὑπολάβοιμ᾽ ἂν λόγον;

Ἀγ: τὸ Σισύφειον σπέρμα πάντ᾽ οἶδεν τάδε.

Με: οὐκ ἔστ᾽ Ὀδυσσεὺς ὅτι σὲ κἀμὲ πημανεῖ.

Ἀγ: ποικίλος ἀεὶ πέφυκε τοῦ τ᾽ ὄχλου μέτα.

Με: φιλοτιμίᾳ μὲν ἐνέχεται, δεινῷ κακῷ.

Ἀγ: οὔκουν δοκεῖς νιν στάντ᾽ ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις
λέξειν ἃ Κάλχας θέσφατ᾽ ἐξηγήσατο,
κἄμ᾽ ὡς ὑπέστην θῦμα, κᾆτ᾽ ἐψευδόμην
Ἀρτέμιδι θύσειν; οὐ ξυναρπάσας στρατόν,
σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἀποκτείναντας Ἀργείους κόρην
σφάξαι κελεύσει; κἂν πρὸς Ἄργος ἐκφύγω,
ἐλθόντες αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν Κυκλωπίοις
ἀναρπάσουσι καὶ κατασκάψουσι γῆν.

Agamemnon's fear that the entire Achaean army will force him to sacrifice his daughter (514), which has already been discussed, is depicted using a series of political γνωμαί. Menelaus advises Agamemnon that οὔτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον (517), while Odysseus is portrayed as ποικίλος … τοῦ τ᾽ ὄχλου μέτα (526) and desiring φιλοτιμίᾳ … δεινῷ κακῷ (527). If the

transmitted text of 521 is to be trusted,[498] the vocabulary of ἄχρηστος and χρήσιμος also have political overtones. Here, as elsewhere, Odysseus is depicted as the quintessential unscrupulous orator.[499] Words such as ποικίλος and δεινός typically surround manipulative orators, especially in verse; being τοῦ … ὄχλου μέτα also has this force. The prediction that he will carry the whole army away with him is also in this vein. ξυναρπάσας στρατόν (531) is an ambiguous phrase. It may refer to carrying the audience away emotionally, playing into the stereotype of an immoral orator appealing to his audience's emotions rather than reason. Equally, it may refer to Odysseus physically bringing the army with him on their bloodthirsty quest to slaughter Iphigenia, Agamemnon and all of Argos, highlighted by the συναρπάσουσι (535) which is physical in nature, referring to the army's destruction of Argos. Again, this ambiguity dances the line between violent military action and political persuasion.

Another noteworthy passage is the following (912-15):

τὰ δ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονος κλύεις

ὠμὰ καὶ πάντολμ᾽· ἀφῖγμαι δ᾽, ὥσπερ εἰσορᾷς, γυνὴ

ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ἄναρχον κἀπὶ τοῖς κακοῖς θρασύ,

χρήσιμον δ᾽, ὅταν θέλωσιν. 915

Spoken by Clytemnestra, this passage evokes the stereotype of a lawless crowd,[500] as well as the motif of a vulnerable lone woman in the midst of an army. The language, too, has political undertones: in its depiction of a collective of sailors who are sometimes capable of being

[498] I follow Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad loc.*) in suspecting that 521 as transmitted cannot be correct, but is unlikely to be far from the truth. Diggle (1994a) doubts lines 520-21.

[499] This forms a subset of Odysseus' generally negative portrayal within tragedy, which falls outside the remit of this thesis; for a general overview, cf. Worman (2002: 108-48). It is worth noting that, even in plays where off-stage groups are not nearby or particularly powerful, Odysseus' power often still revolves around his ability to manipulate them: cf. Soph. *Phil*. 630, 1243.

[500] Michelakis (2006: 45).

χρήσιμος, it evokes political thought on Athens (cf. the Old Oligarch for the connection between sailing and Athenian democratic politics).

It is also important to discuss the passage in which Achilles explains his reasons for opposing the sacrifice of Iphigenia (965-9):

> ἔδωκά τἂν Ἕλλησιν, εἰ πρὸς Ἴλιον 965
> ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἔκαμνε νόστος· οὐκ ἠρνούμεθ᾽ ἄν
> τὸ κοινὸν αὔξειν ὧν μέτ᾽ ἐστρατευόμην.
> νῦν δ᾽ οὐδέν εἰμι, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς στρατηλάταις
> ἐν εὐμαρεῖ με δρᾶν τε καὶ μὴ δρᾶν κακῶς.

Achilles claims that he would have yielded if the sacrifice was the collective desire of Greece, or of the army (965-7); what he objects to is the insult to himself by the leaders. This is highly significant: it suggests that Achilles values the army's collective desires more highly than the leaders'. Furthermore, Achilles elides τἂν Ἕλλησιν with τὸ κοινὸν … ὧν μέτ᾽ ἐστρατευόμην, adding further weight to the implication that the army both represents and *is* all of Greece. In a more political sense, this ties in with his ongoing concern with good leadership (928-9):

> καὶ τοῖς Ἀτρείδαις, ἢν μὲν ἡγῶνται καλῶς,
> πεισόμεθ᾽, ὅταν δὲ μὴ καλῶς, οὐ πείσομαι.

Section D: Conclusions Concerning *IA*

The army in *IA* occupies a uniquely ambiguous location. Located midway between their homes and Troy, they are neither a civilian population nor a fighting force. This chapter demonstrates how this ambiguity enables their identity and power to be explored through a number of fascinating lenses. In many ways, the army is depicted as a *polis*: characters frequently discuss the army in language that evokes distinctly political stereotypes which resemble those found in prose texts depicting the Athenian democracy. This means that individual characters'

relationships with the army become codified in a political light: Odysseus as the unscrupulous orator, Agamemnon the fearful and hypocritical politician, Menelaus the cynical oligarch. This means that the stakes of depicting the army in *IA* become higher: its presence and actions depict, at several removes, an Athenian-style *dêmos*.

However, the fact that it is an army means that several darker elements of group action can be explored, which is not usually possible in depictions of the *dêmos*. The Achaean army, like the Athenian *dêmos*, is all-male. However, the Achaean army is more firmly established in literary thought as a threat to women, meaning that the army in *IA* can be used to articulate the threat posed to women by male collectives more generally. Furthermore, collective violence underpins the army's ability to compel characters' hand, and this violence comes dangerously close to reality when the army approaches as a furious mob with Odysseus at their head: a frequent fear inherent in analyses of the Athenian *dêmos*, but the depiction of an army makes it safer to place this fear on stage. However, Iphigenia redefines the army into admiring viewers and representatives of Panhellenism (which, simultaneously, resists imagining them as a single *polis*) rather than a threatening collective. The army, then, resists easy definition, and the different lenses through which it is depicted demonstrate the various ways a group can hold power over an individual, and what possibilities might exist for an individual to command the group's attention.

Section E: Armies as Powerful Off-Stage Presences

IA demonstrates the range of ways in which an off-stage army's presence can be felt on stage. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore how these findings can be applied to Sophocles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*. Though none of these armies spans the full range of modes of power expressed in *IA*, many have similar ambiguities in their status. Both *Hecuba* and *TW* depict the Achaean army as a looming, menacing group, which is cast as a particular

threat to female characters: this makes sense, given both plays' setting and on-stage characters. However, it is striking that a similar motif exists in *Ajax*: the army inspires fear in characters and Chorus alike, even though they form part of that same army. A number of parallels between Iphigenia's sacrifice scene and Polyxena's sacrifice in *Hecuba* have previously been observed: I follow Rabinowitz in arguing that Polyxena's agency is severely curtailed, even more so than Iphigenia's.[501] This section then demonstrates that the army in *Hecuba* (and, to a lesser extent, *TW*) is depicted in ways that align them with an off-stage democratic assembly, and that the characterisation of Agamemnon and Odysseus closely resembles their characterisation in *IA*. *Ajax* presents a more complex case, as the large conglomerate formed by the Greek army does not map easily onto a single *polis* and never meets as an off-stage assembly; however, Menelaus and Odysseus are both cast as very specific types of political figures, reminiscent of their regular characterisation in Euripides.

In *Hecuba*, the Chorus emphasises their imminent removal by the Greek army:[502] they enter having been chased from their homes at spearpoint (λόγχης αἰχμῇ | δοριθήρατος πρὸς Ἀχαιῶν, 102-3). We have already been informed that the entire army is present, held up by Achilles' demand from beyond the grave (35-8):

> **πάντες δ**᾽ **Ἀχαιοὶ** ναῦς ἔχοντες ἥσυχοι
> θάσσουσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖς τῆσδε Θρῃκίας χθονός.
> ὁ Πηλέως γὰρ παῖς ὑπὲρ τύμβου φανεὶς
> κατέσχ᾽ Ἀχιλλεὺς **πᾶν στράτευμ**᾽ Ἑλληνικόν, …

The repetition of word-forms of πᾶς gives a powerful impression of the Achaeans' sheer numbers, forced to wait by the sea-shore (as in *IA*). The Chorus' entrance builds on this: our pre-existing awareness of the Achaeans' numbers makes the women's hunted existence even

[501] Rabinowitz (1993: 54-62).
[502] Foley (2015: 61-2).

more frightening.[503] *TW*, similarly, begins with the Chorus' frantic attempts to divine the Greek army's intent regarding them (161-2, 179), and frightened anticipation of the army's decision (166-7, 184). Indeed, the fact that (unlike in *Hecuba*) every event which takes place in *TW* is planned by the Greeks, either as individuals or as a collective, led Goff to suggest that the army is "the sole locus of power" in the play.[504] Later in *Hecuba*, Hecuba uses imagery of pillaging and destruction which highlight the Greek army's brutality: subtly, she equates Polymestor's crime (οἵτινες ξένους | κτείνουσιν, 803-4) with the Achaeans' destruction (ἢ θεῶν ἱερὰ τολμῶσιν φέρειν, 804).[505] The Chorus subsequently pick this up by addressing Troy and recalling τοῖον Ἑλλάνων νέφος ἀμφί σε κρύπτει | δορὶ δὴ δορὶ πέρσαν (908-9). Later, in deciding that he is safe, Polymestor (misguidedly) assesses the mood of the Achaean army (982-3).

Inevitably, *Hecuba* and *TW* emphasise women's particular vulnerability before the Achaean army: the women on stage are almost all conquered victims. The Chorus of *TW* articulates a fear that, in her frenzy, Cassandra might rush to the army (341-2), leaving her consequent fate menacingly unstated. In *Hecuba*, the army's power to demand Polyxena for sacrifice is underpinned by the threat of violence: if Hecuba resists, the army will take Polyxena by force (404-408). Andromache's harrowing articulation of the reasons for her fate in *TW* merits closer analysis (647-60):

> πρῶτον μέν, ἔνθα (κἂν προσῇ κἂν μὴ προσῇ
> ψόγος γυναιξίν) αὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἐφέλκεται
> κακῶς ἀκούειν, ἥτις οὐκ ἔνδον μένει,
> τούτου παρεῖσα πόθον ἔμιμνον ἐν δόμοις· 650

[503] The women are quite literally hunted, given the connotations of δοριθήρατος – a word only otherwise seen at Eur. *Tro*. 574. Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.) translates this slightly differently as 'captured'.
[504] Goff (2009: 14).
[505] Rosenbloom (2010: 7).

ἔσω τε μελάθρων κομψὰ θηλειῶν ἔπη
οὐκ εἰσεφρούμην, τὸν δὲ νοῦν διδάσκαλον
οἴκοθεν ἔχουσα χρηστὸν ἐξήρκουν ἐμοί.
γλώσσης τε σιγὴν ὄμμα θ᾽ ἥσυχον πόσει
παρεῖχον· ἤδη δ᾽ ἄμ᾽ ἐχρῆν νικᾶν πόσιν 655
κείνῳ τε νίκην ὧν ἐχρῆν παριέναι.
καὶ τῶνδε κληδὼν ἐς στράτευμ᾽ Ἀχαιικὸν
ἐλθοῦσ᾽ ἀπώλεσέν μ᾽· ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἠρέθην,
Ἀχιλλέως με παῖς ἐβουλήθη λαβεῖν
δάμαρτα· δουλεύσω δ᾽ ἐν αὐθεντῶν δόμοις. 660

Andromache has followed the repressive constraints which fifth-century Athens would demand of her to the letter. She claims to have remained consistently at home (650) – itself a startling revision of her presence at the Scaean Gate in *Iliad* 6 – avoids gossip (650-51) and is present silently for her husband (654-5). Yet, counter-intuitively, this has brought her destruction, simply because a report (κληδών) of her good conduct has reached the Achaean army (657-8). Even remaining safely indoors does not prevent information about a woman from passing into the information-channels of the army, and thus becoming vulnerable to them.

It is predictable, if nevertheless noteworthy, that the all-male army should feel consistently menacing when seen through its conquered victims' eyes. In *Ajax*, though, the army is depicted as a terrifying and potentially violent off-stage collective, even though we are not seeing it from a conquered city's viewpoint. The army in *Ajax* is a site of harmful rumours (137-8) and

θόρυβοι (142, 164) which spread and harm Ajax,[506] making even the Chorus feel vulnerable.[507] The gossiping army is compared to birds chattering (167-8).[508] Subsequently, the Chorus addresses ὦ μεγάλα φάτις (173) and pray for her departure (182-92). Much later, rumour alerts Teucer to Ajax's fate (978, 998-9). The army's power is not only manifested in their ability to spread information, but their potential for violence. Ajax imagines that the entire army would wish to kill him (407-8) – a conditional which, despite the presence of ἄν, feels like a statement of fact given how palpably true the protasis is.[509] Soon after, Ajax states bluntly that μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός (458), a startlingly uncompromising depiction of their animosity.[510] The Chorus fears being stoned to death (254-5), a quintessential evocation of group violence (see Chapter 1 Section C5). Their fears are realised when the entire army (τοῖς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις ὁμοῦ, 722) menaces Teucer with violence, moving swiftly from jeers (ὀνείδεσιν, 724) to the threat of stones (728) and swords (730).[511] This may well underpin Teucer's fear that he will be cast out by unspecified agents in the aftermath of Ajax's death (1019-21), echoing the dilemma which Ajax previously articulates (458f.).[512] The threatening atmosphere of the entire army's animosity towards Ajax is heightened by the sense of his own isolation.[513] Ajax's isolation,

[506] Davidson (1975) suggests a dichotomy in σὲ δ' ὅταν πληγὴ Διὸς ἢ ζαμενὴς | λόγος ἐκ Δαναῶν κακόθρους ἐπιβῇ (*Aj*. 137-8), the point being that *either* the gods have moved against Ajax *or* the report is a lie. I argue that the treatment of rumour both in *Ajax* and elsewhere is consistent with the idea that community-wide rumour can be pernicious to powerful individuals, regardless of whether it is true or false.

[507] The Chorus' vulnerability is underscored by the image of frightened doves (139-40): cf. Davidson (1975: 165); Sorum (1986: 366).

[508] Hesk (2003: 29-30) notes the rarity of similes in *Ajax*, and the Homeric overtones of the bird simile (partly due to the anapaestic metre).

[509] The army's collective enmity makes sense, given that the animals slaughtered by Ajax are repeatedly cast as the army's communal property: *Aj*. 26, 53-4, 144-6, 175. Cf. Davidson (1975: 167); Sorum (1986: 366).

[510] More generally, Ajax is acutely aware of what others, both named and unspecified, will say and think of him (e.g. *Aj*. 367, 382, 440-4, 458-80): cf. Hesk (2003: 56).

[511] Hesk (2003: 95) sees this scene as reminiscent of *Il*. 1, given the conciliatory effect of the elders (*Aj*. 731-2) which evokes Nestor's mediation.

[512] Hesk (2003: 108).

[513] Ajax's isolation has been noted by many scholars, who point to (e.g.) the imagined stoning in *Aj*. 255 (Hesk [2003: 54]), Ajax's soliloquy (815-65), a device rare in tragedy (Kamerbeek [1963: 168]; Sorum [1986: 372]), Ajax's traditional portrayal as the least wealthy of the Achaean heroes, bringing only twelve ships (Scodel [2003: 36]). Ajax's position on the flank of the army has been taken as a sign of marginality (e.g. Bowie [1983: 114]) but, as Hesk (2003: 41) observes, also underlines his importance (the vulnerable flanks needed to be entrusted to reliable warriors). Ajax's imagination of himself being overwhelmed by a wave (351-2) might also be taken as implying his position as an individual against vast numbers. On the other hand, certain motifs (such as the exchange of gifts which places Hector's sword in Ajax's hands) underline Ajax's status as a member of the

and his belief that the entire army is against him,[514] is sufficiently powerful for him to summon an Erinys against the entire army (μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ, 844).[515]

Female vulnerability before the army is much less pronounced in Sophocles' *Ajax*; however, it is noteworthy how threatened Tecmessa, who occupies a complex position as a result of being captured in war but treated in relatively dignified fashion,[516] feels after Ajax's death. Again, it is army-wide gossip that she fears: μή μ᾽ ἀξιώσῃς βάξιν ἀλγεινὴν λαβεῖν | τῶν σῶν ὑπ᾽ ἐχθρῶν (494-5). Ajax later acknowledges and confirms the implications of τῶν σῶν ὑπ᾽ ἐχθρῶν when he states that he is leaving Tecmessa a widow and his son an orphan among his enemies (παρ᾽ ἐχθροῖς, 653).

In *IA*, Iphigenia's sacrifice radically reframes the previous motifs of female vulnerability before the army. Polyxena's sacrifice in *Hecuba* arguably has an even greater effect on the gender dynamics of the play,[517] given that female vulnerability before the Achaean army is central to *Hecuba*. Indeed, parallels between Polyxena's and Iphigenia's sacrifices have previously been noted.[518] In analogous fashion to Iphigenia, it is debated whether or not Polyxena's apparent decision to accept being sacrificed marks a reassertion of her agency.[519] It makes sense that

community (Sorum [1986: 371]) and the play more generally has long been read as the figuration of an uncompromising and self-isolating Homeric hero into the democratic society in which he holds cultic significance (for a summary of Ajax's cultic significance in Athens, cf. Hesk [2003: 20-23]).

[514] For which cf. *Aj*. 829, 925, 986, 1177.

[515] Evans (1991: 77).

[516] Easterling (1997b: 25-6).

[517] Mitchell-Boyask (1993) argues fascinatingly that Polyxena's sacrifice is a failed ritual, and that Hecuba's vengeance is what enables the winds to change and the Achaeans to depart. This has deep implications, given that vengeance conventionally denigrates both agent and victim, whereas sacrificial ritual elevates both (118); however, I cannot agree with Mitchell-Boyask's contention that Artemis conveys a complex theological dilemma in *IA*, whereas Achilles merely asks for his personal whims to be satisfied (120) – as Seaford (1989: 88-9) notes, Artemis' demand comes across as equally inexplicable and inscrutable.

[518] Collard/Morwood (2017: *ad* 1458-60a) note several verbal parallels between how Iphigenia and Polyxena approach their sacrifices; Burnett (1971: 24-5) views both as sacrificial rituals corrupted in analogous fashion. As Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.) notes, Polyxena's sacrifice is also indebted to the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aesch. *Ag*. 218-47, which I do not discuss as it contains little mention of the watching army. For a particularly striking parallel between the *Hecuba* and *Agamemnon* sacrifice scenes, cf. O'Sullivan (2008).

[519] Daitz (1971) feels that Polyxena's choice blurs the boundaries between a free and enslaved person; Loraux (1987: 42-59) argues that Polyxena's agency is reclaimed. On the other hand, Kastely (1993) and Rabinowitz (1993: 57-9) suggest that Polyxena's free will is illusory and used to allow the army to feel comfortable with their wrongdoing. Of particular note is Rabinowitz's (1993: 35, 39-40) argument on Iphigenia, suggesting that the

Iphigenia and Polyxena have typically been analysed in similar terms. However, unlike Iphigenia, Polyxena does not sacrifice herself for the reasons articulated to her by male characters: she does so in order to escape slavery, a fact which underpins some of the arguments for the sacrifice as reassertion of Polyxena's agency.[520] A related question is how the army's gaze during the sacrifice affects the victims:[521] are Polyxena and Iphigenia rendered empowered or vulnerable? During Polyxena's sacrifice, as during Iphigenia's, the army's position radically changes: they abruptly become viewers, and recede from being a looming and threatening force which (in different ways) appeared on the brink of physically harming both women (e.g. 405-8). Though the atmosphere is no longer as actively threatening, their reduction to viewers does not necessarily imply powerlessness: Scodel notes the pervasive voyeurism of the army's gaze during Polyxena's sacrifice,[522] and Rabinowitz quite rightly asks whether Polyxena's choice can be meaningful when she is a lone girl surrounded by the army which has destroyed her city:[523] her sacrifice takes place in the presence of ὄχλος πᾶς Ἀχαικοῦ στρατοῦ | πλήρης (521-2), and (as is rarely mentioned in scholarship) a smaller group of Achaeans accompanies Polyxena to restrain her (525-7). The number of times Talthybius is forced to call for silence (532-3) further emphasises the difficulty in controlling such a large group, if indeed these lines are authentic.[524]

Polyxena attempts to seize autonomy in two much-discussed parts. First, she refuses to be physically restrained by the soldiers (545-52), proclaiming that ἑκοῦσα θνήσκω (548) and ἐλευθέρα θάνω (550), and concluding her speech to the soldiers – as with her last words on stage, to Odysseus (432) – with an imperative.[525] It is notable that she says this while physically

symbolic or artificial "willingness" of the sacrifice victim was an important element of sacrificial ritual, and therefore that the Iphigenia's willingness to die is recognisably illusory.

[520] Daitz (1971: 220); Mitchell-Boyask (1993: 121); more briefly, Burnett (1971: 24-5); Hogan (1972: 252-5).

[521] For the ambiguities here, cf. Scodel (1996: 111-28).

[522] Scodel (1996: 122-6).

[523] Rabinowitz (1993: 59).

[524] For the textual difficulties, cf. Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.).

[525] Daitz (1971: 220).

restrained, as revealed by Ἀγαμέμνων τ᾽ ἄναξ | εἶπεν μεθεῖναι παρθένον νεανίαις (553-4). Second, Polyxena bares her breast and encourages Neoptolemus to strike there (564-5) – an offer which, if taken up, would run counter to ritual convention.[526] Some have seen in this an attempt by Polyxena to take on the stance of a warrior slain in combat,[527] an attempt which arguably fails given Neoptolemus' decision to cut her throat (567, 571).[528] By bearing her breast, yet concealing her genitals (as is emphasised in 570), Polyxena either claims autonomy over the army's gaze in choosing where to direct it, or confirms that her limited agency is on the army's terms only, and is paradoxically a passive agency (the ability to be desired and talked about by them).

Polyxena's death prompts the Achaeans to compete to bring leaves and logs to her pyre (572-80), praising her as εὐκάρδιος (579) and ψυχήν … ἀρίστη (580). εὐκάρδιος is attested only rarely in tragedy, and this is its only Euripidean attestation. Its two other occurrences are used to describe Ajax (*Aj*. 364) and Philoctetes (*Phil*. 535). Strikingly, in both cases, this adjective places emphasis on the respective heroes' misfortunes. Ajax is reminding us of his former heroism before he issues a bitingly sardonic depiction of his madness (ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηρσὶ δεινὸν χέρας, 366) while Philoctetes is about to explain how he survived alone and injured on Lemnos. Unlike Iphigenia, Polyxena is not being praised in terms befitting a Homeric hero; indeed, εὐκάρδιος is unattested in Homer. Rather, this is a specifically tragic term for the Homeric figure fallen upon hard times, the barely recognisable hero.[529]

Hecuba describes her daughter as a νύμφην τ᾽ ἄνυμφον παρθένον τ᾽ ἀπάρθενον (612) and issues the following instruction to Talthybius (604-608):

[526] Scodel (1996: 122).
[527] Loraux (1987: 58-60).
[528] Scodel (1996: 123).
[529] The only other Classical attestation of εὐκάρδιος, in Xen. *Eq*., describes a horse (6.14.3).

σὺ δ᾽ ἐλθὲ καὶ σήμηνον Ἀργείοις τάδε,
μὴ θιγγάνειν μοι μηδέν᾽ ἀλλ᾽ εἴργειν ὄχλον 605
τῆς παιδός. ἔν τοι μυρίῳ στρατεύματι
ἀκόλαστος ὄχλος ναυτική τ᾽ ἀναρχία
κρείσσων πυρός, κακὸς δ᾽ ὁ μή τι δρῶν κακόν.

Hecuba's depiction of the army emphasises vast size (μυρίῳ στρατεύματι) and uncontrollable lack of discipline (ἀκόλαστος … τ᾽ ἀναρχία | κρείσσων πυρός). Her language, presented in gnomic terms (τοι) evokes oligarchic critiques of collective power (the image of ναυτική … ἀναρχία evokes the Old Oligarch's depiction of Athenian democracy, especially given the unusual casting of the Achaean army as sailors).[530] It is also very similar to Clytemnestra's view of the army in *IA* 914, as discussed above (Section C). The imagery of fire (608) resembles Menelaus' very similar depiction of the angry *dêmos* (*Or*. 696-7: see Chapter 2). Most prominent, though, are the delicately veiled implications of what wrong Hecuba fears will be done to Polyxena's body. Many commentators read this as a hint of necrophilia,[531] adding a particular darkness to the paradoxical παρθένον … ἀπάρθενον (612) which Hecuba subsequently evokes.

Like Iphigenia, Hecuba's sacrifice is reframed as a self-sacrifice. Like Iphigenia, Hecuba is consistently menaced by the Achaean army until she seizes autonomy which reduces them to passive viewers. However, Polyxena's status in relation to the army is even more restricted than Iphigenia's. Taken together, the sacrifice scenes of Iphigenia and Hecuba form an exploration of what agency can be reclaimed, and under what circumstances that agency can be reclaimed, by a woman whose sacrifice is demanded by a male collective. Though

[530] Kovacs (1987: 81) and Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.) note similarities between this speech and the Old Oligarch. Morwood (2014: 195) notes the anti-democratic resonances here, but he, like Kovacs (1987: 98) wrongly assumes that Hecuba's comments are "unreasonable", overlooking the army's menacing power over female characters both in this and other plays.
[531] Scodel (1996: 125); Foley (2015: 43); Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.).

vulnerable, Iphigenia is able to reframe the narrative of her death and lay claim to κλέος. In silencing the army, she has achieved what Achilles could not. Polyxena offers tantalising glimpses of reclaiming a similar agency, but glimpses they remain: at crucial moments, even including the placement of Neoptolemus' knife, the narrative resists her command.

Section F: Armies as *Poleis*

The previous sections demonstrate that the type of compulsion exerted by the army is not only violent. Agamemnon fears their propensity to turn against him and raze Argos, while the Trojan women fear the army for the violent destruction they have already wrought. However, at times, such armies are just as threatening to their own leaders and allies. Furthermore, some elements of the threat posed by the army do not easily fit this mould: their ability to gossip and spread rumour enables them to hold power over their leaders, and especially over individual female characters. This section finds that the political overtones which surround much of the army's activity in *Iphigenia at Aulis* are also found in other plays too, even extending to off-stage assembly scenes played out by the army.

Frequently, Achaean armies around the wreckage of Troy are recast as democratic assemblies. An example is the following (*Hec*. 107-119):

> ἐν γὰρ Ἀχαιῶν πλήρει ξυνόδῳ
> λέγεται δόξαι σὴν παῖδ᾽ Ἀχιλεῖ
> σφάγιον θέσθαι. τύμβου δ᾽ ἐπιβὰς
> οἶσθ᾽ ὅτε χρυσέοις ἐφάνη σὺν ὅπλοις,
> τὰς ποντοπόρους δ᾽ ἔσχε σχεδίας
> λαίφη προτόνοις ἐπερειδομένας,
> τάδε θωύσσων· Ποῖ δή, Δαναοί,
> τὸν ἐμὸν τύμβον

στέλλεσθ᾽ ἀγέραστον ἀφέντες; 115

πολλῆς δ᾽ ἔριδος συνέπαισε κλύδων,

δόξα δ᾽ ἐχώρει δίχ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλήνων

στρατὸν αἰχμητήν, τοῖς μὲν διδόναι

τύμβῳ σφάγιον, τοῖς δ᾽ οὐχὶ δοκοῦν.

This is the beginning of a section which consistently portrays the Achaeans in terms of a democratic assembly:[532] this is the force of πλήρει ξυνόδῳ,[533] and the typical democratic formula δόξαι + dative of a collective.[534] It is particularly fascinating that this pseudo-assembly is reported to be in turmoil (πολλῆς … ἔριδος … κλύδων, 116), with the Achaeans divided between those who wish to sacrifice Polyxena and those who do not; as with several other large groups in tragedy, the imagery used to depict them suggests vast volumes of liquid (κλύδων).[535] In prose texts, depictions of an assembly divided between two opposing viewpoints are rare;[536] furthermore, it is surprising that the assembly should entertain such different views, given how compelling Achilles' command (and their inability to sail without propitiating him) seems. The description of the army is made more striking by an abrupt reversion to military vocabulary. Though στρατός alone is not necessarily a marked military term, the description of a στρατὸς αἰχμητής (118) emphasises the fact that they are armed, and reminds us of the spearpoints which pursued the Chorus (102). Though τοῖς δ᾽ οὐχὶ δοκοῦν (119) is a recurrence of democratic vocabulary, the idea of πολλῆς … ἔριδος among a spear-wielding army constructs an image of physical conflict rather than mere disagreement.

[532] Rosenbloom (2010: 4); Schwab (2011: 85); Foley (2015: 37-8).
[533] Gregory (1999: *ad loc.*) and Battezzato (2018: *ad loc.*) point out that πλήρης is a technical term for the full Athenian assembly: cf. (e.g.) Andoc. 1.112, ps.-Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 2.17.
[534] Collard (1991: *ad loc.*); Gregory (1999: *ad loc.*); Battezzato (2018: *ad loc.*).
[535] Battezzato (2018: *ad loc.*).
[536] For a brief but fascinating example in tragedy, cf. Eur. *Heracl.* 415.

The assembly's tumultuous disagreement places more emphasis on the process by which assembly reaches its decision,[537] and highlights Odysseus' role in persuading them and Hecuba's political meditations.[538] The Chorus informs us that Odysseus played a crucial role in achieving consensus (130-33):

> σπουδαὶ δὲ λόγων κατατεινομένων
> ἦσαν ἴσαι πως, πρὶν ὁ ποικιλόφρων
> κόπις ἡδυλόγος δημοχαριστὴς
> Λαερτιάδης πείθει στρατιὰν …

It is instructive to see how the characters on stage engage with and represent this decision. Odysseus describes the vote as follows (218-21):

> γύναι, δοκῶ μέν σ᾽ εἰδέναι γνώμην στρατοῦ
> ψῆφόν τε τὴν κρανθεῖσαν· ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως φράσω.
> ἔδοξ᾽ Ἀχαιοῖς παῖδα σὴν Πολυξένην
> σφάξαι πρὸς ὀρθὸν χῶμ᾽ Ἀχιλλείου τάφου.

Odysseus does not acknowledge the diversity of views which arose across the army.[539] He tells no direct lies (he does not claim that everyone agreed), but he presents the outcome as the γνώμη στρατοῦ (218) and uses the formula typically associated with records of assembly decisions (ἔδοξ᾽ Ἀχαιοῖς, 220) to announce it in formalised fashion.[540] Between the decision-making process and announcement, the dissent has been elided and the assembly's decision

[537] Foley (2015: 38) argues that the assembly's disagreement encourages the audience to reconsider their decision.
[538] For a less negative interpretation of Odysseus' persuasive argument, cf. Kastely (1993: 1037).
[539] Rosenbloom (2010: 5); Schwab (2011: 86-7); Foley (2015: 41).
[540] Morwood (2014: 200). For similar language which associates the Achaeans with democratic decision-making, cf. *Hec*. 506; soon after, Talthybius says that he is sent by δισσοί τ᾽ Ἀτρεῖδαι καὶ λεὼς Ἀχαικός (510).

repackaged as consensus, as the outcome of a collective γνωμὴ στρατοῦ (218). His own persuasive role, too, goes unmentioned.[541]

This is relatively unsurprising, given that Odysseus has a vested interest in attributing more authority to a decision which he influenced. It is more startling, though, to see how Hecuba describes the assembly's decision to Polyxena (188-96):

Ἑκ: σφάξαι σ᾽ Ἀργείων **κοινὰ**
συντείνει πρὸς τύμβον **γνώμα**
Πηλείᾳ γέννᾳ. 190

Πο: οἴμοι, μᾶτερ, πῶς φθέγγῃ;
ἀμέγαρτα κακῶν μάνυσόν μοι,
μάνυσον, μᾶτερ.

Ἑκ: αὐδῶ, παῖ, δυσφήμους φήμας,
ἀγγέλλουσ᾽ **Ἀργείων δόξαι** 195
ψήφῳ τᾶς σᾶς περὶ μοίρας.

Hecuba describes the decision to sacrifice Polyxena as a κοινὰ … γνώμα, which is striking. Coming from someone who spends the first half of the play fighting against the assembly's decision, it implies that Hecuba does not consider the fact that significant dissent exists to render an assembly's decision illegitimate; rather, the fact that an assembly has made a decision retrospectively makes that decision unanimous. Not only does Hecuba treat the army's verdict as a decision by (implied) unanimous consensus; in her response, she seems to treat herself as an inhabitant of a city bound by the law of the assembly, rather than a subjugated victim. Here,

[541] Kovacs (1987: 87).

she refers to the Argives using various terms which cast them in a political light, and none which acknowledge them as an army.

Hecuba's seeming acceptance of the legitimacy behind the army's decision does not mean Hecuba is uninterested in commenting on democratic process – quite the contrary (254-9):

> ἀχάριστον ὑμῶν σπέρμ᾽, ὅσοι δημηγόρους
> ζηλοῦτε τιμάς· μηδὲ γιγνώσκοισθέ μοι,
> οἳ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτοντες οὐ φροντίζετε,
> ἢν τοῖσι πολλοῖς πρὸς χάριν λέγητέ τι.
> ἀτὰρ τί δὴ σόφισμα τοῦθ᾽ ἡγούμενοi
> ἐς τήνδε παῖδα ψῆφον ὥρισαν φόνου;

Hecuba utters stereotypical criticisms against unscrupulous, persuasive orators,[542] implying that Odysseus' σόφισμα is responsible for the vote to sacrifice Polyxena.[543] She has heard, as the audience has, the Chorus' claim that ὁ ποικιλόφρων | κόπις ἡδυλόγος δημοχαριστὴς | Λαερτιάδης πείθει στρατιάν (131-3), an accumulation of stereotypical vocabulary denoting unscrupulous orators (note especially the ποικιλ- compound), culminating in a powerfully pointed avoidance of Odysseus' name. This also demonstrates a willingness to think in psychological terms about the army's collective decision-making: ἀτὰρ τί δὴ σόφισμα τοῦθ᾽ ἡγούμενοι (258) implies, slightly counter-intuitively, that the army are likely to make a decision because *they consider it* to be a σόφισμα. Odysseus is also thinking about the army's psychology, with a view towards their long-term loyalty. He worries that, if the dead are not symbolically honoured by sacrificing Polyxena, the army will be unwilling to fight in future

[542] Rosenbloom (2010: 5).
[543] In *TW*, too, Odysseus emblematises the immoral yet persuasive orator: this is encapsulated by διπτύχῳ γλώσσᾳ (287), which (according to Hecuba) he uses to turn the Trojan army against the captive women (cf. *Tro*. 721: νικᾷ δ᾽ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν Πανέλλησιν λέγων). Worman (2002: 119) notes that Hecuba's criticisms of Odysseus at *Tro*. 283-87 resemble accusations levelled at the sophists.

battles (313-16). This is not so much a blurring of the boundaries between army and *polis*, as a reminder that those boundaries are themselves relatively insubstantial: armies have their own "politics", and part of leading an army is to think about its relationship with its leaders and how to ensure its long-term loyalty.

Agamemnon, too, is concerned about maintaining the army's support (850-72):

Ἀγ: ἐγώ σε καὶ σὸν παῖδα καὶ τύχας σέθεν,
Ἑκάβη, δι᾽ οἴκτου χεῖρά θ᾽ ἱκεσίαν ἔχω,
καὶ βούλομαι θεῶν θ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἀνόσιον ξένον
καὶ τοῦ δικαίου τήνδε σοι δοῦναι δίκην,
εἴ πως φανείη γ᾽ ὥστε σοί τ᾽ ἔχειν καλῶς
στρατῷ τε μὴ δόξαιμι Κασσάνδρας χάριν
Θρῄκης ἄνακτι τόνδε βουλεῦσαι φόνον.
ἔστιν γὰρ ᾗ ταραγμὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ μοι·
τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον φίλιον ἡγεῖται στρατός,
τὸν κατθανόντα δ᾽ ἐχθρόν· εἰ δὲ σοὶ φίλος
ὅδ᾽ ἐστί, χωρὶς τοῦτο κοὐ κοινὸν στρατῷ.
πρὸς ταῦτα φρόντιζ᾽· ὡς θέλοντα μέν μ᾽ ἔχεις
σοὶ ξυμπονῆσαι καὶ ταχὺν προσαρκέσαι,
βραδὺν δ᾽, Ἀχαιοῖς εἰ διαβληθήσομαι.

Ἑκ: φεῦ.
οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἔστ᾽ ἐλεύθερος·
ἢ χρημάτων γὰρ δοῦλός ἐστιν ἢ τύχης
ἢ πλῆθος αὐτὸν πόλεος ἢ νόμων γραφαὶ
εἴργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην τρόποις.

ἐπεὶ δὲ ταρβεῖς τῷ τ᾽ ὄχλῳ πλέον νέμεις,
ἐγώ σε θήσω τοῦδ᾽ ἐλεύθερον φόβου.
σύνισθι μὲν γάρ, ἤν τι βουλεύσω κακὸν 870
τῷ τόνδ᾽ ἀποκτείναντι, συνδράσῃς δὲ μή.
ἢν δ᾽ ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν θόρυβος ἢ ‘πικουρία …

Agamemnon pities Hecuba and the dead Polydorus (850-51) and wants to help them, or at least claims that he does (852-3), but he does not wish to appear to the army as though he plotted Polymestor's death for Cassandra's sake (854-5), a fear he subsequently explains (858-9) and finally reiterates (863). It is possible that this is merely a pretext for Agamemnon's inaction – after all, he was unafraid to lobby for the sake of Hecuba's family during the assembly-scene earlier (120-22). I argue, however, that Agamemnon is not lying; that the power of the army (or at least Agamemnon's perception of it) is real here.[544] This might be indicated, firstly, by Agamemnon's subsequent statement πῶς οὖν σε κρίνας μὴ ἀδικεῖν φύγω ψόγον (1249). Here, his side has changed (he is condemning Polymestor), but his fear of ψόγος has not: this implies that Agamemnon was genuinely motivated by his fear of collective reproach, rather than using this as a justification for taking a particular side. Further supporting evidence is provided by the menacingly powerful presence of the Achaean army across all the plays discussed in detail in this chapter: given that this was a typical way of portraying the off-stage army, an audience would readily assume that Agamemnon is telling the truth.

Hecuba responds by putting this in political terms. Agamemnon's specific brand of lacking freedom, she declares gnomically, results from πλῆθος αὐτὸν πόλεος ἢ νόμων γραφαὶ | εἴργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην τρόποις (866-7). As signalled by πόλεος and νόμων γραφαί, she is re-imagining Agamemnon's reticence in a political rather than a military scenario. A similar

[544] Here, I follow Rosenbloom (2010: 4).

note is struck by ταρβεῖς τῷ τ᾽ ὄχλῳ πλέον νέμεις (868), which (while not explicitly political) still feels generic and equally applicable to the imaginary political scenario which Hecuba is constructing. Agamemnon is portrayed with imagery which suggests that he is not only restrained, but not free (οὐκ … ἐλεύθερος, 864; ἐγώ σε θήσω … ἐλεύθερον, 869),[545] which evokes the Platonic conception of rulers who depend on the masses' power as slaves of the masses (Chapter 1 D1).[546] The idea that Hecuba may face θόρυβος (872), too, is a stereotype of group activity in general, applicable to both military and political situations (as we have seen). Agamemnon departs with the wish that πᾶσι γὰρ κοινὸν τόδε, | ἰδίᾳ θ᾽ ἑκάστῳ **καὶ πόλει** (902-3), which sets the proceedings in a political light, with (presumably) the army as his *polis*. Just as in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Agamemnon is sketched out as the type of political leader who lives in fear of the *dêmos*' mood turning against him. His fear of θόρυβος (872) and, later, his alarmed report of ἀνὰ στρατὸν … θόρυβον (1110-11) are reminiscent of his fear of the *thorubos* in *IA* 317.

Hecuba, then, depicts the Achaean army functioning much as an assembly, forming an agonising counterpoint to the vulnerable women who await their verdict. This offers us a perspective on how collective decision-making was viewed: even when we are explicitly told that the assembly is torn between two possibilities, Odysseus decisively repackages the decision to imply that it was unanimous and conclusive, and Hecuba does not contest this reinterpretation. This is not to say that Hecuba portrays democratic decision-making positively: she criticises the army's thought processes in language which evokes stereotypical anti-democratic prose motifs. Furthermore, Odysseus is again stereotyped as an unscrupulous orator, while Agamemnon again constantly fears losing the army's loyalty. Euripides gives some Homeric characters consistent personalities across multiple tragedies, mapping these

[545] Daitz (1971: 221).
[546] Kastely (1993: 1042).

characters onto generalised stereotypes of fifth-century political figures. There remains one more unnoticed lens through which the army-as-*dêmos* is refracted. Hecuba's cold description of the army's ψῆφον … φόνου (259) conflates the language of democracy with that of violence. This resembles one of Clytemnestra's comments in *IA* (1196-8):

> ὃν χρῆν δίκαιον λόγον ἐν Ἀργείοις λέγειν·
> Βούλεσθ', Ἀχαιοί, πλεῖν Φρυγῶν ἐπὶ χθόνα;
> **κλῆρον τίθεσθε** παῖδ' ὅτου **θανεῖν** χρεών.

Both women discuss the democratic ὄχλος with aristocratic contempt. However, these two comments depict democracy in a very different light: for both royal women, *voting itself* is cast as a brutal, cruel process irretrievably linked with death for them and their own.

In *Ajax*, there are no full reports of the army making decisions. Nevertheless, the army is sometimes viewed in a political or specifically democratic light. Sophocles has selected the version of the myth in which the award of Achilles' arms was determined by vote (οὐκ ἄν ποτε | δίκην κατ' ἄλλου φωτὸς ὧδ' ἐψήφισαν, 448-9).[547] Subsequently, Teucer suggests that this vote might have been fixed (1135);[548] Agamemnon, too, refers to the process of voting in his subsequent accusation κοὐκ ἀρκέσει ποθ' ὑμὶν οὐδ' ἡσσημένοις | εἴκειν ἃ **τοῖς πολλοῖσιν** ἤρεσκεν **κριταῖς** (1242-3).

Menelaus thinks in explicitly political terms about the army (1071-6, 1081-3):[549]

> καίτοι κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὄντα **δημότην**
> μηδὲν δικαιοῦν τῶν ἐφεστώτων κλύειν.

[547] It is not explicitly stated whether those who voted are the army (as per Pind. *Nem*. 8.26) or the Trojan prisoners (as per some strands of the epic tradition: cf. Williams [1980: 142]). Rose's (1995: 63) suggestion that "[t]his makes the decision a direct judgment by the community about its own leadership" seems to assume that the army has voted in *Ajax*.
[548] Evans (1991: 78) suggests that this claim would have been treated with scepticism by contemporary Athenians with jury experience.
[549] Knox (1983: 11).

οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἂν **ἐν πόλει νόμοι** καλῶς

φέροιντ᾽ ἄν, ἔνθα μὴ καθεστήκοι **δέος**,

οὔτ᾽ ἂν στρατός γε σωφρόνως ἄρχοιτ᾽ ἔτι, 1075

μηδὲν **φόβου** πρόβλημα μηδ᾽ αἰδοῦς ἔχων. 1076

ὅπου δ᾽ ὑβρίζειν δρᾶν θ᾽ ἃ βούλεται παρῇ, 1081

ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν **πόλιν** χρόνῳ ποτὲ

ἐξ οὐρίων δραμοῦσαν εἰς βυθὸν πεσεῖν. 1083

As in *Orestes*, Menelaus sets out his maxims for attaining power by influencing collectives. He draws on the contemporary stereotype that groups are susceptible to emotions rather than reason (focusing especially on fear): see Chapter 1 C4. The belief that the population should be restrained by fear of their rulers has been interpreted as an overtly oligarchic and possibly even tyrannical maxim,[550] although (as I argue in Chapter 1 C4) it is also a tool for controlling groups more broadly. Moreover, Menelaus' fable at 1142ff. aims to discredit Teucer by depicting him as an unscrupulous orator (ἄνδρ' … γλώσσῃ θρασύν, 1142) persuading a group to act against their best interests: the analogy refers to sailors piloting a ship during the storm, drawing on the "ship of state" motif.[551] Elsewhere, Menelaus justifies his actions by claiming that Ajax was plotting against the entire army (1055), a noticeable exaggeration.[552]

Menelaus' political presentation in *Ajax* is similar to his depiction in *IA*. Menelaus sees the army as a vehicle for his power and explicitly discusses how to manipulate their authority to suit his requirements. δοκοῦντ᾽ ἐμοί, δοκοῦντα δ᾽ ὃς κραίνει στρατοῦ (1050), as Barker points out, demonstrates how Menelaus perceives the relationship between ruler and ruled: the army's

[550] Scodel (2003: 38).
[551] Barker (2009: 301) also interprets this fable as an incarnation of the "ship of state" allegory; it is difficult to fully credit the interpretation of Papadodima (2017: 31-2) that the fable "puts the spotlight on the idea of individual punishment and humiliation", since this completely elides the agency of the sailors present. Garvie (1998: 229) connects this fable to Eteocles' parable in Aesch. *Sept*. 602-4; Barker's citation of *Sept*. 62-4, though plausible, is presumably intended to read 602-4.
[552] For an interpretation of this claim in light of Ajax's previous curse (844), cf. Knox (1983: 11).

views are an afterthought to Menelaus', and used to reinforce his wishes.[553] Moreover, the use of δοκέω resembles the formulae used to record decisions of the Athenian assembly:[554] Menelaus nods to democratic politics, but reframes them in a harshly and cynically controlling (and perhaps oligarchic) light.

Menelaus' politics in reference to the army are made more explicit by Teucer's resounding response (1100-1107):

> ποῦ σὺ στρατηγεῖς τοῦδε; ποῦ δὲ σοὶ λεὼν
> ἔξεστ᾽ ἀνάσσειν ὧν ὅδ᾽ ἦγετ᾽ οἴκοθεν;
> **Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων ἦλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν κρατῶν·**
> οὐδ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπου σοὶ τόνδε κοσμῆσαι πλέον
> ἀρχῆς ἔκειτο θεσμὸς ἢ καὶ τῷδε σέ.
> [ὕπαρχος ἄλλων δεῦρ᾽ ἔπλευσας, οὐχ ὅλων
> στρατηγός, ὥστ᾽ Αἴαντος ἡγεῖσθαί ποτε.]
> ἀλλ᾽ ὧνπερ ἄρχεις ἄρχε καὶ τὰ σέμν᾽ ἔπη

Teucer's condemnation of Menelaus as Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων resonates before an Athenian audience.[555] It is reminiscent of Peleus' comments to Menelaus in *Andromache* (581-2) and Telephus (fr. 723). Equally, not every aspect of Menelaus' political characterisation can easily be assimilated to Spartan-ness: fear of the laws and authorities was enshrined in Athenian democracy,[556] and there are some very Athenian and even Periclean elements in Menelaus' emphasis on fear of authorities and the rule of law (see Chapter 1 D1).[557] Though Menelaus' heavy-handed application may make him oligarchic or even tyrannical, Menelaus applies

[553] Barker (2004: 10).
[554] Ibid.
[555] This has been noted as early as Welcker (1845). Rose (1995: 72) follows Stanford (1963: 198) in suggesting that this would have tapped into anti-Spartan feeling in the audience, set against the Chorus, with whom Athenians would likely have identified (Rose [1995: 71]; Scodel [2003: 33-4]).
[556] Winnington-Ingram (1980: 63).
[557] Knox (1983: 12).

principles which resemble those used by democratic leaders, and evokes stereotypical fears which surround groups operating in democratic contexts.

Teucer's response is not so much a challenge to Menelaus' authority as a challenge to the idea that the army is such an entity as Menelaus can claim authority over. In restricting Menelaus' authority to his own troops (ὧνπερ ἄρχεις ἄρχε, 1107), Teucer presents the army as an alliance, a collection of separate *poleis*, rather than a single *polis* over which authority can be claimed.[558] Menelaus' words freely elide together the nature of a *polis* and a *stratos*, and imply that the same principles and the same type of power can be used to govern both.[559] Teucer's response reminds the audience to rethink whether the vast coalition formed by the Achaean army can truly be made to resemble a more cohesive *polis*.[560]

Both *Hecuba* and *Ajax* play with the off-stage army's identity by shifting it between categories, although both do this less pervasively than *IA*, which gives us considerable exposure to the army as pseudo-democratic *polis* and the army as threatening off-stage collective. In *Hecuba*, we are encouraged to see the army as an off-stage *dêmos* which meets in democratic assemblies and attracts clichéd anti-democratic criticism. However, this is complicated by the fact that they rule Troy by conquest: we view their decision-making processes from the viewpoint of their conquered victims, through the eyes of the Chorus whom they pursue at spearpoint. In *Ajax*, the army is not strongly assimilated to a democratic assembly; however, Menelaus' political language turns the debate over Odysseus' body into a fight for control over the army and a discussion of how best to exercise that control. The army, though, is vaster than even a

[558] Rose (1995: 73); Scodel (2003: 39); *pace* Meier (1993: 200).
[559] Winnington-Ingram (1980: 63); Sorum (1986: 374).
[560] Indeed, this may underpin the Chorus' vulnerability: several scholars have analysed Ajax's followers as representing a *polis* within the wider community formed by the army. Cf. Hesk (2003: 49); Scodel (2003: 37). Rose (1995: 71) suggests that the Athenians were likely meant to identify with the Chorus.

polis, as Teucer's words remind us: this may make them even more threatening, emphasising how vulnerable the Chorus feels.

Section G: Conclusions

A group of people depicted on stage can have political significance even if it does not contain overt allusions to contemporary politics. However, this chapter has demonstrated how the armies of Athenian tragedy are given heightened political significance by being represented as a *polis*. Characters frequently discuss them in terms which imagine them as a *polis*, such as Agamemnon in *IA*; they also often consider their power over the army using the stereotypes which often surround depictions of groups and democratic decision-making in prose texts. On occasion, the army's political identity is disputed, which draws our attention to the different types of power constructed by characters: in *Ajax*, Menelaus conceptualises the army as a *polis* which he commands, while Teucer redefines it as a coalition of *poleis* over which Menelaus has only limited authority. At times, as in *Hecuba*, the army engages in off-stage assemblies which carry markers of democratic assemblies.

However, armies in tragedy are not simply disguised *poleis*: their dislocation makes them difficult to define straightforwardly in civilian or military terms. They are all-male populations placed in a position of power over a destroyed city (*Hecuba*, *TW*) or forced to resolve internal tensions (*Ajax*, *IA*). In *Ajax*, we are confronted with the fact that explicitly depicting the army as *political* does not mean the army is being read straightforwardly as a single *polis*. Other plays, too, demonstrate the tension between the army's semi-political nature (which, I argue, results from the fact that it is not actively on campaign) and its dislocated, military nature. In *TW* and *Hecuba*, we are reminded that the army has defeated Troy and will soon destroy it: the start of *Hecuba* juxtaposes the army as democratic assembly and the army as dangerous force which has just pursued the Chorus at spear-point. *Ajax* (through Tecmessa) and *IA* also dwell

on the fact that, as an all-male group, the army poses an especial threat to women; *Hecuba* and *TW* force us to see the army through the eyes of the very women whose homes it has destroyed. However, the army's potential for violence affects other characters too: they come to the brink of collective violence against Achilles himself. This intersects with the army's political overtones: Agamemnon's fear of the army has its roots in their potential for a violent uprising, but is consistently reinterpreted as a generic politician's fear of his political supporters turning against him.

Agamemnon's twice-determined fear reminds us that we should not impose a false dichotomy between the characteristics of an army and those of a *dêmos*. The Athenian *dêmos*, too, was all-male, and fears of a violent popular uprising were as relevant for civilian politicians as for an army's generals. However, extant tragedies do not explicitly explore the idea of the *dêmos* as a potentially violent or dangerous body, or as an all-male collective inimical to women. This demonstrates the important role armies play within the wider context of Athenian drama's interest in groups. The off-stage Achaean army can be depicted in ways that assimilate them to a *polis*, or even an Athenian-style democratic collective; however, they are distant enough from the *dêmos* that they can provide a space for exploring these darker aspects of group politics, without explicitly airing difficult questions about the Athenian *dêmos*. This is a logical extension of my argument in Chapter 2, where I suggested that locating a democratic assembly in Argos enables complex, double-edged scrutiny that would be more uncomfortable set in Athens.

Analysing how the army is depicted across multiple tragedies also demonstrates how Homeric characters are consistently characterised with reference to the army. Odysseus' characterisation as a stereotypical unscrupulous orator is relatively well-known; it is more striking that Agamemnon is routinely depicted as a politician who has taken advantage of widespread support to secure power and now constantly fears losing this support. Menelaus is consistently

a cynical politician with oligarchic sympathies who is very willing to take advantage of the democracy in order to secure his goals. Another recurring character-type is notable: the royal female character who demonstrates disdain for the army as a collective (represented with a series of clichéd *gnômai* about "the crowd" in general) and claim not to understand the importance of retaining their allegiance.[561] Both Clytemnestra (in *IA*) and Hecuba (*Hecuba*, *TW*) fit this mould,[562] and in future it would be fruitful to compare this with the flashes of disdain Clytemnestra demonstrates for the *dêmos* in *Agamemnon*. Equally, there are fascinating contrasts between some of these characters. In Euripides, Odysseus is irredeemably unscrupulous and self-centred: he never appears on stage in *IA* and *TW*, ensuring that other characters' depiction of Odysseus' character is the only depiction which reaches the audience. In *Ajax*, his depiction *by the Chorus* is similar; however, when he appears on stage, he is rather more nuanced.[563] His manipulative nature is what enables him to win over Agamemnon, and thus establish a much-needed consensus between the parties on stage,[564] articulating both sides' point of view (1355) in the process.

[561] E.g. *IA* 1357; *Hec*. 605-8, 884. Gregory (1999: *ad Hec*. 605-8) observes that Hecuba is voicing the typical disdain for the undisciplined mob which characterises some oligarchic viewpoints in 5th-century Athens: cf. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.5. For similar *gnômai* elsewhere in Euripides, cf. *IT* 678, *Med*. 296-7, *Andr*. 480-82.
[562] This means that Hecuba's anti-democratic *gnômai* cannot simply be attributed to her identity as an *Asian* queen, as Morwood (2014) and, more subtly, Kovacs (1987: 82-4) suggest.
[563] Sorum (1986: 365, 374-5); Scodel (2003: 42); Barker (2004: 8ff.). For a broadly positive interpretation of Odysseus in *Ajax*, cf. Evans (1991).
[564] Barker (2004: 16-19).

Chapter 6: Female Groups

This thesis has aimed to demonstrate the complexity of group psychology, group decision-making and group action as portrayed by Attic drama. The discourse on groups in contemporary and near-contemporary prose tends to present them in binary fashion: groups are either eminently suited to making decisions and running a government, or ill-placed to do so. By contrast, the groups depicted in drama neither comply with nor fully contradict the group-related stereotypes found in prose, but instead offer us the nuanced, turbulent and sometimes inconsistent turns of events that might be more consonant with the reality of group decision-making. This chapter proposes that Attic drama depicts female groups in broadly comparable fashion. Comedy and tragedy allow us to explore inconsistencies and subtle nuances in the portrayals of female groups, and help us to scrutinise the stereotypes with which such groups are often associated. As with male off-stage groups, the stereotypes used to depict female groups are often more obvious in comedy, where they exist at least partly for comic effect.

The material covered in this chapter poses different complexities to the others. Off-stage male groups in drama are rarely discussed in scholarship, because they are often viewed as default elements of the backdrop to a tragic plot. In drama, female group activity is more unusual and has therefore been discussed more in scholarship. Furthermore, there are very few off-stage female groups in extant drama. I have therefore widened the discussion to include *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Lysistrata*, both of which use choruses to imagine city-wide collective female activity and thus partially represent larger off-stage collectives. Female groups also raise the question of what *comparandum* to use for them. For off-stage male groups, we possess many prose texts which enable us to establish a consistent picture of how assemblies, juries and armies were generally depicted. It is much more difficult to establish a widespread conception of female groups from prose texts. Other *comparanda* are available, such as

iconographic depictions of maenads;[565] in this chapter, though, I explore how female groups can be compared with poetic stereotypes articulated by characters in the plays themselves.

Female groups are often depicted using very different motifs to male groups. In particular, characters often portray them using imagery which associates them with mythic archetypes of foreign women who attack men: Amazons, bacchants, the Lemnian women. Furthermore, the situation is complicated by the intersection between group-related stereotypes and gendered stereotypes which are often attached to women, regardless of number. Group-related stereotypes of inability to make logical decisions and propensity to mob violence are complicated by gender-related stereotypes of irrationality, as well as comedy-specific stereotypes such as female alcoholism. Furthermore, prose depictions tend to focus on groups in a position of power: an assembly with the power to make decisions, an army with the power to inflict destruction on communities. Female groups do not tend to hold institutional power: this is an example of drama being able to expand the discourse by depicting marginalised groups. Attic tragedy often focuses closely on groups of women, located firmly outside established power structures; Attic comedy often reverses the situation by imagining groups of women controlling and subverting established power structures.

This chapter begins with Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, a play which makes it difficult for us to understand and straightforwardly categorise the women by setting various stereotypical female group categories in conflict with each other. The women carry out their festival on the Pnyx, simultaneously making them occupy their mandated space and transgress male political space. The language used to describe their "female assembly" repeatedly challenges the audience with the paradoxical idea of a female political gathering. An undertone which aligns the women with bacchant violence is close to the surface, but never resolved with actual

[565] For discussions of *Bacchae* with reference to visual depictions of maenads, cf. March (1989), Weaver (2009).

violence. The women's attempt to find disguised men reminds us pointedly that they are themselves male actors dressed as women, which draws their gender back into an uncertain space. *Thesmophoriazusae* illustrates the various categories to which female groups can stereotypically be assigned; indeed, the readiness of certain scholars to read the women at the Thesmophoria as associated with Amazons or the Lemnian women perhaps demonstrates how powerful those stereotypes still remain.

I then discuss *Lysistrata*, in which the women occupying the Acropolis might seem more straightforwardly transgressive than their counterparts in *Thesmophoriazusae*. Similarly, they resist being stereotyped; the difference, though, is that these stereotypes are articulated by male characters in *Lysistrata*. The Magistrate tries to equate the women's behaviour with bacchants; subsequently, other men compare them with Amazons and with Artemisia, associating them with extreme, foreign and anti-male behaviour in order to render them "other". The women resist these stereotypes: their analogy comparing the government of Athens to wool-working confronts us with the paradoxical idea that the women are transgressing male spaces, yet simultaneously remaining quintessentially female. However, reminders of the women's desire for wine, as well as the presence of Spartan women (which adds weight to the men's claim that the women are Spartan sympathisers) means that we cannot straightforwardly ignore all the stereotypes about women found in *Lysistrata*, either. Aristophanic comedy has a stake in perpetuating comic stereotypes, even if it sometimes allows them to be undercut and problematised.

The women of Euripides' *Hecuba* also defy straightforward comprehension and categorisation by male onlookers. Here, though, the misunderstanding is the opposite. Rather than figuring them into stereotyped imagery of aggressive and violent transgression, Agamemnon views the Trojan women as archetypal prisoners and struggles to understand the threat they pose. Polymestor, similarly, struggles to process the idea of the female prisoners' collective action

even as he writhes in the darkness of his blinded agony. Motifs of stereotypical female group transgression are deployed, strikingly, by Hecuba (Lemnians and Danaids) and Polymestor (bacchants), forcing us to engage with the Trojan women as occupying a complex middle ground between stereotyped foreign man-haters and passive victims of war.

The chapter ends by discussing a problem in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Pentheus' initial claim that he plans to meet the bacchants in armed combat has been scrutinised by scholars, given that this is an inaccurate prediction of subsequent events. I argue that the non-appearance of the promised battle should be viewed in the context of other deliberate inconsistencies in the portrayal of the off-stage bacchants: the swift changes between peace and violence, the easy slippage between individuals and groups and the disconcerting elements of the women's attack on the village. Though no battle takes place, we are often taunted with motifs implying that the bacchant women might be viewed as an army, which forms a part of their indistinct, undefinable nature. In a play which partly revolves around Pentheus' inability to define correctly who the bacchants are or what they are doing, it is unsurprising that the audience, too, should be challenged with an off-stage group of women which resists easy definition.

Off-stage groups of women, then, consciously resist definition, taking advantage of the various (often primarily male) viewpoints from which on-stage characters attempt to define and stereotype them. This remains partially true even when an on-stage chorus is used to represent city-wide female activity.

Section A: *Thesmophoriazusae*

Though often overlooked before the 1980s, *Thesmophoriazusae* has become relatively well-covered by scholarship since the first publication of Zeitlin's 'Travesties of Gender and Genre' article in 1981.[566] As such, the women's complex identity has been thoroughly discussed. This

[566] As noted by Slater (2002: 150).

section surveys existing scholarship which approaches problems in the women's identity from various angles. In doing so, it extracts an under-appreciated theme from existing discussions of *Thesmophoriazusae*: the women are designed to embrace multiple identities and (in doing so) to resist definition as far as possible. The women's "assembly" on the Pnyx blends motifs drawn from the male assembly in deliberately jarring and inconsistent fashion with stereotypically female concerns. The threatening Danaid roots of the Thesmophoria are fully exploited by the bacchant connotations of the women's festivities, which keeps stereotypical motifs of transgressive female group violence close to the surface without resolving them. The fictive nature of the female stage roles is itself teased out subtly, confronting us with the blurred identity of men-playing-women on stage. Overall, the women's collective actions are made multifaceted and difficult to categorise easily; in particular, the undercurrents of stereotypical foreign female groups are important to note, as they are often used to stereotype other transgressive female groups in Attic drama.

Thesmophoriazusae differs from *Lysistrata* and *Assembly-Women* in that it does not overtly contain a female invasion of a male space. Rather than taking control of the Acropolis or the Assembly, the women celebrate the female-only Thesmophoria,[567] and it is men who transgress the boundaries of a women-only space.[568] However, respect for/transgression of gendered space does not form a straightforward dichotomy here. The festival is celebrated on the Pnyx (658),[569] which makes the women's legitimate presence at their own rituals simultaneously a transgression of male political space.[570] The idea of women transgressing the Pnyx is

[567] Detienne (1979: 145); Bowie (1996: 205); Zeitlin (1996: 376).
[568] Taaffe (1993: 74); Zeitlin (1996: 380).
[569] It is unclear whether this reflects the reality of the Athenian Thesmophoria. Richardson (1974: 250) demonstrates that most sanctuaries of Demeter were located just outside the city, as was the case with the Athenian Eleusinion. Henderson (1996: 92-3) argues very plausibly that the Thesmophoria really were celebrated on the Pnyx, followed by McClure (1999: 229) and Slater (2002: 151n4).
[570] Bowie (1996: 206). Zeitlin (1996: 379) compares this to the double-edged nature of "female" presence on stage: simultaneously exposing them to the public gaze and sanctified by the ritual nature of drama. Taaffe (1993: 76) suggests that this reminds us of the Thesmophoria rituals' implicit threat of social revolution. Henderson (1996: 92) suggests that *Thesmophoriazusae* sees institutionalised the transgression of gendered boundaries which

complicated further by the women's portrayal and self-portrayal as a *dêmos*.[571] Some have even viewed *Thesmophoriazusae* as staging a political usurpation which responds to the recent oligarchic coup.[572] Euripides describes their gathering as ἐκκλησιάζειν (84, 90; cf. 277),[573] a verb similarly used by the Chorus as they utter the formulae which open their gathering (330, cf. 376).[574] The prayer εὐφημία ἔστω (295-6) evokes the typical opening formulae of a male assembly; however, this is complicated by the fact that it recalls the introduction of the effeminate Agathon (39-40).[575] The Chorus offers the startling concept of τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων **καὶ | τὸν τῶν γυναικῶν** (308-9). Subsequently, a female herald declares that ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ τάδε | τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν (373-4). The formula ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ evokes Athenian democratic institutions (as does the subsequent formula τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται, 379);[576] however, the enjambed attributive phrase τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν immediately challenges us to reconcile this democratic formula with the female religious group that utters it. Furthermore, motifs from the assembly are paired with motifs pointing to religious ritual: the ἐκκλησία and σύνοδος, for example, are paired together.[577] The subsequent prayer to various gods (312-330)

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the women of *Lysistrata* could achieve only in comic fantasy, but this overstates the case for transgression: the point is that the women occupy an unclear space *between* political transgression and institutionalised ritual.

[571] The close connections between *Thesm*. 295-371 and an Athenian assembly have been noted since Wilamowitz (1893: II 352f.) and are now widely taken for granted since Haldane's (1965) detailed study: e.g. Hansen (1976: 176-7); Taaffe (1993: 88); Slater (2002: 151). Rhodes (1972: 37) uses this section of *Thesm.* as evidence for the opening prayer and curse of the *boulê*.

It is possible that Aristophanes (by portraying the women as an assembly) embraces and emphasises an ambiguity which often surrounded celebrants of the Thesmophoria. An ancient inscription from Karia contains the assembly-formula ὡς ἔδοξε ταῖς γυναιξί (Sokolowski 1955: #61.5), as Detienne (1979: 138), Bowie (1996: 207) and Henderson (1996: 93) all observe. Furthermore, officials called *archousai* existed who corresponded to the male *archontes*: e.g. Isaeus 8.19f., Sokolowski 1962: #124.3; cf. other sources cited by Bowie (1996: 207n16).

[572] Goff (2004: 364-5).

[573] Austin/Olson (2004: *ad* 84); McClure (1999: 229).

[574] Habash (1997: 26) suggests that Aristophanes included an assembly-type scene due to the inherently humorous nature of women debating 'men's issues', the requirement of a court to put Euripides on trial, and the consequent introduction of the 'civic' elements typical to Old Comedy. Austin/Olson (2004: *ad* 277-8) note that the Athenian assembly would also begin with the herald raising and lowering a signal, and state that "[t]he women's Thesmophoria assembly functions from the first as a parodic version of a regular state Assembly". As I will subsequently indicate, I do not believe that this assembly-scene is as straightforwardly parodic as scholars have suggested: for example, the women do not solely debate 'men's issues'.

[575] Hansen (1976: 176).

[576] Detienne (1979: 138); Bowie (1996: 209); Habash (1997: 30); McClure (1999: 229). For more details on the women's parody of a regular Athenian assembly, cf. Austin/Olson (2004: *ad* 295-382, 306-9).

[577] For more examples, cf. Haldane (1965: 40).

seems to be broadly modelled on that of a religious ceremony; equally, the choice of gods addressed is reminiscent of Athenian state prayer.[578] Of particular note in exploring the blurred boundaries between male-gendered political assembly and female religious group is the following passage (331-51):

εὔχεσθε τοῖς θεοῖσι τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις
καὶ ταῖς Ὀλυμπίαισι, καὶ τοῖς Πυθίοις
καὶ ταῖσι Πυθίαισι, καὶ τοῖς Δηλίοις
καὶ ταῖσι Δηλίαισι, τοῖς τ᾽ ἄλλοις θεοῖς.
εἴ τις ἐπιβουλεύει τι τῷ δήμῳ κακὸν
τῷ τῶν γυναικῶν ἢ ‘πικηρυκεύεται
Εὐριπίδῃ Μήδοις τ᾽ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τινὶ
τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν, ἢ τυραννεῖν ἐπινοεῖ
ἢ τὸν τύραννον συγκατάγειν, ἢ παιδίον
ὑποβαλλομένης κατεῖπεν, ἢ δούλη τινὸς
προαγωγὸς οὖσ᾽ ἐνετρύλισεν τῷ δεσπότῃ,
ἢ πεμπομένη τις ἀγγελίας ψευδεῖς φέρει,
ἢ μοιχὸς εἴ τις ἐξαπατᾷ ψευδῆ λέγων
καὶ μὴ δίδωσιν ἂν ὑπόσχηταί ποτε,
ἢ δῶρά τις δίδωσι μοιχῷ γραῦς γυνή,
ἢ καὶ δέχεται προδιδοῦσ᾽ ἑταίρα τὸν φίλον,
κεἴ τις κάπηλος ἢ καπηλὶς τοῦ χοῶς
ἢ τῶν κοτυλῶν τὸ νόμισμα διαλυμαίνεται,
κακῶς ἀπολέσθαι τοῦτον αὐτὸν κῴκίαν

[578] Haldane (1965: 41-3).

ἀρᾶσθε, ταῖς δ᾽ ἄλλαισιν ἡμῖν τοὺς θεοὺς 350
εὔχεσθε πάσαις πολλὰ δοῦναι κἀγαθά.

Teasingly, this passage opens with a series of phrases invoking prayers to male gods, then adding their female counterpart in enjambment.[579] Similarly, the powerful and unexpected phrase τῷ δήμῳ … | τῷ τῶν γυναικῶν (335-6), echoing 306-7, undercuts the depiction of a male-gendered group by offering a female-gendered attributive phrase a line later. Syntactically and stylistically, this closely imitates the subsequent τῇ βουλῇ … | τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν (373-4). More generally, this passage freely blends stereotypically female-associated domestic intrigues with deeply political concerns. It utters a curse against anyone who τυραννεῖν ἐπινοεῖ | ἢ τὸν τύραννον συγκατάγειν (338-9), which is an almost stereotypical concern of the *dêmos*; however, it then curses female slaves who betray their mistresses' affairs to their husbands, and male lovers who betray women (amongst others).

Parallels between this prayer and the formulaic prayer used to open Athenian civic gatherings have been widely noted. Where this passage is underestimated, though, is in scholars' frequent habit of writing it off as a simple parody.[580] Austin and Olson, for example, note that the opening curse imitates the curse which opens Athenian council and assembly meetings,[581] but suggest that it subsequently "wander[s] off into fantasy".[582] Haldane, too, presents this straightforwardly as a domestic-centred parody of public politics.[583] Though parodic, this scene presents hidden complexities. The combination of Athenian civic formulae with elements relating to Demeter and the prayers' Thesmophoric contexts highlights the women's self-portrayal as both ritual celebrants and civic leaders.[584] Similarly, the standard political curse is

[579] Habash (1997: 29).
[580] E.g. Rhodes (1972: 36-7); Bowie (1996: 209).
[581] Their sources are as follows: Isoc. 4.157, Dem. 18.130, 19.70, 20.107, 23.97, Lycurg. 1.31, Din. 1.47, 2.16.
[582] Austin/Olson (2004: *ad* 331-51).
[583] Haldane (1965: 44).
[584] Habash (1997: 27-8).

interspersed oddly with distinctly and even stereotypically female-gendered concerns: first the curse against domestic wrongdoers, then the curse against women who engage in political crimes.[585] Subsequently, though, the two worlds are more subtly intertwined. The following passage begins with a prayer for both *dêmos* and *polis* (353). Following this, more curses are uttered; this time, though, the Chorus curses women who transgress in *political* rather than stereotyped domestic ways. Their imagined sins include ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμους | ζητοῦσ᾽ ἀντιμεθιστάναι (361-2) and Μήδους ἐπάγουσι τῆς | ἀρχῆς οὕνεκ᾽ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ (365-6).

Consequently, we are forced to acknowledge the blurred categories with which the Chorus of *Thesmophoriazusae* depict themselves.[586] They portray themselves both as a group of women concerned with stereotyped domestic affairs and as a surrogate *dêmos* uttering assembly formulae and cursing political traitors. In their curses against women, they credit women with both domestic and political agency. Mnesilochus' belief that the political bodies of Athens are not sitting (which would guarantee Euripides' safety: 78-9) is spectacularly undercut by this semi-political gathering; so, too, are our expectations of the spheres in which female groups operate.

As the women become a surrogate *dêmos*, so the individuals who address the Chorus are cast as orators. When they praise the first speaker, the Chorus acclaims her as follows (433-9):

> οὔπω ταύτης ἤκουσα
> πολυπλοκωτέρας γυναικὸς
> οὐδὲ δεινότερον λεγούσης. 435
> πάντα γὰρ λέγει δίκαια·

[585] This blend of curses is noted by Bowie (1996: 209), Habash (1997: 28-9) and McClure (1999: 229). Habash suggests that the shift from threatening enemies of the *polis* to the women's personal enemies reflects the women's authority to protect all women from those who have harmed them (such as Euripides) in addition, by making the women equivalent to a political body, it underlines the all-inclusive nature of the festival.
[586] For a reading which similarly emphasises the ambiguous status of the women's gathering, cf. Zumbrunnen (2012: 49-50).

†πάσας δ᾽ ἰδέας ἐξήτασεν,

πάντα δ᾽ ἐβάστασε φρενὶ πυκνῶς τε†

ποικίλους λόγους ἀνηῦρεν

πολύπλοκος, δεινός,[587] πυκνῶς and ποικίλος are conventional vocabulary for stereotypical manipulative orators.[588] As such, the women's speech is connected to corrupt rhetorical practices; furthermore, the connotations of artifice may also evoke the craft-related metaphors used previously to describe Agathon's poetic activity (e.g. 52-7).[589] The vocabulary which the Chorus uses subsequently, in the analogous passage 459-65, is very similar. Furthermore, the second speaker is more thoroughly categorised as an unscrupulous orator by the fact that she is depicted as deceitful: her self-interest is evident, and her words make it clear (despite her protestations to the contrary) that business is in fact booming. As such, we begin to doubt the Chorus' ability to interpret the speeches accurately.[590]

The Chorus' responses to the orators, then, figure them further into the imagery of a gullible political decision-making body. They imagine the women who address them as orators from an assembly; subsequently, they fear μὴ δάκῃ ῥήτωρ ἀθρεῖν (530). Disconcertingly, though, this comes immediately after a previous scene which identifies the Chorus with female stereotypes. The proposal of poisoning Euripides (430; cf. 561) selects a method of execution which is associated with female characters in tragedy.[591]

In his response to the women's assembly, Mnesilochus portrays their speech using vocabulary of anger (466-8):

[587] On which Austin/Olson (2004: *ad loc*.) note the praise of Praxagora at *Eccl*. 516.
[588] McClure (1999: 230).
[589] Ibid.
[590] Slater (2002: 163).
[591] Austin/Olson (2004: *ad loc*.) note that this parodies a Euripidean trope, citing *Med.* 384-5, *Hec.* 876-8; *Ion* 616-17, 843-5; fr. 464. As will subsequently be discussed, the passage they cite in *Hecuba* actually overturns rather than upholding this trope.

τὸ μέν, ὦ γυναῖκες, **ὀξυθυμεῖσθαι** σφόδρα

Εὐριπίδη, τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀκουούσας κακά,

οὐ θαυμάσιόν ἐστ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἐπιζεῖν τὴν **χολήν**.

However, the Chorus' responds by demonstrating further anger (520ff.) and they set about preparing to punish this impudent speaker (533ff.). This exemplifies a number of group-related tropes. Firstly, how easily groups can become entrenched in their views, either due to persuasion by an orator, or due to already holding these views before the assembly began. Once their views have solidified, a speech by an opposing orator, often one less skilled in manipulation, may only serve to intensify the group's views, rather than soften them (Chapter 1 D1). In this context, it is deeply ironic that the Chorus should praise the previous speakers using vocabulary which strongly connotes the skills of a manipulative orator, but then utter a generic anti-orator proverb (560) after Mnesilochus speaks. Secondly, these entrenched views may be extended into enmity against the orator who attempts to change the group's minds: hence the women's decision that Mnesilochus must be punished (533-9). In their psychological reaction to a single dissenting voice, the women at the Thesmophoria exemplify the stereotyped tendencies of a political decision-making group. However, this also adds a further layer of complexity to the transgressions which the women are committing, and to their difficult and multifaceted portrayal. Their claim to hold *parrhêsia* (541) is itself transgressive, given that *parrhêsia* was the prerogative of adult citizen males only.[592] Now, though, the *parrhêsia* which the women claim to hold has itself been problematised. After Mnesilochus begins to speak, the assembly insists that no woman may speak contrary to the views that the others all hold, and their insistence is accompanied by a startling level of violence.[593] Though Mica repeatedly

[592] McClure (1999: 216, 234).

[593] Slater (2002: 165-6), who suggests that the incomplete question εἰ μὲν οὖν τις ἔστιν; (*Thesm*. 536) may be intended to encourage an imagined female audience to join in collective violence against Mnesilochus. Subsequently, Slater (2002: 180) suggests that the women's opposition to free speech may reflect the oligarchic crisis of 411. Slater's (2002: 160-61) suggestion that the *boulê* has already determined guilt, and that the assembly

pours scorn on Mnesilochus' speech (e.g. 554, 559), she never says that his argument is untrue:[594] a pointed omission.

As a collective, then, the women evoke a much larger male group: they act out a democratic assembly, blending political language with stereotypically gendered concerns. *Thesmophoriazusae* also evokes another category frequently used to imagine group female transgression: the stereotype of foreign, man-hating group violence. This becomes increasingly strident in the play; however, it is also inherent in its setting. The Thesmophoria seems to be an exception to the male monopoly over blood sacrifice, meaning that women could usurp the male prerogative of sacrificial violence in an institutionally-sanctioned setting.[595] Furthermore, the myths surrounding the Thesmophoria underline its connection with collective female violence: there are several mythic examples of celebrants killing male spies at the Thesmophoria.[596] Herodotus (2.171) claims that the rituals were originally introduced to Thessaly by the Danaids, who brought them from Egypt.[597] As such, powerful mythic associations exist between the Thesmophoria and the idea of murderous female group violence against individual transgressive men. Moreover, a number of Bacchic motifs appear during Mnesilochus' imprisonment.[598] The adjective χορομανής ("dance-mad") in line 960 implies that the women are dancing in a Bacchic frenzy; subsequently, the women invoke Bacchus and

merely meets to sentence Euripides, cannot account fully for the sheer collective outrage which Mnesilochus encounters.

[594] Slater (2002: 167).

[595] Detienne (1979: 132-5, 147).

[596] Zeitlin (1996: 402n39), Habash (1997: 24) and Goff (2004: 136-7) cite Aelian fr. 44 Hercher (King Battus killed while spying on celebrants at Cyrene) and Paus. 4.17.1 (Aristomenes of Messenia being attacked after coming too close to the festival). Bowie (1996: 212-3) gives several more examples. Detienne (1979: 130) finds these stories marginal and dubious, arguing that they do not suit the sanctity of the festival, and notes that Battus had a reputation as a wise and pious king. Nevertheless, Detienne elsewhere sees echoes of the motif of foreign female groups posing a threat to men: he suggests that the women's secret assembly reminds us of the Lemnian women voting for the male race to die (Detienne 1979: 139). Later, he claims that each matron transforms into an Amazon at the Thesmophoria (Detienne 1979: 144-5).

[597] Bowie (1996: 206); Habash (1997: 24); Goff (2004: 300).

[598] Habash (1997: 31-5); Austin/Olson (2004: *ad loc*.).

dedicate their song to him (985-1000), interspersed with Bacchic cries (994a). Appeals to Μανία, too, occur at several points (728, 739).[599]

The motif of an individual man venturing incognito into a group of women engaged in a female-only ritual activity immediately evokes danger by reminding us of Pentheus' fate.[600] The lurking Bacchant motifs are evoked as early as the scene with Agathon, who in many ways is cast as a representation of Dionysus. As a person whose gender presentation is complex and highly ambiguous, he is well-placed to do so. He evokes from the kinsman a quotation from Aeschylus' *Edonians* which, in its original context, was addressed to Dionysus himself.[601] The irony of the relative playing the doomed Lycurgus to Agathon's Dionysus is that Agathon will blithely escape from proceedings, whereas capture and punishment awaits Mnesilochus.[602] Furthermore, as Slater notes, this is an especially pointed parody: Aristophanes rarely gives us a source for the passages he parodies. As such, we are encouraged to imagine that Mnesilochus becomes a Pentheus or a Lycurgus, mocking an Agathon who represents Dionysus.[603] The robing of Mnesilochus with articles from Agathon's wardrobe to help him pass as female, moreover, functions much like the robing of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*.[604] Of course, this is not a Dionysiac festival, nor is Mnesilochus torn apart. A Dionysiac object is hiding behind the façade of the Nesteia, in the form of the wineskin; however, this plot pattern is resolved when Mnesilochus 'kills' the wineskin.[605] And yet, as Zeitlin notes, given the mythical paradigms of collective violence against men at the Thesmophoria, we are teased by the sinister possibility of a murderous outcome.[606]

[599] Loraux (1993: 240n89); Zeitlin (1996: 402).
[600] Goff (2004) 365.
[601] Zeitlin (1996: 400).
[602] Hansen (1976: 173-4); Bowie (1996: 212).
[603] Slater (2002: 155).
[604] Zeitlin (1996: 402).
[605] Zeitlin (1996: 402). On more general note, the wineskin underlines the fact that the Nesteia is being parodied, using comic stereotypes of female drunkenness: cf. Hansen (1976: 179); Bowie (1996: 210).
[606] Zeitlin (1996: 402).

Thesmophoriazusae is in many ways a play about acting, and "men playing women" are scrutinised from various angles. The effeminate Agathon attempts both to write and to embody female roles;[607] Mnesilochus dresses to impersonate a woman, and once unmasked must play a variety of Euripidean roles (several female) in order to extricate himself.[608] Cleisthenes offers another example of a man acting as a woman.[609] As such, more than in other comedies portraying women, the fact that the women are played by male actors lies relatively close to the surface, and we are forced uncomfortably close to acknowledging their fictive nature.[610] To this end, the following lines are important (531-2):

> ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γάρ ἐστι τῶν ἀναισχύντων φύσει γυναικῶν
> οὐδὲν κάκιον εἰς ἅπαντα — πλὴν ἄρ᾽ εἰ γυναῖκες.

Taaffe perhaps goes too far in suggesting that the women's self-blame here reveals to the audience that they are actually male actors, making fun of women in general.[611] This is far from the only time in Aristophanes when women are complicit in stereotyping and making fun of their own gender. However, Ferris makes the important point that these lines are meant to form intrigue and conspiracy with the audience: they align the Chorus with audience, rather than with women.[612] As such, the actors' male gender is not revealed, but brought closer to the surface. There is, moreover, humour in the fact that the women cannot find any more men in their search for further intruders: after all, there are men all over the audience,[613] and Loraux wonders if the women are bad at distinguishing impostors from within their midst (taking a long time to identify Mnesilochus as male, for example) because they are themselves actors

[607] Which he does somewhat poorly and incompletely: cf. Taaffe (1993: 82).
[608] For deeper analysis of the various Euripidean parodies, cf. Taaffe (1993: 94-100); Zeitlin (1996).
[609] Taaffe (1993: 92).
[610] For detailed discussion of the representation of bodies and gender in *Thesmophoriazusae*, touching on some aspects of the overt fictiveness of women on stage, cf. Stehle (2002).
[611] Taaffe (1993: 91).
[612] Ferris (1989: 23).
[613] Taaffe (1993: 94).

'disguised' as women.[614] As well as consistently parodying male actors' attempts to portray female figures, *Thesmophoriazusae* emphasises humour that revolves around the women on stage not truly being women.

We find the Chorus alone on stage for the first time in the prayers of 947-1000 and 1136-59.[615] However, Hansen's argument that these prayers redress the balance after "the mock prayers of the womanish Agathon and the fantastic prayers of the mannish assemblywomen" is far from certain.[616] As Habash convincingly demonstrates, a concentration of references to Dionysus can be found towards the end of the first of these two sections: these prayers are not overtly depicted as appropriate to their Thesmophoric context, and instead increase our uncertainty by underlining the implication of collective female violence. In the second of these two sections, moreover, a reference to the δῆμος … γυναικῶν (1145-6) and praise of Pallas for defeating tyrants (1143) ensures that the thread of women as a political collective is retained.[617]

Overall, *Thesmophoriazusae* demonstrates the large number of categories at the comic playwright's disposal which can be used to define female groups. The women at the Thesmophoria are not straightforwardly crossing any gendered boundaries. However, a number of lenses are used to cast their actions in a more transgressive and dangerous light. One of these is the idea that they can take the place of men, which they do by enacting an assembly. Another is the imagery of foreign women (such as Danaids or bacchants) engaging in collective violence against men. In the other plays discussed in this chapter, these are analysed as stereotypes: they are over-simplified images used to categorise female transgressions and which are found

[614] Loraux (1993: 243).
[615] Hansen (1976: 184). This is partially because, as Slater (2002: 160) notes, the Chorus previously streams into the orchestra in disorganised fashion, with no *parodos*. He speculates, moreover (160n36), given the similarity to the entrance of the *Ecclesiazusae* Chorus, this disorganised entrance helps to culturally construct the Chorus as "feminine" (compared to the close-formation marching typical of male Choruses).
[616] Hansen (1976: 184).
[617] Bowie (1996: 227n77); Habash (1997: 36); *pace* Goff (2004: 366-7), who argues that the second half of the play retreats from political commentary.

wanting. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, the picture is not so simple, as the ideas of imitating men or enacting group violence against men are implicit rather than uttered explicitly by other characters. Nevertheless, having set up these categories, the women of *Thesmophoriazusae* defy them and blur the boundaries between them. The male assembly quickly descends into a strange combination of political and domestic matters; collective violence against men remains an unresolved threat. Reminders of the fictive nature of female stage roles only adds more uncertainty and fluidity to the already-undefinable place which the women occupy.

Section B: *Lysistrata*

Unlike *Thesmophoriazusae*, the transgression of gendered space in *Lysistrata* is in many ways unambiguous: the women have usurped the traditional male-gendered roles of engaging in public debate and running Athenian society, as well as taking control of the Acropolis itself. Given that women's traditional religious roles are emphasised (for example, by the names of several protagonists), it is all the more jarring that they are transplanted into a male-gendered political space.[618] Scholarship on *Lysistrata*, though, has overlooked the ways in which men on stage attempt to understand and categorise the women's transgression. Male characters in *Lysistrata* attempt to make the women fit into stereotypical female group categories, several of which are very similar to those which lurk beneath the surface in *Thesmophoriazusae*. The women are likened to bacchants (which casts them as wild, irrational, threatening violence against men), Amazons (which similarly implies a sworn enmity to men) and Artemisia. In short, the categories which the men reach for are generally foreign and imply outright warfare and bloodshed.

[618] Newiger (1980: 235-6). The ritual undercurrent is powerful, given the oft-remarked presence of Myrrhine (the name of the priestess of Athena Nike at the time of the original performance) and Lysistrata (a name lexically similar to Lysimache, the name of the priestess of Athena Polias at the time): cf. Lewis (1955). Furthermore, women's cultic role is frequently stressed (e.g. *Lys*. 638ff.): for discussion, cf. Goff (2004: 360-64).

The women of Lysistrata defy this stereotyping. They compare their conquest of Athenian politics to woolworking, and they emphasise their desire to bear heirs as their motivation for opposing warfare. In doing so, they associate themselves strongly with traditional female spheres, which means that they challenge the stereotypes offered by the Athenian men. They simultaneously occupy male spaces and redefine those spaces as traditionally female domestic activities, in order to make their supposed transgressions quintessentially female in nature – much like the women of *Thesmophoriazusae*. In effect, they imply that a straightforward dichotomy between male and female spaces cannot be imposed, and resist men's ability to define them according to a strict category. Even this, though, is far from simple: on occasion, the men's stereotyping does ring true. Given the women's comically-stereotyped desire for wine, the Magistrate's attempt to denigrate them as wild bacchants is not completely far from the truth; similarly, Lampito's presence makes it difficult for us to ignore the men's accusation of Spartan sympathising, which forms an element of their attempts to stereotype the women as foreign. As such, we are forced to engage with the complex and unclear categories which the female group occupies in *Lysistrata*, and the women's refusal to comply with the men's stereotypes proves in some ways as inadequate as the stereotypes themselves.

When the Magistrate first enters, he assumes that the women's group activity can only be explained by Bacchant-style mystery rites (387-8):

> ἆρ' ἐξέλαμψε τῶν γυναικῶν ἡ τρυφὴ
> χὠ τυμπανισμὸς χοὶ πυκνοὶ Σαβάζιοι, …

The Magistrate is unable to understand how the women have collectively transgressed male political space. As such, he aligns them with a stereotype relating to group female activity: the idea that they are acting as Bacchants, which implies that they are governed by uncontrollable emotion and inspired by foreign influences. Furthermore, he is noticeably wrong to attribute

the women's activity to their stereotypically wanton nature (τρυφή, 405): in fact, in a literal sense, the disruption is caused by the women exercising collective self-control by refusing sex (despite their desires to the contrary).[619]

Similar stereotypes return in 465-6, when the Magistrate ascribes the women's boldness to drunkenness: the proximity of a κάπηλος. The Athenian men then ask τί τοῖσδε σαυτὸν εἰς λόγον **τοῖς θηρίοις** συνάπτεις (468), a stereotype often associated with groups (not solely female groups) implying wild irrationality which renders them unable to participate in reasoned discussion (Chapter 1 C1). Subsequently, the Athenian men rely on stereotypes of foreignness in their attempts to rationalise the women's actions (674-9):

> ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κἀπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι
> ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, **ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία·** 675
> ἢν δ' ἐφ' ἱππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς ἱππέας·
> ἱππικώτατον γάρ ἐστι χρῆμα κἄποχον γυνή,
> κοὐκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος. **τάς γ' Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει**,
> ἃς Μίκων ἔγραψ' ἐφ' ἵππων **μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν**.

As has already been noted, Artemisia is an extreme and unusual example of a foreign woman participating in military activity: as a result, she is a fixture in rhetorical and philosophical discussion concerning female transgression;[620] the Amazons are a similarly recurrent trope.[621] Moreover, in line with stereotypes surrounding female transgression, the future transgressions imagined by the Athenian men are military in nature. The male chorus is figuring the women into stereotypical examples of female transgression, which cast them as antagonists to men: the

[619] Henderson (1980: 196).
[620] E.g. Aelius Theon *Progymnasmata* 114-15.
[621] Taaffe (1993: 53) argues that Aristophanes' plot relies on imagery from myths concerning Amazons and the Lemnian women. For a very detailed treatment of how Lysistrata evokes the myth of the Lemnian women, cf. Martin (1987).

mention of Amazons μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν makes this clear. These stereotypes hinge around foreignness: in their attempts to understand Lysistrata and her women, to place their transgression into a conceptual framework which they can comprehend, the men are trying to mark Lysistrata and her women as "other" in every way possible, reinforced by the earlier accusation of διαλλάττειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνδράσιν Λακωνικοῖς (628; cf. 620). Furthermore, these stereotypes imply that the women are abandoning their femininity entirely by taking control of male-gendered political space.[622]

Aristophanes, though, resists the "othering" of the transgressive Athenian women. With some exceptions (most prominently, the Spartan Lampito), Aristophanes undermines the men's attempts to figure Lysistrata's followers among foreign stereotypes by focusing on Athenian citizens' wives.[623] Ruffell cites this as a way of making the shattering of social taboos in the *Lysistrata* more striking; however, it is arguably even more significant in circumventing the foreign stereotypes which male characters use both to rationalise female transgression and to render it "other". The debate between the male and female choruses, then, directly contradicts prevailing stereotypes surrounding female transgression, and forces us to deal with the presence of radical female transgression without aligning it with stereotypes of foreignness, drunkenness and irrationality. From the very beginning, we have been confronted by the idea that the women are transgressing male-gendered spaces simply by using all the means which are conventionally associated with female spaces and gender roles (46-8). Later, during the debate, Lysistrata reminds us that women traditionally organise household finances (495). A crucial way in which Aristophanes establishes the idea of female transgression but distances it from the Athenian men's stereotyping is the wool-working metaphor (567f.):

[622] Foley (1982: 10-11) suggests that the male characters fear that they, in turn, will be feminised, especially when the Magistrate is accoutred with a veil, spindle and wool-basket (532ff.), emphasising the dramatic situation with a physical reversal of gendered roles. Cf. Henderson (1980: 197).
[623] Ruffell (2011: 394) notes the contrast with Pherecrates' work exploring female transgression, which focuses on marginal female groups.

ὥσπερ κλωστῆρ᾽, ὅταν ἡμῖν ᾖ τεταραγμένος, ὧδε λαβοῦσαι,

ὑπενεγκοῦσαι τοῖσιν ἀτράκτοις, τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ, τὸ δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε,

οὕτως καὶ τὸν πόλεμον τοῦτον διαλύσομεν, ἤν τις ἐάσῃ,

διενεγκοῦσαι διὰ πρεσβειῶν, τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ, τὸ δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε. 570

The women claim the male sphere of running the *polis* as their own, but they do so in a quintessentially female-gendered way, aligning it with the traditionally female-gendered task of wool-working.[624] They remain quintessential Athenian women, rather than enraged militaristic Amazons, and force both the men on stage and the audience to deal with the conflation of these two spheres. This is mirrored by the Acropolis' transformation into a series of domestic spaces: by turns, it becomes a bedroom (as Myrrhine adorns it with bedding to tempt and taunt her husband), a symbol of the household (as a walled, closely guarded female realm) and finally a dining-hall.[625] As such, Acropolis and *oikos* are conflated, which enables the women to remain attached to female-gendered roles while controlling political space and discussing civic and military salvation.[626]

Another motif which undermines the stereotypes of group female transgression, as seen through male characters' eyes, is the dialogue concerning "aged virgins" (592-3):

μονοκοιτοῦμεν διὰ τὰς στρατιάς. καὶ θἠμέτερον μὲν ἐάσω,

περὶ τῶν δὲ κορῶν ἐν τοῖς θαλάμοις γηρασκουσῶν ἀνιῶμαι.

[624] Weaving is a complex and double-edged motif: it embodies ideas of covert female agency as well as conformation with gender roles. Cf. (e.g.) Bergren (1983: 71-3), Goff (2004: 361n128). Several scholars have discussed the political implications of this wool-working motif. Henderson (1980: 198) notes that Lysistrata's suggestions draw extensively on the domestic sphere; however, he treats this as a way for Aristophanes to distance himself from the controversial politics of arguing against warfare, rather than as imagery significant in itself. Newiger (1980: 231, 234) sees the imagery of domestic economy more generally as an allegory for the entwining of internal and external Athenian politics, with the former prioritised.

[625] Foley (1982: 7).

[626] Faraone (1997: 54-5).

The idea that man-hating groups of foreign women, having slaughtered all their men, will decay as virgins is a recurrent stereotype. In the *Argonautica*, for example, during the Lemnian women's debate, we see Polyxo flanked by παρθενικαὶ πίσυρες … λευκῇσιν ἐπιχνοάουσαι ἐθείραις (1.671-2). In *Lysistrata*, though, this dystopian vision is not presented as a consequence of female transgression; rather, it is the result of the male-enforced *status quo*, which the Athenian women are attempting to avoid through their transgression.[627] Similarly, the women of *Lysistrata* are deeply preoccupied with the loss of children due to warfare (589-90, 651). This reminds us that the collapse of traditional family units is caused not by female transgression, but by the *status quo* as enforced by men's warfare. The women are moving not to upset a delicate balance, but to restore it.

The Athenian women refuse to embody the stereotypes which male characters use to categorise them. In doing so, they force us to conflate categories which do not sit easily together. While occupying unambiguously male spaces, they redefine their transgression as something concordant with traditional female-gendered roles. However, Aristophanes adds a further layer of complication by making some of the stereotypes uttered by male characters ring true. The women are not all fully devoted to the cause: it takes considerable effort to prevent them from losing their self-control, surrendering to desire for their husbands and departing from the Acropolis soon after the *agôn* (706ff.). This reasserts the dichotomy between public political space (the Acropolis) and the women's domestic spaces, and also reinforces the Magistrate's initial assessment of the women as surrendering to their uncontrollable nature. The stereotype of women being burdened by their excessive sexual desire is even emphasised by Lysistrata herself (718-19). This points to a further problem. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, the women

[627] For an alternative approach, cf. Loraux (1981), who argues that the Athenian women are configured as young virgins whose activity is constructive rather than threatening to the *polis*.

genuinely seem to operate as a collective; in *Lysistrata* (as, to a lesser extent, in *Assembly-Women*) their cohesion simply seems to reflect their leader's forceful personality.[628]

This is far from the only stereotype which looms large over the Athenian women's actions. As has previously been mentioned, the men try to figure the transgressive women among stereotypes of foreignness, partly by accusing them of διαλλάττειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνδράσιν Λακωνικοῖς (628). Given Lampito's presence, not to mention several other foreign ringleaders, this accusation is uncomfortably close to the truth. The Magistrate begins by rationalising the women's actions through the stereotype of female drunkenness; furthermore, he is not alone in doing so. This is previously suggested by Lysistrata herself, who opens the play with a striking comment on women's preference for drunken revelry, and indeed anticipates the Magistrate in evoking the stereotype of Bacchic ritual by wondering εἴ τις εἰς Βακχεῖον αὐτὰς ἐκάλεσεν (1).[629]

In *Lysistrata,* like in *Thesmophoriazusae*, the women defy firm categories and stereotypes, and we are forced to engage with the complexity of their presence in Athenian political spaces. Certain threads found in *Thesmophoriazusae* are more explicit in *Lysistrata*: the idea that the Athenian women have become wild Bacchants or man-hating Amazons is at the most an undertone in *Thesmophoriazusae*, but in *Lysistrata*, male characters explicitly state these stereotypes while vocalising their attempts to categorise the transgressive Athenian women. The women's response, though, highlights traditional female gender roles, and makes them seem paradoxically consistent with their occupation of political spaces by force. That said, categorising the women as "transgressing male spaces using their traditionally female traits" is itself transformed into a problematic label that resists being applied consistently. Some female

[628] Cf. Taaffe (1993: 52): Lysistrata's serious and focused speech differentiates her markedly from the rest of the women throughout the prologue.
[629] Taaffe (1993: 52).

group stereotypes are made to ring true, and undermine the women's efforts to consolidate their hold on the Acropolis.

Section C: *Hecuba*

We might expect women to be passive and vulnerable in Euripides' *Hecuba*: the Trojan women present are the prisoners of their Achaean conquerors, and the off-stage army looms over them (Chapter 5). However, the women of *Hecuba* defy the expectations which we typically attach to female prisoners of war. Their collective action grants Hecuba the power to overturn her imprisoned powerlessness and take vengeance. These women's agency has been under-appreciated in scholarship, relative to other aspects of the play. Not only do the women defy our expectations, they are also depicted as defying conventional attempts to categorise female groups. This is emphasised in the conversation between Hecuba and Agamemnon: Agamemnon articulates a series of stereotypical assumptions concerning how Hecuba might claim vengeance, all of which are undercut by the off-stage women's surprising agency. Similarly, our attention is drawn to how inaccurate Polymestor's expectations are concerning the Trojan women. He struggles to grapple with the idea of female prisoners harming him, repeating the women's captive status in confusion and shock.

The language depicting the Trojan women, too, makes it difficult to categorise them firmly. Hecuba describes them as an ὄχλος and a πλῆθος, which evokes her previous use of the same terms to depict the hostile Achaean army; similarly, the phrase σὺν ταῖσδ' ἀρίσταις Τρῳάσιν (1052) seems to equate them with Homeric male warriors. However, Hecuba also embraces stereotypes that accompany the idea of transgressive female groups: she evokes imagery of the Danaids, the Lemnian women and bacchants. These stereotypes of foreign female groups might seem highly appropriate, given the non-Greek nature of the Trojan women; however, this is

undercut by some elements of their portrayal which draw them closer to Greek norms of female self-presentation.

Hecuba unveils her plan as follows (876-90):

Ἀγ: πῶς οὖν; τί δράσεις; πότερα φάσγανον χερὶ
λαβοῦσα γραίᾳ φῶτα βάρβαρον κτενεῖς
ἢ φαρμάκοισιν ἢ ‘πικουρίᾳ τίνι;
τίς σοι ξυνέσται χείρ; πόθεν κτήσῃ φίλους;
Ἑκ: στέγαι κεκεύθασ᾽ αἵδε Τρῳάδων ὄχλον. 880
Ἀγ: τὰς αἰχμαλώτους εἶπας, Ἑλλήνων ἄγραν;
Ἑκ: σὺν ταῖσδε τὸν ἐμῶν φονέα τιμωρήσομαι.
Ἀγ: καὶ πῶς γυναιξὶν ἀρσένων ἔσται κράτος;
Ἑκ: δεινὸν τὸ πλῆθος σὺν δόλῳ τε δύσμαχον.
Ἀγ: δεινόν· τὸ μέντοι θῆλυ μέμφομαι σθένος. 885
Ἑκ: τί δ᾽; οὐ γυναῖκες εἶλον Αἰγύπτου τέκνα
καὶ Λῆμνον ἄρδην ἀρσένων ἐξῴκισαν;
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γενέσθω· τόνδε μὲν μέθες λόγον,
πέμψον δέ μοι τήνδ᾽ ἀσφαλῶς διὰ στρατοῦ
γυναῖκα. 890

As Hecuba sets out her plans for revenge, she confronts and corrects Agamemnon’s misconceptions. Agamemnon assumes that Hecuba can only enact her planned vengeance alone (879) and that it will take the form of typical vengeful female violence in Attic tragedy (876-8): his description is reminiscent, for example, of the various plans which Medea considers.[630] Hecuba corrects him: she has a Τρῳάδων ὄχλον (880) on her side. The use of

[630] Eur. *Med*. 376-85; cf. Battezzato (2018: *ad loc*.). Meridor (1978: 30) briefly observes the abrupt contravention of Agamemnon’s expectations. Hecuba is misleading, moreover, in implying that Polymestor will be killed rather

ὄχλος here (and again at 1014) is unexpected: in Hecuba's previous speech, this noun has been used disparagingly to refer to the Achaean army (605, 607).[631] The redeployment of this noun marks a crucial change: Hecuba is no longer an individual at the mercy of groups, but now has a group to empower her. Subsequently, Hecuba manipulates the fact that the group/individual dynamic has unexpectedly changed. Polymestor enters confidently, because προσφιλὲς δέ μοι τόδε | στράτευμ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν (982-3). With a group backing him, he does not imagine the existence of any other group who might threaten him. Hecuba increases Polymestor's confidence by stating that ἡμεῖς μόναι (1018): a comment which is true, but (in the context of the audience's knowledge) mockingly ironic, especially given the ambiguity of the plural which might refer either to Hecuba or to the women collectively.

Furthermore, the women's numbers enable them to transcend the restrictions imposed by their gender and captive status. Agamemnon, startled, asks how women can hold power over men (883); Hecuba's response suggests that they gain power through their numbers. Furthermore, her phrase δεινὸν τὸ πλῆθος (884) sounds like a typical anti-democratic cliché, of the sort which Hecuba has previously been repeating; the more so since δεινός is a word often used to characterise manipulative orators' rhetoric. Here, though, the context is Hecuba taking pride in the πλῆθος which takes her side, and planning to exploit its δεινός nature. Again, the female group defies Agamemnon's expectations: that Hecuba will conduct vengeance alone, that women cannot hold men accountable, that an ὄχλος or a πλῆθος will not be on Hecuba's side.

As well as being female, this off-stage group is further marginalised by their imprisonment. Indeed, Agamemnon's first question is to ask how τὰς αἰχμαλώτους (881) can possibly claim revenge against Polymestor. Subsequently, Polymestor hysterically reiterates the women's

than blinded, and not troubling to correct Agamemnon's assumption to this effect: for the consequent "surprise" of Polymestor's blinding, cf. Tetstall (1954).

[631] Battezzato (2018: *ad* 868).

captive status: γυναῖκες ὤλεσάν με, | γυναῖκες αἰχμαλωτίδες (1095-6), Ἑκάβη με σὺν γυναιξὶν αἰχμαλωτίσιν | ἀπώλεσ᾽ (1120-21). This heavy emphasis on the gender and imprisonment of his attackers is an attempt to reassert their status, and to return them to the constrained role which their status would normally entail. However, their presence as a group enables them to transcend these constraints. Hecuba refers to her actions σὺν ταῖσδ᾽ ἀρίσταις Τρῳάσιν (1052), a loose formula which normally refers to male warriors in Homeric epic.[632] Furthermore, Hecuba previously evokes two powerful mythical *exempla* for the women's violent intentions:[633] she compares them to the Danaids (886) and Lemnians (887). As such, Hecuba embeds them in the tradition of transgressive female groups, who are firmly othered (both the examples she cites are non-Greek) and whose mythic transgressions are more significant than the slaughter of one man.[634] Both the Danaids and the Lemnians obliterated an entire male community; the Trojan women under Hecuba, then, are redefined as a threat to men in general,[635] and (by extension) to the restrictions imposed by gender. It is striking that Hecuba, as a woman, reimagines these foreign violent female group stereotypes as empowering rather than critical.

Another undercurrent connects Hecuba (and, by extension, the women who assist her) with bacchants. On seeing Polydorus' body, Hecuba declares κατάρχομαι νόμον | βακχεῖον, ἐξ ἀλάστορος | ἀρτιμαθὴς κακῶν (685-7); later, Polymestor describes his assailants strikingly as bacchants of Hades (1076).[636] Equally, though, the women are not consistently viewed through the lens of foreign other-ness. Though non-Greek, the women liken their sufferings to those of

[632] E.g. *Il*. 3.250-51, 17.513. Similar phrases referring to the Achaeans are more frequent, e.g. *Od*. 8.77, *Il*. 3.273.
[633] Segal (1990: 119).
[634] Mossman (1995: 184) notes the ominous effect of this parallel, but suggests that the significance is rather the idea of women overcoming men by collective co-operation.
[635] Battezzato (2018: *ad* 886-7).
[636] Mossman (1995: 167) argues that the audience is unlikely to detach themselves from Polymestor's monody sufficiently to think back to Hecuba's βακχεῖον … νόμον. Nevertheless, these connected motifs still contribute to the characterisation of Hecuba and the off-stage women as irrationally threatening, violent, othered. For possible ritual elements in Polydorus' death and Polymestor's mutilation, cf. Schlesier (1988).

Greek women (649-56) and dress in recognisably Greek style (923-7, 933-4).[637] As such, the imagery surrounding Hecuba's women is complex and contradictory. They are associated with male warriors, by being described as ταῖσδ' ἀρίσταις Τρῳάσιν, as well as the vocabulary of ὄχλος and πλῆθος which Hecuba previously used to describe the Greek army. However, they are also associated with extreme examples of their own gender: Danaids, Lemnians and bacchants, who by their nature are stereotypically considered a lethal threat to men. These images, which evoke stereotypes of dangerously transgressive *foreign* women, are consonant with the women's Trojan identity but conflict with the Greek elements in their portrayal.

In *Hecuba*, groups cause a seismic change to the gender dynamics across the tragedy. The motif of individual women feeling threatened in front of a large male group has been pervasive across *Hecuba*, culminating in Polyxena's sacrifice in front of the Achaean army (Chapter 5). However, the off-stage women grant Hecuba sufficient agency to take vengeance on Polymestor, and thus attain a measure of redress where *nomos*, pity and persuasion all failed.[638] From a political perspective, too, Hecuba seems to have embodied the elite individual disparaging the newfound democratic power of the "mob". However, the Trojan women claim power and agency by forming a group of their own, despite being captives across multiple huts (1016). Hecuba now extolls the power of the ὄχλος. Previously, a lone woman experienced fear and exposure before a large male group; now, the phrase ἡμεῖς μόναι reminds us of this previous motif, but hints ironically at the women's newfound strength in numbers.[639] As Polymestor begins to describe his blinding, the full reversal of this motif becomes clear: he is now μόνος (1148) with many women (1151). Strikingly, moreover, the women seem to work seamlessly as a collective: Hecuba herself is not mentioned, and no individual woman is

[637] Segal (1990: 110).
[638] Gregory (1991: 94-111) convincingly discusses the various recourses which Hecuba attempts to employ and their relative degrees of success. Luschnig (1976) covers some similar ideas.
[639] Segal (1990: 125) observes the false security here, and points out that household interiors are already depicted as a place of collective female deception: previously, the women have concealed jewellery stolen from their masters there (616-18).

described as leading.[640] Furthermore, the debate concerning the unity of *Hecuba* might be better informed by considering the relationship between the groups (the Achaean army and the Trojan women) which form the apex of each notional half:[641] the contrast between Hecuba's early isolation and later empowerment by the group of women is stark.[642] As Gregory observes, one group's ascendancy is set against the other's collapse into disunity: the Achaean conquerors begin to descend into factional conflict as the Trojan women combine into a collective.[643]

The comparison of the women's hands to a single octopus (πολυπόδων δίκην, 1162) is startling.[644] In Greek thought, the octopus represented complex, polymorphic intelligence: it is frequently πολύπλοκος in Oppian.[645] An octopus possesses a single cognition, but a multiplicity of arms; it thrives on being difficult to pin down, a creature of night, capable of shifting its colour and producing dark clouds to obfuscate.[646] As such, it is the culmination of the difficulty experienced by male characters, bystanders and victims alike, in attempting to understand the Trojan women's cohesive group action. As he suffers – and as the 'octopus' *literally* covers his eyes with darkness – Polymestor still struggles with the disjunct between multiple women and a single cohesive act.

In *Hecuba*, then, the female group resists being defined or even understood by male characters on stage. The language used to describe the group of women often subtly aligns them with male warriors, but equally sometimes equates them with stereotypically violent female groups such as bacchants, Danaids and Lemnians. Even the fact that they can act as a group is met with incomprehension by Agamemnon, who keeps resorting to stereotypes of lone female

[640] Meridor (1978: 30); Mossman (1995: 193).
[641] For a summary of scholarship on the unity of *Hecuba*, cf. Conacher (1961: 1n1). Mossman (1995: 206-8) is also relevant.
[642] For Hecuba's isolation, cf. Gregory (1991: 86-7).
[643] Gregory (1991: 87).
[644] A conjecture accepted by Mossman (1995: 194n66) and in Diggle's (1984) text.
[645] Cf. Detienne/Vernant (1974: 33, 37-43, esp. 39) for the connections in vocabulary between the intelligence of the octopus and that of a sophist or politician.
[646] Detienne/Vernant (1974: 38).

vengeance. Hecuba taunts Polymestor, who similarly cannot imagine the form which the women's vengeance might take, with ambiguous language, hinting at yet obscuring the women's group agency. The image of the octopus – a single being, yet with a confusing multiplicity of arms – embodies Polymestor's inability to comprehend how the women have transcended their passivity to blind him and kill his children.

The uncategorisable nature of women in *Hecuba*, then, runs deeper than in *Lysistrata*. The men of *Lysistrata* use stereotypical *exempla* to try to define the women's group action; the men of *Hecuba* struggle to understand the presence of women as a group at all. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the stereotypes surrounding female transgression are found in the voices of different types of character. The men in *Lysistrata* are insistent on equating the Athenian women with stock examples of foreign transgressive women; by contrast, Hecuba anticipates Polymestor in aligning the Trojan women with bacchants, as well as citing the Danaids and Lemnians, and uses these stereotypes of violent female group transgression to underline their newfound power. This contrast is striking, and the fact that the women in *Hecuba* are Trojan rather than Athenian may well be relevant to the use of this imagery as empowering rather than derogatory. In both *Hecuba* and *Lysistrata*, the women defy easy categorisation, and (surprisingly, in the Trojan women's case) come across as typically Greek enough to resist being straightforwardly "othered".

Section D: *Bacchae*

In *Hecuba*, *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, stereotypes relating to transgressive female groups – Amazons, bacchants, Danaids, Lemnians – are applied to groups of women who resist the male-ordained *status quo*. In *Bacchae*, by contrast, the bacchants already fit a defined category in the contemporary Athenian imagination, associating them with irrationality,

wildness and antipathy towards men.[647] However, there remains room to consider how the bacchants of *Bacchae* are ill-defined and indeed indefinable. This section considers male characters' inability to understand and define the bacchants. Pentheus prominently demonstrates his incomprehension of the bacchic rites by imagining them only as illicit sexual encounters.[648] Our impression of the bacchants is further complicated by the military imagery used during reports of their off-stage activity, especially their assault on the village. Though these motifs are inconsistent with the promise of an actual battle in lines 50-52, they create a counter-intuitive portrayal of the bacchants as well-ordered and organised. Other elements of the bacchants' portrayal create inconsistency: their blurred portrayal as sometimes individual and sometimes group, their swift alternations between peace and violence. Throughout the play, Pentheus misunderstands the bacchants and misinterprets their behaviour. Though the later messenger-type characters possess, relative to Pentheus, a privileged view of events on the mountain, they nevertheless offer a depiction of the bacchants which makes them resist clear definition, flowing unpredictably between peace and war, discipline and chaos. If Pentheus struggles to comprehend the bacchants' nature, so does the audience.

In the prologue to *Bacchae*, Dionysus promises: ξυνάψω μαινάσι στρατηλατῶν (52). This seemingly incongruous line has troubled critics:[649] as Dodds puts it, "the god's threat is never carried out".[650] Teiresias subsequently reminds Pentheus of Dionysus' ability to spread spontaneous fear through the ranks of an army (303-4), which similarly seems incongruous.[651]

[647] Maenadism as imagined in myth and literature is distinct from, although connected to, maenadism in ritual practice: cf. Henrichs (1978); Bremmer (1984), who gives further bibliography. Seaford (1981) argues more strongly for correspondence between the maenads of *Bacchae* and ritual practice. For a recent analysis of Dionysiac metaphors in Homer and tragedy, cf. Seaford (2018). In some traditions, men as well as women could be initiated: Burkert (1977: 290-92) summarises several accounts.
[648] On which cf. Segal (1978: 189).
[649] For an overview of the difficulties in interpreting this line, cf. Hamilton (1974: 139-42), MacLeod (2006: 579n5-6).
[650] Dodds (1960: *ad loc*.); cf. Seaford (1996: *ad loc*.).
[651] March (1989: 39); MacLeod (2006: 581). Seaford's (1996: *ad loc*.) argument that this prefigures Dionysus' power made manifest at 761-4 is difficult to sustain, as 761-4 does not depict the villagers being terrified spontaneously by a divine power.

Hamilton argues that the promised battle does in fact take place, at least metaphorically: the maenads' attack on the village and Pentheus' mountainous misadventure are both presented in a military light.[652] MacLeod, though, has noted that the vocabulary used in the second messenger speech primarily connotes hunting rather than military engagement,[653] and that the scene revolves around the confrontation between mother and son (as individuals) rather than city and maenads.[654] Oranje, too, notes that the villagers' aim to defend themselves and rescue their children is at odds with the expectations set for the 'battle' by the prologue.[655] As such, the consensus seems to be that the promised battle is never resolved. March goes some way towards demonstrating why this is the case: her survey of earlier non-literary evidence suggests a strong mythic tradition of Pentheus dying in pitched battle against the maenads. Euripides, then, surprises the audience with a twist on the usual myth of Pentheus' death, and lines 50-52 underpin his initial misdirection of the audience.[656]

Hamilton's argument, though, remains important. It reminds us that, even if the women are not consistently portrayed as an army, lines 50-52 depict them counter-intuitively as possessing military discipline.[657] This becomes significant when we consider the blurred boundaries and uncertain categories which surround the women on the mountain. In the first messenger's speech, the description of the women flows from focusing on individual women (e.g. 689) to groups (e.g. αἳ μέν … αἳ δ[έ], 684-5; cf. 737-9) to a single collective (ἀθρόῳ στόματι, 725).[658] The idea of them moving as a collective is underlined by the comparisons to birds (ὥστ' ὄρνιθες, 748; cf. 957-8, 1090).[659] Within these motifs, images connoting peace are blended

[652] Hamilton (1974: 142-4); cf. Segal (1978: 195-6).
[653] A point which Hamilton (1974: 143n13) concedes.
[654] MacLeod (2006: 580).
[655] Oranje (1984: 75n185).
[656] March (1989: 35-43).
[657] Segal (1978: 195).
[658] Buxton (1991: 43) notes the unison of the women's ritual dance from 723-7. Podlecki (1974: 145-6) discusses the bacchants' collective identity more generally.
[659] Podlecki (1974: 146) observes that this simile emphasises the bacchants' group identity.

disconcertingly with violence: the dove image (1090) sits uneasily with the women's imminent violence.[660] During their attack on the village, they are depicted as acting collectively, and the comparison to birds underlines the impression of a cohesive swarm descending on the village. The second messenger's speech, like the first, shifts between describing the women as individuals, as "some…others" (e.g. 1054-6) and as a collective. Agave's proposal for organised collective action (1106-109) is what brings Pentheus down from the tree.[661] When Pentheus is being torn apart, though, the focus is on individuals: we see close depictions of Agave's, Ino's and Autonoe's madness (1114-30) with only brief flashes of ὄχλος … πᾶς … βακχῶν (1130-31).

The disconcerting elements of the 'battle' scene in the first messenger's speech have troubled critics.[662] Given how fluidly the women shift between singular and collective, between peaceful and violent imagery, the claim that the women πάντ᾽ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω | διέφερον (753-4) might be taken as a metanarrative statement as well as a description of events. Not only do the women overturn an entire village, but they operate in a topsy-turvy world.[663] Though female, they have been configured into military imagery as πολέμιοι (752).[664] They seize children, lift up bronze and iron utensils as if by magic, and are not burned by the fire which they carry on their hair (754-8). They abandon their own pots and pans, yet counter-intuitively return to steal those belonging to the village.[665] The χαλκός and σίδηρος (757) which the women carry remind us of weaponry, but instead represent the same domestic items which the women have previously abandoned.[666] The image of ἐπὶ δὲ βοστρύχοις | πῦρ ἔφερον (757-8) is a strange and difficult-

[660] Podlecki (1974: 146); Buxton (1991: 46).
[661] MacLeod (2008: 24).
[662] Seaford (1996: *ad* 754-9); MacLeod (2006: 579n3-4).
[663] For a wider interpretation of *Bacchae* as depicting deformed ritual which causes the collapse of the *polis*, cf. Goff (2004: 350-52).
[664] Hamilton (1974: 143).
[665] Oranje (1984: 181).
[666] For a note on the textually suspect nature of this line, which Seaford excises, cf. Seaford (1996: *ad loc*.). Diggle (1994a), taking his cue from the seemingly military language, adopts a conjecture which transposes οὐ χαλκός,

to-picture image, quite apart from the supernatural notion of the women being unburned by their fire.[667]

The weirdness of this 'battle' scene continues (758-64):

οἱ δ᾽ ὀργῆς ὕπο

ἐς ὅπλ᾽ ἐχώρουν φερόμενοι βακχῶν ὕπο.

οὗπερ τὸ δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ᾽ ἰδεῖν, ἄναξ· 760

τοῖς μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἥμασσε λογχωτὸν βέλος, 761

οὐ χαλκός, οὐ σίδηρος < > 757a

κεῖναι δὲ θύρσους ἐξανιεῖσαι χερῶν 762

ἐτραυμάτιζον κἀπενώτιζον φυγῇ

γυναῖκες ἄνδρας οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.

757a post 761 trai. Jackson

The villagers, as one might expect, are angry (ὀργῆς ὕπο). However, this description of the villagers' emotion helps us to realise a startling absence: at no point in this passage are the women's emotions described.[668] The women's pursuit of the messenger, their *sparagmos* of the cattle and their attack on the village all take place with an eerie absence of emotion. Furthermore, this scene feels *silent*: except for Agave's shout to pursue the men (731-3), the women seem to utter no cries. The villagers fly to arms, which prove ineffective (761) against the *thyrsoi* wielded by the maenads (762-3). γυναῖκες ἄνδρας, a delayed subject and object juxtaposed strikingly, highlights the sheer scale of the reversal in gender roles which has taken

οὐ σίδηρος to between 761 and 762, hence its inclusion in the quoted passage below. It should be noted that much is textually uncertain in these lines: for a survey of the difficulties, cf. Oranje (1984: 181-6).

[667] For the ritual significance of this image, cf. Bremmer (1984: 269-72).

[668] This omission may be attributed to the messenger's allegiance with the villages, rather than the women (although its effect is still striking). However, following Barrett (1998), I do not think the messengers are implicated in the narrative strongly enough to come across as a source representing the villagers.

place.[669] The idea of a female group shifting abruptly from peaceful domesticity to savagery, as Segal notes, parallels the off-stage revenge scene in *Hecuba*, in which the women swiftly move from caressing the children to murdering them.[670]

It makes perfect sense that the bacchants should be incomprehensible. The fact that they are mythic bacchants means that they fit into a preconceived category, in the audience's mind, for what their transgression 'should' look like. However, this is in many ways a play about misunderstanding the bacchant women. Pentheus consistently fails to understand what the bacchants are doing on the mountain and why: he stubbornly equates their behaviour with illicit sex and moral degeneracy (e.g. 222-5). We might expect the audience to see more clearly: after all, they receive privileged insights from various messenger-figures and from Dionysus himself.[671] However, the messengers are unable to provide insight as clearly as we might imagine. Barrett demonstrates convincingly that the messengers who report on the bacchants should be treated as privileged viewers who do not act within the narrative: they are almost omniscient in the range of events they can describe,[672] they regularly excise themselves from the narrative using impersonal or second-person expressions (e.g. 737-8, 740, 760),[673] and attention tends to be deflected away from them whenever they are on the point of interacting with other characters.[674] And yet, Buxton (1991) is in some ways right to observe that the messengers are more embroiled in the narrative than we would expect a typical messenger to be.[675] Like Pentheus, the cowherd erroneously conflates wine with sex (773-4),[676] for example.

[669] Perris (2011: 40) identifies this juxtaposition as making the women "becom[e] like male warriors".
[670] Segal (1990: 119).
[671] The Chorus of *Bacchae* may also offer a way to view the bacchants on the mountain: this is suggested by Podlecki (1974) and Carey (2016).
[672] Barrett (1998: 347).
[673] Barrett (1998: 349).
[674] Barrett (1998: 350).
[675] This assumption is also inherent to Perris' (2011: 40) approach: the statement that "[t]he messenger's successful aim here is to prove Dionysus' power and thereby prove Pentheus wrong" implies some personal investment in the message he is relaying.
[676] Buxton (1991: 44).

Their attempt to capture the bacchants (728ff.) similarly clashes with their privileged separation from the plot.

Even with the benefit of messengers' speeches, the closer we look at depictions of the bacchants, the more they resist definition and categorisation. Their activity is self-contradictory, filled with category shifts from individual to group, from peace to war, from archetypally female maenads to surprisingly male-coded warriors who fight in disciplined silence. Moreover, some of the ways in which Pentheus fails to categorise the bacchants map onto the ways in which the bacchants resist categorisation by the audience. Pentheus understands the bacchants' transgression as an individual transgression: he imagines the women sneaking off for trysts individually (222).[677] In contrast, Dionysus highlights their behaviour as a group (37),[678] while the Chorus subsequently dubs them a θηλυγενὴς ὄχλος (117). Similarly, during the reported scenes of the bacchants' activity, it proves difficult for us to register whether the bacchants are acting as individuals or group. The fact that Pentheus' prediction of a pitched battle does not come to pass, but is teasingly evoked by military language, is a thematic rather than an inadvertent textual oddity: it highlights how the bacchants consistently defy definition.

Section E: Conclusions

Disentangling the intersection between group stereotypes and female stereotypes is complex, and in some ways impossible. Large male groups and individual women alike are frequently stereotyped as irrational, for example. Instead, this chapter answers a different question: what traits are attributed specifically to groups of women in extant drama? The plays discussed in this chapter engage with how complex groups of women are: they are made weird, counter-

[677] Segal (1978: 189).
[678] Buxton (1991: 41).

intuitive and transgressive by ensuring that no preconceived label or category can properly fit them, even labels that stereotypically fit female transgression.

Several motifs are routinely evoked with reference to female groups in Athenian drama. Some of these imply threatening otherness: Amazons, Danaids, Lemnian women, bacchants. They imagine transgressive women as foreign, violent and hostile to men. Another set of motifs imagines women imitating or occupying the places of men: forming an assembly, capturing the Acropolis, acting like an army. The plays discussed in this chapter undercut these stereotypes by depicting female groups who resist straightforward definition. In *Lysistrata*, *Bacchae* and *Hecuba*, male characters routinely misunderstand and bluntly stereotype the women; in all three plays, the women blur boundaries and resist straightforward categorisation, although even Lysistrata's definition of the women as "transgressing in traditional Athenian female fashion" begins to feel inadequate as Aristophanes allows some stereotypes to reassert themselves entertainingly. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, the audience are confronted directly with the difficulty of defining the women: they teasingly half-fit categories of violent foreign rebels and of a typical Athenian male assembly, while simultaneously bringing the reality of men-playing-women closer to the surface than normal.

When female groups are located completely off stage, the difficulty of categorising them is exacerbated: we view them through the perspectives of individual characters, many of whom are male. In *Bacchae*, even the seemingly privileged viewpoints provided by messenger-speeches offer counter-intuitive and inconsistent depictions of the bacchants. In both *Hecuba* and *Bacchae*, male characters tend to stereotype off-stage female group activity, which prevents them from anticipating the women's power and violence. Choruses do not necessarily provide clarity: the female Chorus in *Hecuba* explicitly differentiate themselves from the off-stage women's vengeance. It is striking that a similar dynamic is seen in both *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, with (especially male) characters deploying stereotypes which prove

insufficient to characterise collective female activity – even though the choruses do partially represent the city-wide female activity on stage. We should be wary of comparing tragedy and comedy so brusquely; however, this may suggest that transgressive group female activity in drama can resist straightforward definition and stereotyping even when this activity is represented on stage by the chorus. However, there are some crucial differences: keeping the group off stage highlights and further intensifies how undefinable they are. On the other hand, comedies sometimes take advantage of the chorus' presence on stage by allowing the women to play into some of the stereotypes for comic effect.

Conclusion

Because off-stage groups have not previously been systematically studied across all extant Athenian drama, this thesis has explored a wide variety of subject matter. Not every group I discuss can, or should, be compared directly to every other group, and a large part of this thesis' contribution to our understanding of Athenian drama lies, I hope, in how it changes our reading of individual plays. For example, the backdrop of political uncertainty in *Antigone* (Chapter 4) is intensified by every character's incremental struggle to read the population's obscured views. In *Assembly-Women* (Chapter 3), the assembly scene is heavily influenced by anti-democratic stereotypes found in many prose texts, but Blepyrus and the two anonymous citizens encourage us to consider how individual and group decision-making processes contrast and interact. In *Orestes* (Chapter 2), the *dêmos* has an oppressive presence and pre-existing opinion against Orestes, which is part of what makes the trial so different to Aeschylus' version.

However, several consistent themes have emerged across the different types of group handled in separate chapters. This conclusion identifies some ways in which we can move towards an overall picture of off-stage groups in Athenian drama. It then considers what relationship exists between off-stage groups and choruses, as separate but complementary angles from which wider communities can be depicted. Finally, I consider what hypotheses we might draw about how specific playwrights tend to depict groups and how these depictions change over time, thus indicating possible pathways for future research.

Section A: Consistent Themes in Off-Stage Groups

This thesis began with a chapter on prose texts, in which I argued that prose depictions of groups such as populations, armies and *dêmoi* should be interpreted not necessarily as fact, but as literary imaginings, although we should bear in mind authors' explicit and the genres' implicit claims to provide factual truth. Many of the motifs they use to depict groups remain

consistent across different authors and prose genres, and demonstrate an interest in psychologising groups. In extant prose works, we see individuals – both characters and authors – engaging with, commenting on and trying to take advantage of groups' power and psychology.

In many ways, drama's position relative to off-stage groups is similar. The fact that groups are depicted off stage means that the audience relies on characters' mediation and commentary to view these groups. This allows and encourages us to explore groups from multiple perspectives. Drama differs from prose, though, in several key respects. Firstly, though drama's characters often depict and judge groups, its authors may not state direct opinions, due to the strictures of the genre. Thucydides, the Old Oligarch and Demosthenes make strident claims about group psychology (which may or may not be true, consistent or aligned with their genuine opinions), but the tragedians never do, although Aristophanes' choruses sometimes come very close. However, drama's other differences to prose allow it to depict off-stage groups using an even wider variety of approaches and perspectives: unlike prose, drama is explicitly fictive, and offers a much wider variety of characters (often marginalised) who are given words of their own. Groups' off-stage nature may make them harder for us to interpret, but this is part of what makes them so fascinating: I argue that many extant plays exploit the necessity of mediating characters to report on off-stage groups.

As a result, the on-stage perspectives which mediate between the audience and off-stage groups are many and diverse. Some of the characters who depict groups would normally be members of those groups (Blepyrus). Some hold different types of authority over groups (Theseus, Praxagora, Agamemnon, Pelasgus, Creon); others *think* they hold authority over groups (Cleon, Tyndareus, Achilles, Xerxes, Menelaus). The authority they hold may be military, tyrannical or democratically-mandated or none of these, or may blur the boundaries between these types of authority. Some characters are vulnerable before groups (Adrastus, Ajax,

Iphigenia, Orestes, Hecuba, Achilles, the Danaids); in certain circumstances, others defy groups or take advantage of their weaknesses (Clytemnestra). Even the characters who claim to report groups' opinion directly (Danaus, Haemon, the local man in *Orestes*) often have a complex and biased relationship with the issues under discussion. Noticeably, though, almost all these perspectives are elite: it is rare, especially outside comedy, that an 'ordinary person' offers their opinions on groups. This means that on-stage representations of groups often convey a tension between groups' collective power and elite individuals who either feel unexpectedly vulnerable before that power or attempt to channel that power to their own ends. Whether or not the groups have the institutional authority to make decisions, and even when groups consist of marginalised people such as female prisoners, they tend to be able to compel the elite individuals on stage.

The distance between off-stage groups and on-stage characters makes itself felt in the difficulty which characters experience in interpreting (and hence controlling) these groups. Tragic characters often claim that they can predict or influence the *dêmos*' verdict, in stereotyped fashions familiar to readers of the Old Oligarch, Thucydides or even the Attic orators: they intend to take advantage of groups' emotional volatility, or bemoan unscrupulous orators' influence. However, tragic off-stage groups are often depicted in ways that undermine characters' stereotypical portrayals of their psychology. I am hesitant to typify off-stage groups in terms of an illusion created by on-stage characters, set against an off-stage 'reality': after all, off-stage groups only exist in the words characters use to depict them, and any hypothetical 'reality' remains forever inaccessible to the audience. I posit instead that off-stage group scenes encourage us to view alternative perspectives on, and especially *processes* within, group decisions. In this fashion, events in the plays may demonstrate how characters misunderstand off-stage groups' opinions and what influences them.

For example, the highly nuanced depiction of group decision-making emphasises characters' clichéd misunderstanding of groups. There is more to the depiction of group decision-making than a dichotomy between unscrupulous, demagogic persuasion and idealised rational decisions. Aeschylus' *Suppliants* and Euripides' *Orestes* push us to consider where exactly that boundary lies as we watch stakeholders, including the notionally pro-democratic Pelasgus, calculate how to package the decision for the *dêmos* and try to compromise between ideology and political expediency. Euripides' *Orestes* depicts both how a community reaches their verdict within a trial, and how their verdict has partially formed independently before the trial begins, which casts doubt on characters' claims of manipulation. Characters' inability to 'read' off-stage groups is not confined to groups in formalised decision-making frameworks. In *Antigone*, we are regularly encouraged to scrutinise characters' claims about the population's wishes, which draws attention to the shaky foundations on which Creon's, Antigone's and even Haemon's assertions rest. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, the Theban population's views are obscured and explicitly questioned, which perhaps encourages us to scrutinise Theseus' claims to represent the Athenian population.

As well as failing to read and influence off-stage groups' opinions, characters often struggle to define these groups. Groups often resist being identified as a single category. Armies can be both democratic assemblies and violent mobs; groups of women resist being categorised as either violent, foreign stereotypes or 'normal' women. A democratic assembly can be manipulated, independent or somewhere in between. Characters tend to be eager to constrain their depiction of a group to a single category, but alternative accounts and subsequent events often resist straightforward definitions. This is connected to the various perspectives from which we see groups: an army will come across differently to conquered victims and to generals who (supposedly) command its loyalty. Even when a group's identity is defined relatively tightly, that group can mean different things to different individuals: the series of characters on

stage allow us to see a single off-stage group in a single play from viewpoints which are by turns pro-democratic, cynically opportunistic, anti-democratic, empowered, marginalised or hold power in a complex interdependent relationship with the group's power.

Aristophanes' comedy presents a somewhat different picture to tragedy. The power dynamics between characters and group are less consistent, and the plots often revolve around an individual cleverly circumventing a group. Praxagora wins over the assembly with the same ease with which the Sausage-Seller manipulates the *boulê*. Aristophanes' interest in groups, though, is deeper than has previously been acknowledged. His depiction of their psychology draws pervasively on motifs found in prose texts, often pushing them to their (il)logical and comical extremes: as such, they are even more prominently visible than in tragedy. Strikingly, the *boulê* in *Knights* and the assembly in *Assembly-Women* are both placed in neat conjunction with an individual character who represents them on stage. Like tragedy, then, comedy allows us to explore off-stage groups through mediating characters; in comedy, though, these characters are non-elite, which means that they can offer a perspective more aligned with the group than we see in tragedy. In both cases, this character is capable of analysing proposals and arguments, in stark contrast to the groups they represent. In the case of Dêmos personified, this manifests itself as a paradoxical logical self-awareness of his own inability (or refusal) to reason logically. Aristophanes has his own range of vocabulary, and his own quintessentially comical spin, on stereotyped ideas of group psychology which he shares with many contemporary prose texts. Given Aristophanes' explicit use of the *realia* of fifth-century Athens, it is unsurprising that he evokes fifth-century reflections on group thought more closely than tragedy. But Aristophanes' reflections also run deeper: the depictions of Blepyrus and the anonymous citizens in *Assembly-Women* imply that group and individual decision-making psychology differ meaningfully, in that an individual *dêmos* member approaches a decision differently when not surrounded by others like him. Aristophanes, then, has much more

recognisable versions of group-related stereotypes, but both tragedy and comedy find different ways to problematise them and ask difficult questions of them.

In some ways, off-stage groups are closely connected to their geographical settings, and different locations lend themselves to different types of group. In Argos, decision-making groups which closely parallel Athenian democratic institutions can be closely scrutinised, often in ways which raise disturbing questions about group decision-making processes. In tragedy, decision-making groups set in Athens tend to be idealised; in comedy, though, they are satirised and questioned far more freely and explicitly, and individuals tend to be successful in manipulating them. No extant play situates a decision-making group in Thebes; however, Thebes provides a space for exploring the less tightly-defined influence which the population holds over characters, and the difficulties which those characters experience in interpreting the population's wishes. At Troy and at Aulis, in different ways, the army is located both geographically and symbolically partway between civilian *polis* life and warfare, which lends itself easily to combining aspects of a (sometimes democratic) *polis* with a threatening, potentially violent all-male collective. For female groups, the setting often emphasises their transgression of male space (the destroyed Troy, the Pnyx, the Acropolis).

Section B: Depicting Communities: Off-Stage Groups and Choruses

This thesis has shown how Athenian plays can be acutely conscious of the large groups who form a crucial part of their setting. It has long been understood that the chorus can often function as a proxy, although not necessarily a direct or straightforward proxy, for the community's response to on-stage events. Off-stage groups provide a different way of depicting the setting, complementing the picture we receive from choruses. Here, I present some aspects of the relationship between off-stage groups and choruses which this thesis has uncovered, and which (it is hoped) offer promising avenues for future research.

Within a given play, off-stage groups are much more heterogeneous than the chorus. Though assemblies and juries are understood as being all-male, they nevertheless represent men from various social classes and ages, something which is explicitly untrue of most choruses, which tend to identify a specific geographical origin, gender and age, and often social class. As a result, off-stage groups can encompass entire communities (such as an entire city's population) in ways that a chorus cannot. However, this is not to say that choruses can only represent a restricted subset of the community: rather, the relationship between the two groups is more complex. At times, the chorus stands in for a wider group: the birds in *Birds* are imagined as representing the population of an entire cloudborne city, while several plays by Aristophanes (Chapter 6) use the chorus to represent all the women of Athens. At other times, especially in Sophocles, choruses represent a subset of the larger group, such as the elders in *Oedipus at Tyrannus* and *Antigone*. This enables us to imagine a relationship between chorus and off-stage group, which may create tensions of its own. In the case of the elders in *Antigone*, this draws attention to their position as *partial* representatives of the wider community: their status and close proximity to Creon means they cannot be taken as representing the Theban population's opinion. Sometimes, though, there is a prominent disjunct between the chorus and off-stage group, with the chorus' identity (e.g. as women) marking them out as separate from the off-stage group (as a *dêmos* or army).

Consequently, the relationship between off-stage groups and on-stage choruses is not only about representation and communication, but also dynamics of power and vulnerability. At times, the chorus is at the larger group's mercy. The choruses' vulnerability in *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba* is intensified by their identity as female prisoners of the victorious off-stage army. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, the Danaids briefly feel vulnerable at the imagined approach of the Argives, signalled by a dust-cloud. In particular, female choruses are especially able to highlight the all-male nature of off-stage *dêmoi* and armies, either satirising their gender (in

Aristophanes' political plays) or being vulnerable as a result of it. However, such vulnerability is not only experienced by female choruses: Ajax's soldiers in *Ajax* are similarly vulnerable, though they are also a subset of the off-stage army. Contrasting relationships between off-stage groups and on-stage choruses become even more complicated when an off-stage group is female: the foreign Chorus in *Bacchae* exemplifies a very different type of maenadism to the Theban women in the mountains, while the Chorus in *Hecuba* explicitly differentiate themselves from the vengeful action taken by their off-stage counterparts (1183-4). In both cases, the off-stage women are endowed with a transgressive agency, despite their marginal nature, that the on-stage choruses lack. In this, again, tragic female choruses tend to differ from comic female choruses (*Lysistrata*, *Assembly-Women*, *Thesmophoriazusae*) who are used to imagine all the women of the city and given transgressive agency as a collective.

Section C: Re-arranging Source Material: Temporal and Author-Specific Patterns

With the small number of extant plays, it would be hazardous to make definitive wider claims about how specific playwrights depict groups in general. However, some tendencies across the extant plays are nevertheless worth noting. I have already discussed the ways in which Aristophanes' handling of groups broadly differs from the depiction of groups in extant tragedy; here, I identify some differences between the extant tragedians' approaches.

In Aeschylus' extant works, off-stage groups' agency and power is often relatively limited, and on two occasions Aeschylus sets plays in a *polis* destabilised by the wartime absence of the adult male population, whose consequent powerlessness is emphasised. Aeschylus' *Suppliants* offers a very different picture of a smoothly functioning assembly within an established democracy; however, Pelasgus proves extremely effective in his careful management of the assembly to ensure that they vote in accordance with his decision. Furthermore, the *dêmos*' decision is backlit by their decision's disastrous consequences and by the increasingly

menacing notes of tyranny towards the end of the play. Broadly, in Aeschylus' surviving works, groups seem to be less powerful (and where their power exists, it is placed under more pressure) than in the works of Sophocles or Euripides. This might plausibly be connected to these plays' performance dates: Aeschylus' extant works were likely performed between the early 470s and the late 450s, relatively early in the life of the Athenian democracy.

Sophocles' surviving plays tend not to depict groups which have the trappings of Athenian democracy; the closest he comes, arguably, is the motif of voting in *Ajax*. Instead, he often depicts wider populations: large collectives of people who lack formalised institutions for making decisions, but can make their voices heard through other means. By contrast, Euripides depicts several groups which are more heavily flagged as exemplifying aspects of Athenian-style democracy. A case in point is the difference between Sophocles' depiction of an army in *Ajax*, which is made to feel like a disparate conglomerate of *poleis*, and Euripides' armies which map easily onto a single city's assembly. Both armies are similar in that they are capable of making choruses or individuals within the army feel vulnerable, although Euripides depicts the army from its conquered victims' perspectives much more pervasively than Sophocles. Others have noted the possibility that Euripides, in particular, was influenced by Athenian involvement in the Peloponnesian War, a possibility which I do not discount; beyond this, however, Euripides' armies closely resemble each other even though they are produced across a relatively wide timespan, making it difficult to discern any specific temporal trends. I cannot claim to have the last word on a topic which I only discuss briefly and exclude from the main body of my thesis, though, and I hope and intend that specific playwrights' depictions of off-stage groups provide avenues for future research.

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