

The Birth of the Mob: Representations of Crowds in Archaic and Classical Greek
Literature

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation surveys the representation of crowds and related phenomena in Homer, the Attic tragedians, and Aristophanes.

The first chapter begins by noting that while recent scholarship has explored the role of the crowd in ancient Roman history and literature, virtually no similar work has been done in archaic and classical Greek studies. Admittedly, Greek *poleis* were on a much smaller scale than was Rome, and it may be for this reason that classical scholars have assumed “the” crowd is not a feature of ancient Greek society. In order to explain why this absence of study is due to a limited understanding of what crowds are, I survey the development of crowd theory and mass psychology in the modern era. I adopt the model of Elias Canetti’s *Crowds and Power*, which studies crowds as part of a spectrum of group behavior, ranging from small “packs” to imagined crowds at the level of a nation. Under this expanded model, I argue that crowds are universal human phenomena whose representations in archaic and classical Greek literature are fruitful objects of study. The chapter ends with a brief survey of “crowd words” to be examined, including *homilos*, *ochlos*, *homados* and *thorubos*.

The second chapter studies crowds in Homer through a close reading of several words and passages. The two crucial words for this study are *homilos* and *homados*, which refer respectively to a crowd and the distinctive noise it makes. I survey the *homilos* in the *Iliad* as a background of anonymous figures against which elite figures display their excellence, before arguing that the suitors in the *Odyssey* are the closest Homer comes to representing a crowd. Individually elite, they nonetheless are reduced to the status of a mob by the fact of their aggregation.

The third chapter examines the crowd in tragedy. I argue that the crowd looms as an offstage threat to the elite characters depicted onstage, most obviously in such plays as Sophocles’s *Ajax* and Euripides’s *Andromache* and *Orestes*, but to some extent in almost every surviving tragedy. In this chapter, the word *ochlos* (not yet present in Homer) is the key crowd-term, although *homilos* and other words are also present. The works of

Euripides are particularly rife with descriptions of crowds, and my survey illuminates just how central the topic was to his work, in a reflection of the troubled politics of his era.

The fourth chapter examines the discourse on the crowd in Aristophanes. I demonstrate that the comedian's work is highly concerned with crowds and other groupings of people. Athens during the Peloponnesian war was crowded, not only due to the siege but in mentality and dramatic representation. To many of Aristophanes's characters, the improper aggregation of bodies is just one symptom of the general disintegration of society and decline of traditional morality. Where in tragedy the crowd must remain offstage, comedy can also bring crowds onto the stage, in such scenes as the opening of the *Acharnians*.

I close with a Postscript presenting two quotes of Plato, from the *Republic* and the *Laws*, whose descriptions of crowd behavior and its effect on individuals take on new significance in light of the deep history of the representation of crowds which this dissertation explores.

CHAPTER ONE CROWD THEORY

This dissertation surveys the representation of crowds in the two great epics of Homer, the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the comedian Aristophanes. It covers each of these authors in varying levels of detail, and has two major goals: to identify the vocabulary with which they describe crowds, and to infer from these descriptions certain underlying concepts of group behavior and collective psychology.

As a preliminary question, I must address whether such a thing as a crowd was available as an object of representation during the period surveyed. This will require establishing a distinction between two senses of the word “crowd.” According to the modern, sociologically technical sense of the word, archaic Greece and classical Athens clearly did not have crowds.

According to a broader sense of crowd, however, as any aggregation of people exhibiting behavior interpreted by those who observe or represent it as threatening and/or volatile, they clearly did. Such aggregations are universal human phenomena – indeed, they are found in many other species of animal. If the goal is to determine, not to what extent the ancient sources conform to our modern categories, but rather how these ancient sources represent crowd-like formations and behavior on their own terms, this broader definition is more useful.

Once this distinction between the narrow and broad understanding of “crowd” has been established, we must consider two formulations of the *problem* of the crowd. According to one school of thought, which I call the “lowest common denominator” theory, crowds are dangerous because only a relatively few people are capable, or law-abiding, or restrained in their actions, or whatever the quality is that crowds are thought to lack. A large gathering of people, then, will tend to contain undesirable elements; as its size increases, these elements will come to dominate.

The other theory is that of the “Group Mind.” On this model, crowds exhibit problematic behavior not because of the prior character of their component members, but because the very fact of aggregation “dumbs down” the members of the group subordinates them to a collective entity that operates as its own organism, or some combination of these two mechanisms.

Both these theories of why crowds are dangerous things are present in the surveyed texts, implicitly and at times (especially in Euripides) explicitly. Especially in the fifth century texts, written and performed during a period of increased mass participation in politics and intermittent military mobilization, we find representations of groups and group behavior as crucial elements.¹

After a history of the development of the modern theory of the crowd, with constant reference to its implications for the investigation of ancient texts, this introductory Chapter offers a list of Greek words that directly denote or are often found associated with descriptions of crowds. The stage will then be set for the examination of individual authors’ works in the subsequent Chapters.

¹ The ultimate expression of this is in Euripides’s *Iphigenia at Aulis*, for which see Chapter Three.

The major work to date in the field of classical studies on the subject of the crowd is Fergus Millar's *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic*. This dissertation positions itself, as it were, at the other end of the field: its subject Greece rather than Rome, its sources read as literature rather than history. Millar's own description of his project will serve to highlight these contrasts.

At the beginning of his first chapter, Millar announces:

The first purpose of this book is to present a series of images of the Roman people: assembling in the Forum, listening to orations there, and responding to them; sometimes engaging in violence aimed at physical control of their traditional public space; and dividing into their thirty-five voting groups to vote on laws.²

A few pages earlier, in the preface, he defines his intent as “merely to try to feed into our attempts to understand Republican Rome a sense of the possible significance of a series of images of political meetings that are to be found in our literary sources.”³

Millar restricts his inquiry to images of the political crowd, and indeed his work makes a political argument: that the Roman Republic was more democratic a system of government than is usually appreciated.⁴ The role of mass assemblies in this system, he maintains, has been neglected; the work (originally a series of lectures) redresses this neglect. Arranged chronologically, it studies the political crowd from the post-Sullan restoration of popular elections in the 70s B.C. to the decline of popular politics in the 50s and beyond.

Millar's project is made possible by the (relatively) thorough documentation of the late Republican period: “[T]he political life of these three decades,” he notes, “is more fully recorded than that of any other period of the ancient world.”⁵ This dissertation takes as its subject one of those “other” periods. It must be stressed at the beginning that this is *not* an attempt, parallel to his, to assess the (actual, historical) *role* of the crowd in, e.g., classical Athens. Rather, the focus is on the *representation* of crowds in canonical archaic and classical Greek texts: specifically, Homer, the three tragedians, and Aristophanes. A trade-off is made: we lose the specificity and thoroughness of Millar's study, but we access a broader range of sources, dig further into the roots of representation, and engage larger questions in political and social theory.⁶

Where Millar's study is a “deep” plumbing of a more narrowly defined historical phenomenon, this dissertation is more in the way of a “broad” survey of a theme over

² Millar 1998:1.

³ *Id.* ix.

⁴ “[I]t is difficult to see why the Roman Republic should not deserve serious consideration ... as one of a relatively small group of historical examples of political systems that might deserve the label “democracy,”” p. 11. Millar 2002 expands this claim; Morstein-Marx's Introduction provides full bibliography for the debate over the degree of popular democracy in the Republic.

⁵ 1998:1

⁶ None of this is meant to indict Millar for his focus. Indeed, he acknowledges that his sources are “indirect literary reflection[s]” (9) of historical reality. But since that reality is what interests him, he takes the indirect reflection largely as read, leading to the major methodological difference between his work and this dissertation: his inquiry attempts to see through the reflection to relate and assess socio-political reality; ours, to examine the evolution and variety of the reflection itself.

centuries and across genres. A necessary first step, one that Millar, his concerns being different, does not take, is to define the term “crowd.” Again, my methods will employ a trade-off in comparison to Millar’s. The phenomena he studies are more obviously “crowd-like,” allowing him to avoid any theoretical discussion of “crowd-ness,” and to make specific claims about their social role and historical development. Rome at its height was far larger and denser than any center of population in the early Greek world; its urban “mob” is therefore more directly analogous to that which concerns modern theorists.

For my part, I *must* engage the theoretical issue of what we mean by “crowd”; I will be forced to defend the “crowd-ishness” of some seemingly dubious textual moments, and I cannot presume to pronounce judgment on the role of “the” crowd at a particular historical juncture. Yet it is to be hoped that the theoretical discussion will not be without its own interest and benefit. Adopting the insight of Elias Canetti (discussed in detail below), who models “crowd” not as a mass modern urban phenomenon but as a universal characteristic of human and other animal societies, I will in subsequent Chapters examine the full *range* of human groupings represented in the texts I survey.

A more recent publication also stands in great contrast to Millar’s, but in a very different way than does this dissertation. Millar’s is the work of one scholar, written from a highly traditional, nontheoretical perspective, and investigating a clearly delineated field of study. *Crowds*,⁷ edited by two scholars at the Stanford Humanities Laboratory, presents the work of more than a score of writers. Its format and methodology are both far from traditional. The book was accompanied by an art exhibit, and has its own website.⁸ The anthology conveys a sense of why crowds are seen by many modern scholars as “good to think with.”

The main body of the book’s text is devoted to the scholars’ essays, but the margins are host to personal reminiscences of participation in crowd events (mostly political protests of 60s/70s vintage),⁹ as well as brief lexical glosses on crowd terminology in various languages.¹⁰ In the starkest contrast to Millar’s study, the essays in *Crowds* are intensely “theoretical,” with constant reference to the modern theory of the crowd, as well as robustly multidisciplinary in their use of art history, sociology, etc. The material covers a wide range of topics and time periods, from crowd photography in fascist Italy,¹¹ to the French concept of “the masses” during and after the Revolution,¹² to the crowds of shoppers at a high-end fashion store.¹³

Classical material is included, with one essay¹⁴ discussing at length Roman representations of the *populus* assembled. Yet, in keeping with the overall trend of the collection, the main concern of even this essay is the *modern* socio-political valence of

⁷ Schnapp and Tiews

⁸ <http://crowds.stanford.edu/>; Schnapp and Tiews, xi

⁹ E.g. White.

¹⁰ E.g. Sofroniew; Samuels.

¹¹ Schnapp, “Mob Porn.”

¹² Jonsson

¹³ Burstein

¹⁴ Connolly. Symptomatic of the divergence between Millar’s project and *Crowds*’ is the fact that the former is not cited in the latter; although the material under scrutiny – Roman representations of political crowds – is similar, the purposes to which it is put are very different.

the crowd: the Roman crowd as represented in American film. Most frustratingly for our purposes, almost all the antiquarian references are to Roman material. The significant exceptions are three: a brief discussion of the word ὄχλος;¹⁵ references to Homeric and Olympic sports audiences;¹⁶ and an observation that “[n]ot a single purely Greek institution was incorporated into the American or French constitutions of the late 1700s.”¹⁷ The point is to contrast the modern systems’ avoidance of Greek “direct democracy” in favor of Roman “checks and balances;” the argument is prefaced by the aphorism “Rome is not Greece; and here has lain its virtue.”¹⁸

Rome is, indeed, not Greece. The study of the Roman crowd has, as we have seen, produced some significant works.¹⁹ The study of the Greek crowd, however, can truly be said to be in its infancy,²⁰ and has already faced the danger of being strangled in its crib. Sergei Karpyuk, using a (for our purposes) overly restrictive definition, has concluded that there were no “crowds” in pre-Hellenistic Greece. Karpyuk’s article is the only work of scholarship treating the specific issue of the crowd in ancient Greece, and its negative conclusion threatens the viability of my project.

Were I to accept Karpyuk’s conclusion, this dissertation would come to an abrupt halt. To explain why I do not, it will be necessary, after engaging his argument, to provide a broader survey of the history of crowd theory over the last century and more. Thus will I attempt to combine the approaches of Millar and the contributors to *Crowds*: limiting my inquiry to source material within the bounds of traditional “classics,” but

¹⁵ De Vivo, echoing Karpyuk and identifying the two key words surveyed in this dissertation:

The standard definition of the Greek term *ochlos* ... is “a crowd, throng.” In this it closely parallels the term *homilos*, “assembled crowd, throng of people” ... In its standard sense, *ochlos* is often used in relation to armies and soldiers and their camp followers. ...

The term *ochlos* also carries a political connotation, as “populace, mob.” For Plato [and, as I hope to show, for the dramatists], *ochlos* can refer to a popular assembly ...

The term appears 641 times in the Greek main corpus, from the tragic and comic poets, through the great philosophers Plato and Aristotle, on to the New Testament. The term survived into the Middle French *ochlocratie*, “a government by the populace,” and modern Italian *oclocrazia*, “mob rule, rule of the plebs,” from the Hellenistic coinage *ochlokratia*, “mob rule.” It was soon to enter the English language as *ochlocracy*, “rule of the populace, mob,” a term used in 1991 by the *Observer*, in quoting the Russian newspaper *Pravda* as claiming that Boris Yeltsin’s run for the presidency was backed by an ochlocracy.

¹⁶ Guttman

¹⁷ Connolly 81

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Morstein-Marx studies the *contio* (Roman political assembly) as “center stage for the performance and observation of public, political acts in the Roman Republic” (9), but his study is primarily focused on public discourse: “I seek in this book to examine how mass communication shaped the distribution of power between the Roman People and their political elite in the late Republic ... [to provide] a richer picture of the relationship between public speech and political power” (31-2). The representation of the crowd *per se* is tangential to such a project.

²⁰ Karpyuk remains the only attempt directly to address the question: “Was there a crowd in ancient Greece?” His adoption of the modern sociological definition of “crowd” dictates that his answer will be negative.

More attention has been paid to the representation of crowds in classical Greek historiography and philosophy. E.g. Hunter 1986, 1988; Segal 1962, esp. at 108 ff. No such similar body of scholarship has yet investigated crowds in earlier and more “literary” texts.

incorporating a discussion of the theoretical issues involved (and, not incidentally, drawing on a broader range of source material).

In his article “Crowd in Archaic and Classical Greece,” Karpyuk states his conclusion starkly: “May we suppose a crowd as a social phenomenon, and crowd activities to have any importance in Greek political life in pre-Hellenistic period [*sic*]? The answer is clear: no.”²¹ He attributes this alleged lack of crowds to two causes: the small size²² of ancient Greek *poleis*, and the nature of Greek city institutions as “a slightly organized civil crowd.”

The first posited cause – insufficient size – implies that crowds, properly so-called, occur only in social settings larger than even such a large *polis* as Athens. Issues of scale will be addressed later, and are at any rate of little importance here, since Karpyuk himself identifies his second cause as “the main reason.” Quoted out of context, this “main reason” seems nonsensical: Greece had no crowds because its institutions were ... crowds? This seeming contradiction can be resolved only with reference to his proffered definition of “crowd.”

At the beginning of the article, he has adopted a definition of “crowd” as “a group of persons with common traditions intentionally acting together outside of existing channels to achieve one or more specifically defined goals.”²³ It is the condition that crowds must act “outside of existing channels” which leads to his second, and “main,” explanation for the supposed absence of crowds. If a crowd is something that escapes, erupts from, or boils over existing “channels” in a sort of socio-psychic “flood,”²⁴ and if we accept that Greek political institutions were themselves crowd-like in nature, then there was no need for further crowd actions outside of these institutions.

Already it is clear that one’s answer to the question “Were there crowds in ancient Greece?” depends entirely on one’s definition of “crowd.” To Karpyuk, a key requirement is that a crowd be unauthorized, paralegal or illegal: “It is necessary to note that an *unorganized* mass gathering was an extremely rare phenomenon for archaic Greece ...”²⁵ This claim comes near the beginning of his survey²⁶ of “alleged cases of crowd activities in pre-Hellenistic Greece.” A few pages later he writes “I could find no sure trace [in Athens during the Peloponnesian War] of crowd activities, city riots and so on.”²⁷ (Already the problems with Karpyuk’s conclusion are evident. If we go beyond his narrow time constraints, Ober has argued forcefully for a revolution in 508/7.)²⁸

²¹ Karpyuk 100-01

²² It is unclear whether he means that the physical cities, their populations, or both, were too small. He expands: “There were very few places in ancient Greek cities where crowd activities could take place: agora, the theater, and maybe no more. Greek polis [*sic*] had no place for crowd activities ...” (101). Probably he means less that the physical space was inadequate for crowds to gather, than that the population did not reach some critical threshold for crowd formation, but the distinction is not explicit.

²³ Karpyuk attributes this definition to Hoerder.

²⁴ Karpyuk only uses hydraulic imagery once, and that in psychological language removed from its figurative origins (“The psychological necessity for crowd activities could *canalize* in the assembly meetings,” p. 101), but we shall see that such language is very common in the discussion of crowds: Schnapp 5-7; Canetti 80-84; Theweleit *passim*.

²⁵ Karpyuk 92, emphasis added.

²⁶ *Id.* 92-100

²⁷ *Id.* 96

²⁸ In Morris & Raaflaub 1998.

Karpyuk's stated definition of "crowd," quoted above, is further restricted near the end of his introductory section. Discussing the evolution and social significance of the term ὄχλος in fifth-century Athens, he observes: "[Although] used frequently by the Greek authors in the meaning of "crowd," [ὄχλος] can also mean (and did in fact very often mean) the mob, the low strata of citizens, or non-citizens ... i.e., it assumed social or situational characteristics ... [T]here is no word in ancient Greek to designate the crowd *separately* from the mob ..."²⁹

Here Karpyuk's flat statement, that "crowd as a social phenomenon" was absent from Greek life during the period in question, begins to make more sense. An ὄχλος is not a "true" crowd, because the term carries, or can be made to carry, a negative social charge, making it more the equivalent of the English word "mob" (or, although Karpyuk does not use this term, "rabble"). In his model, a "crowd," properly so defined, cannot be laden with "social or situational characteristics" beyond those given in his earlier definition: group action outside existing channels, directed towards a specific goal. Further semantic loading, e.g. aristocratic disdain for a *lower-class* group, takes the term out of the realm of pure "crowd-ness."

Even earlier than this, Karpyuk has opposed another term, "mass[es]," to his restricted definition of "crowd." "[S]ocial historians and classicists ... usually substitute the notion "crowd" for the notion "masses;"³⁰ that is, they use the *word* "crowd" to describe a social object which he feels does not merit that label. As an example, he cites Millar's work: "Fergus Millar in *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* ... regard[s] "crowd(s)" as a synonym to "the masses" ... [p]lac[ing] "the *populus Romanus* – or the crowd that represented it – in the center of our picture of the Roman system."³¹

Karpyuk does not provide a definition of "masses," but this reference to Millar allows us to grasp at least some of what he means by the term.³² He objects to Millar's substitution of "crowd" for *populus*/"mass." The "masses," then, are "the people" imagined as a corporate body, envisioned as separate from their elite leaders, yet most definitely *not* as instantiated in a specific gathering or gatherings of some portion thereof. If a "mob" is not a "crowd" because this is too specific and loaded a term – a group of *members of a certain class* – then the "masses" are not, and should not be confused with, "the crowd" for the opposite reason – "mass" is too general a concept, transcending any particular assembly of people.³³ With both these semantic fields defined out of the picture, we are left with a narrow field in which to search for the "true" crowd.

Karpyuk, in the very first sentence of the article, proclaims a need to "define [his] field clearly." This is followed by citations – quickly replaced by the definition quoted

²⁹ *Id.* 81, emphasis original.

³⁰ *Id.* 79

³¹ *Ibid.* fn. 2. The quote is from Millar 1998:1.

³² Some of the difficulty here may result from political/cultural difference. Karpyuk, a Russian (or at least Russophone; he is identified as a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences) scholar, is most likely the product of a political environment in which "the masses" is, or was at one point, a term freighted with significance unknown in Western/capitalist regimes. Anglo-American scholarship, in contrast to (post-) Soviet or even Continental work, may tend to be less politically engaged, with a greater disconnect between political terminology ("masses") and "objective" scholarly discourse.

³³ See fn. 43 below and accompanying text on the distinction between the "dispersed" and "aggregated" crowd.

above – of sociological and psychological definitions of “crowd.”³⁴ Shortly thereafter, he notes that “[t]he pioneers in studying crowd behavior in historical contexts were the students of 18th-19th century Europe, such as Gustave Le Bon or George Rude.”³⁵ This observation comes by way of discussing the nature of the sources used in modern crowd studies (e.g. police reports), citing the absence of equivalent sources for antiquity as a possible explanation for the “lack of scholarly interest”³⁶ in Greek crowds. Still, it is further evidence that Karpyuk is concerned to fit his inquiry into the modern tradition of the study of crowd behavior. Such is his dilemma: after cataloguing, in the main body of his essay, a number of crowd-like events in the ancient Greek city, he is forced, due to the restricted³⁷ model which he chooses to use, to declare these not to involve “real” crowds.

To justify my rejection of Karpyuk’s conclusion that the crowd was a nonexistent or unimportant phenomenon in archaic and classical Greece, and at the same time to justify my own method of inquiry in the following chapters, it now becomes necessary to provide a brief history of the modern theory of the crowd.³⁸ This will place Karpyuk’s work in its broader intellectual context, revealing that his approach is only one of several possible ways of thinking about group behavior. In the end, I will adopt the understanding of crowd – for “definition” would be too restricted a term – found in the work of Elias Canetti, according to which “crowds” in the modern sense are just one point on a spectrum of human aggregations.

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Writing in 1977, Robert A. Nye provides a useful summary of the origins and chief characteristics of the modern psychological and sociological theory of the crowd:

The intellectual origins of collective psychology are rooted in the protracted crisis which troubled European liberal political, social and economic theory from 1848 to 1914. ... This crisis ... was generally perceived to be a result of the destruction of the traditional patterns of life thought to have been characteristic of European society in the pre-industrial age. ...

Most writers agreed that crowds or other less physically unified collectivities experienced a new form of unity that was qualitatively

³⁴ p. 79. Respectively: “an incidental aggregation, held together by a relatively extrinsic and temporary bond,” and “a group whose cooperation is relatively occasional and temporary, as opposed to that which is either instinctively or reflectively determined.” It is worth noting that this element of *temporary* grouping is not present in his preferred definition, which is, again, a “group of persons with common traditions intentionally acting together outside existing channels to achieve one or more specifically defined goals” (with the added provisos that this group be both factually existing in time and space, as opposed to the broader concept of the “masses,” and that it *not* be further characterized as socially low, as in the term “mob”).

³⁵ p. 80

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “Restricted” in a double sense: both by the general desire to align his inquiry with the *modern* study of the *modern* crowd, and his particular and peculiarly limited definition of “crowd” as against “mass,” “mob,” etc.

³⁸ McClelland provides the most thorough history of the idea of the crowd in western political thought. The introduction to Schnapp and Tiew’s *Crowds* contains a brief but useful snapshot of the field today. In what follows I make no claim to a thorough survey; rather, I have chosen my examples and shaped my narrative to provide what I feel will be the most useful and suggestive account.

different from the group considered as a sum of its parts. This collectivity was described as a being whose influence over the behavior of its individual members contrasted unfavorably with the liberal ideal of the rational and conscious human individual. The crowd was non-rational and was dominated by the ‘unconscious’ and instinctive emotions that were freed in the general diminution of conscious control that overcame individuals participating in collective phenomena. Crowds were accordingly incapable of reflective ratiocination or discrimination, and ideas ‘suggested’ to them quickly universalized themselves through the automatic mechanism of ‘imitation’ or ‘mental contagion.’ The leader or leaders of collectivities were thus of central importance. ... Collective psychology was far from being an observational or experimental discipline, and reveals behind its ‘scientific’ rhetoric the anxious efforts of a generation of liberal intellectuals to make conceptual sense of the world’s most perilous threats to ‘individualism.’ ... By defining the problems and strategies of democratic elitism in these ways, collective psychology lent a certain conceptual bias to elite-mass theory that later theorists found particularly difficult to avoid. The heritage that collective psychology bestowed upon elite theory ... consisted of a certain pathologically-imbued concept of the nature of collectivities in democratizing societies, an authoritarian concept of leadership that sprang from a hypnotically-conceived leader-crowd relationship, and the assurance that elites would continue to play an important role in policy-making despite all appearances to the contrary. By defining the problems and strategies of democratic elitism in these ways, collective psychology lent a certain conceptual bias to elite-mass theory that later theorists found particularly difficult to avoid.³⁹

Nye’s work also serves as a marker for the point of theoretical exhaustion of sociological discourse on crowd, with its origins in radical theoretical and revolutionary movements of the early modern period and the elite reactions thereto. By the 1970s, mirroring the trajectory of politics and ideology in the world at large, theories of group behavior had in one corner of the academy ascended to the highly theoretical and “post-human” level of such thinkers as Theweleit and Deleuze and Guattari, while in the field of political theory proper they had gotten bogged down in a decades- and centuries-old ideological morass. Nye criticizes this impasse, even as his work to some extent replicates its pathologies.

Just as the political and economic scene saw a (re)turn to the “right-wing” or “classical” discourse of capitalist individualism following the exhaustion and collapse of global leftism from the 1970s and especially 1980s, so too would the academic study of collective action eventually be reborn as an individualist-behavioralist discipline drawing on economics and game theory. These more recent developments will be surveyed briefly below, but the story of how matters got to this point must first be related.

³⁹ Nye 1977:12 ff.

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Describing the consensus of the past century's scholarship, Schnapp and Tiews, in the introduction to their anthology on *Crowds*, write: "The conviction in question held that ... a quantitative and qualitative difference distinguishes modern crowds from their premodern counterparts. In some deep and essential sense, crowds *are* modernity. Modern times are crowded times."⁴⁰

Specifically, both the appearance of the modern crowd, and the initiation of the discourse on and debate over its nature and worth, are dated to the French Revolution.⁴¹ Yet the first generations of this discourse subordinate the crowd to other concerns. The revolutionary crowd is praised or damned according to the author's view of the desirability of revolution. Not until the close of the nineteenth century does the attempt to study the crowd, *per se*, begin.⁴² These latter works will attempt an objective study of the nature of crowd phenomena in themselves, rather than solely an argument about their political force. Of course the objectivity of these studies is very open to question, yet it is with the beginning of this more "scientific" discourse on the crowd that I will begin a more detailed narrative of the evolution of crowd theory.

Published in 1841, Charles Mackay's *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* is sometimes included in surveys of crowd theory. Yet, despite its title, the book is not an examination of crowds *per se*, but rather of "panics" (mostly financial and political). The real object of study is "public opinion," with crowds as only one possible manifestation of disturbances therein. Mackay's work is indicative of a rising concern with what will come to be called "mass psychology," but does not focus on crowds in the literal sense of aggregations of bodies in space.

The second round of European revolutions, in 1848, brought the role of the crowd further into the forefront of social and intellectual concern. Yet even the most vociferous advocates of radical change were not operating with a detailed theoretical model of the crowds, *as* crowds, which they hoped to unleash. In *The Communist Manifesto*,⁴³ the physical aggregation of workers in factories under capitalism is posited as the dialectical process through which capital, in its irresistible drive towards consolidation and efficiencies, unwittingly provides the means of its own overthrow. But no clear

⁴⁰ Schnapp and Tiews x

⁴¹ Jonsson outlines the "French beginnings of the discourse on the masses," and (51-3) discusses Edmund Burke's reaction against the revolution, more or less blaming him for negative views of crowd actions in later times: "[P]olitical collectives and social instability ... were sealed together by Burke, and ever since then, they will refuse to come apart. They will not uncouple, because there emerges with Burke a discourse that will insist that the two are intrinsically related." (53) Jonsson maintains that "Burke should be counted among the first modern analysts of mass politics and crowd behavior ... [He] connect[s] the rule of number, of mass, to political violence and disorder ... lay[ing] the foundation for the conception of the masses that will be gradually modified and refined throughout the nineteenth century, until, in the 1890s, it crystallizes into a purportedly scientific theory called mass psychology." I have chosen this "crystallization" as the point to begin my survey in detail; Jonsson's essay details the generations prior.

⁴² As Nye (1977 *passim*) observes, however, this new "objective" discourse on the crowd still bears many traces of its elite, reactionary origin.

⁴³ Marx and Engels 229: "[W]ith the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number, it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more ... The real fruit of their battles lies ... in the ever expanding union of the workers." The "greater masses" in the first sentence might be actual "aggregated crowds;" the "ever expanding union" in the second is the abstract or "dispersed" pan-European socialist network.

distinction is made between the proletariat as a “class,” on the one hand, and particular revolutionary “crowds” in action. Since the latter are assumed to emerge inevitably from the former, and both are putatively inevitable products of the (scientifically intelligible) progress of history, no sustained attempt is made to understand them in themselves. The revolutionary discourse, no less than the Burkean reactionary discourse, still keeps the crowd waiting in the wings, as it were, not yet ready for its own moment in the spotlight.

That moment can be dated, although with some inevitable arbitrariness,⁴⁴ to 1895, with publication of Gustave Le Bon’s *La Psychologie des foules* (whose English translations have been titled *The Crowd*). In his introduction to the 1961 Viking Press edition, Robert K. Merton writes:

The enduring influence of Le Bon’s little book presents us with something of a riddle. When first published in 1895, it might have been fairly described as a vogue book, yet there must be something singular about a vogue that endures for two-thirds of a century.⁴⁵

He offers this as his own supplement to a quote from Allport’s *Handbook of Social Psychology*: “[P]erhaps the most influential book ever written in social psychology is Le Bon’s *The Crowd*.” Yet Merton is anything but uncritically reverent.⁴⁶

[T]he riddle deepens as we consider the character of the book. Probably no single truth in it has not been stated elsewhere more cogently ... [S]ome conceptions set forth in the book are now known to be misdirected, misleading, or mistaken. And yet it remains indispensable reading for all of us who are students of mass behavior.⁴⁷

Merton later lists Le Bon’s “ideological curiosities:”⁴⁸ “[R]ecurrent traces of political conservatism, an unremitting hostility to every aspect of socialism, a distinct kind of racial imagery, and a picture of woman as weak and acquiescent ...”⁴⁹ Yet he asserts that “[A]ll these ideas lie only on the surface of the book. Once these are cleared away as so much ideological debris, Le Bon’s fundamental conceptions of crowd behavior remain reasonably intact, though incomplete.”

Viewed without charity, Le Bon’s work can indeed seem an expression of mere reaction, tainted with the racism and elitism of his social position. On the first page of his Author’s Preface, he introduces the concept of “race” as an essential, hereditary character

⁴⁴ Merton xvi-xviii presents Le Bon in the context of his predecessors and contemporaries. xviii: “The squabble [over who’s influenced by whom] between ... Le Bon [and his contemporaries] ... holds interest for us only as a case of the multiple and at least partly independent appearance of essentially the same ideas at about the same time, this testifying that the ideas have become almost inevitable.” Schnapp and Tiews, in their introduction (ix), adopt Le Bon as the starting point of their survey.

⁴⁵ Merton v

⁴⁶ Allport himself, while acknowledging Le Bon’s importance in the field, rejected the concept of a “group mind” in favor of an insistence on methodological individualism.

⁴⁷ Merton v-vi

⁴⁸ *Id.* xxxix

⁴⁹ *Id.* xxxvii-xxxviii

of human groups,⁵⁰ before announcing that “[C]ertain new psychological characteristics [of the crowd] ... are added to the racial characteristics and differ from them at times to a very considerable degree.”⁵¹ Even more troubling, in his Introduction he introduces a biological metaphor: “In consequence of the purely destructive nature of their power, crowds act like those microbes which hasten the dissolution of enfeebled or dead bodies. When the structure of a civilization is rotten, it is always the masses that bring about its downfall.”⁵²

The political dimension of Le Bon’s project is not reaction but adaptation. He seeks to assist the mainstream liberal/bourgeois/republican politician in understanding and controlling the crowd, in an effort to prevent the triumph of the radical/working-class/socialist tendency.⁵³ If the rise of the crowd is irreversible, it is the result of a “profound modification in the ideas of the peoples.”⁵⁴ Changes in the political system are the result, not the cause, of the new order, which was established in the realm of ideology before bearing fruit on the level of institutions.⁵⁵ The century-long debate, sparked by the French Revolution, ended in a decisive victory for the proponents of “[t]he entry of the popular classes into political life ... The introduction of universal suffrage ... is not, as might be thought, the distinguishing feature of this transference of political power.”⁵⁶

Such, then, are the major elements of Le Bon’s worldview that render his views problematic. Blessed with the benefit of hindsight, we have long since learned to beware such essentialist and pseudo-scientific models. Yet there is much in Le Bon that transcends these limitations. He is no simple reactionary. His analysis of the crowd, shot through with veins of racism and misogyny as it may be,⁵⁷ is not Burke’s “rhetoric of fear and disgust.”⁵⁸ For one thing, by Le Bon’s time it was clear that the crowd’s role in politics was an established and growing fact, not something that could be argued away. The old order was gone forever.

The dogmas whose birth we are witnessing will soon have the force of the old dogmas. ... The divine right of the masses is about to replace the divine right of kings. ... Universal symptoms, visible in all nations, show us the rapid growth of the power of crowds. ... Whatever fate it may

⁵⁰ Merton (*ibid.*), however, absolves Le Bon of “ethnocentric malevolence:” “‘Race,’ for Le Bon, was an ill-conceived idea corresponding loosely to what has since been described as national character structure.”

⁵¹ Le Bon 1961:3

⁵² *Id.* 18

⁵³ Nye 1977:14

⁵⁴ Le Bon 1961:13

⁵⁵ 15: “The progressive growth of the power of the masses took place at first by the propagation of certain ideas, which have slowly implanted themselves into men’s minds, and afterwards by the gradual association of individuals bent on bringing about the realization of theoretical conceptions.”

64: “The philosophical ideas which resulted in the French Revolution took nearly a century to implant themselves in the mind of the crowd”

⁵⁶ p. 15

⁵⁷ E.g.: crowds exhibit characteristics “almost always observed in beings belonging to inferior forms of evolution – in women, savages, and children, for instance.” (p. 36). The association of the feminine, the “savage” and the passive, is part and parcel of the ideological justification both for traditional domestic social structures and for foreign colonialism.

⁵⁸ Jonsson 52

reserve for us, we shall have to submit to it. All reasoning against it is a mere vain war of words.⁵⁹

Le Bon begins the main body of his treatise by defining what he sees as the essential quality of a “crowd” (*foule*):

In its ordinary sense the word “crowd” means a gathering of individuals ... whatever be the chances that have brought them together. From the psychological point of view the expression “crowd” assumes quite a different signification ... Under certain given circumstances ... an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed.⁶⁰

This alleged “collective mind” is “[A]n organized crowd, or ... a psychological crowd. It forms a single being ...”⁶¹ The essential and peculiar nature of the crowd is that of a higher unity, a true entity formed of multiple individuals, who in forming a crowd lose their very individuality. It is no mere abstraction; a crowd exists and acts as a living thing. The member of a crowd “is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will.”⁶²

To Le Bon, these newly-minted automata are guided by “unconscious”⁶³ or “reflex”⁶⁴ motives. Being a member of a crowd shuts off one’s ability to reason, reducing the collectivity to the lowest common denominator of human motives and abilities.⁶⁵ This is true regardless of the intellectual abilities of the individual members themselves: “The decisions ... come to by an assembly of men of distinction ... are not sensibly superior to the decisions that would be adopted by a gathering of imbeciles.”⁶⁶

The reference to an “assembly” is not casual. Indeed, one great innovation of Le Bon’s work is that he extends his analysis of collective behavior to include participatory political institutions: juries, parliaments, and the mass electorate. He criticizes his

⁵⁹ Le Bon 1961:16-7

⁶⁰ Le Bon 1961:23. Cf. Karpyuk’s definition at fn. 23 above and accompanying text.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Id.* 32. Scattered throughout the book are similes that resonate strongly with Homer’s: “An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand among other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will” (33); “[Crowds] are like the leaves which a tempest whirls up and scatters in every direction and then allows to fall” (37); “[C]rowds in so many wars ... have allowed themselves to be massacred as easily as the larks hypnotized by the mirror of the hunter” (Le Bon 1995:78).

⁶³ *Id.* 28. As discussed above, Le Bon’s concept of the unconscious, in stark contrast to Freud’s, is intertwined with his concept of “race”: “Our conscious acts are the outcome of an unconscious substratum created in the mind in the main by hereditary influences ... which constitute the genius of a race” (Le Bon 1995:48). See also 1961:185.

⁶⁴ Le Bon 1961:37

⁶⁵ “[T]he crowd is always intellectually inferior to the isolated individual,” *Id.* 33.

⁶⁶ *Id.* 29; cf. 172, 180, 184. Compare the famous quote: “In all very numerous assemblies, of whatever character composed, passion never fails to wrest the scepter from reason. Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob.” (James Madison, Federalist No. 55; Kramnick 336).

predecessors⁶⁷ for restricting their inquiry to the “criminal” crowd (i.e., riots/“mobs”). This move is highly significant for the debate, ancient and modern, over the so-called “radical” democracy of classical Athens. In a sense, Le Bon is updating certain arguments of Plato and other Greek anti-democrats.⁶⁸ Perhaps mass psychology, as well as philosophy, is in some sense a series of “footnotes to Plato?”

Le Bon assigns deliberative assemblies the same traits as other crowds: suggestibility, irrationality, inconsistency.⁶⁹ Still, “[t]he suggestibility of parliamentary assemblies has very clearly defined limits ...” These limits are, chiefly, two: the obligation of representatives to their constituencies,⁷⁰ and the role of leaders within the parliament. Indeed, since in Le Bon’s view any crowd is essentially passive, they require at all times the direction of a leader if they are to work towards any specific goal.⁷¹

Early in the work,⁷² Le Bon identifies two major causes of the crowd’s peculiar characteristics, one internal to the psyche of the individual crowd member, the other an inter-psyche process between these members. The first is “a sentiment of invincible power, which allows him to yield to [repressed] instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint ... the sentiment of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely.” This points directly at the most basic descriptive feature of a crowd: its multiplicity. “Power in numbers,” the proverbial phrase, is like an

⁶⁷ Le Bon 1961:18-9

⁶⁸ E.g., *Id.* 184: “It does not follow because an individual knows Greek or mathematics, is an architect, a veterinary surgeon, a doctor, or a barrister, that he is endowed with a special intelligence on social questions ... With regard to social problems, owing to the number of unknown quantities they offer, men are, substantially, equally ignorant.” Here Le Bon seems to go past the “lowest common denominator” theory of the mob common to earlier reactionary thinkers, embracing the “Group Mind” model under which aggregation is *itself* pathological, without reference to the pre-existing qualities of the individual persons who come together to form a given group.

This passage simultaneously looks backwards to the works of Plato, and foreshadows the post-WWII epistemological arguments against central planning given by Friedrich von Hayek in *The Road to Serfdom* and other works. For crowd theory in deep historical context, in a continuous survey from Plato to modern thinkers, see McClelland.

⁶⁹ *Id.* 186-203

⁷⁰ Le Bon’s discussion is limited to the post-Revolutionary assembly, with no reference to the democratic and representative institutions of antiquity. Presumably he would see the Athenian assembly, involving as it did “direct” rather than “representative” participation, to be less restrained by this consideration, and therefore more purely “crowd-like.”

⁷¹ “Men forming a crowd cannot do without a master, whence it results that the votes of an assembly only represent, as a rule, the opinions of a small minority,” p. 189. Cf. the “iron law of oligarchy,” the claim of some political scientists (first developed by Michels, 43 ff.), under which any political organization tends toward control by a relatively small group. On the role of the leader of a crowd, pp. 117-40. Still: “A leader is seldom in advance of public opinion; almost always all he does is to follow it and to espouse all its errors.” Le Bon’s concept of the role of the leader is nuanced. Despite his great power, the leader does not have the ability to shape the crowd’s opinions entirely to his will; he must work with its pre-existing characteristics. Much of his and other early social psychologists’ work is highly resonant with Plato, e.g. in the *Gorgias*.

Nye’s (1977:30) observation on Michels is appropriately said of much turn-of-the-century discourse on crowds, whether historical, sociological or psychological: “The entire theoretical structure of *Political Parties* seems to be an extended effort in self-consolation wherein Michels convinced himself that all efforts to improve the lot of the masses were bound to fail.”

⁷² p. 30

intoxicant, temporarily transforming each member of a crowd into a superhuman dynamo.

Le Bon calls the second cause of a crowd's crowd-ness "contagion." This is the link established *between* members of the crowd, as opposed to the aggrandizement of self *within* each member, and it is ill-defined. "Contagion is a phenomenon of which it is easy to establish the presence, but that it is not easy to explain. It must be classed among those phenomena of a hypnotic order ... In a crowd every sentiment and act is contagious ..." This is obviously a restatement of his initial definition of a crowd as a "collective mind." Contagion is then re-cast as an effect of a third cause, "suggestibility," which is likened to hypnotism. Here Le Bon is playing a sort of shell game, passing from one synonymous label to another, with no real success in defining *why* members of crowds experience this unifying link with the other members.

I have described Le Bon's contribution at such length because it sets the parameters for much of the next generation's, even the next century's, discourse on collective psychology. For as Nye notes: "[M]ost subsequent commentators ... were obliged to absorb or refute him; they could not ignore him."⁷³ And it is the dual nature of the crowd – a collection of individuals, who are somehow linked to form a collectivity treated as an entity – which poses the major problem.⁷⁴ It is on the attempt to explain this link that Le Bon's most prominent successor and critic focuses his attention.

Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* has been called "fairly isolated in his larger work,"⁷⁵ for asking the question "What are the emotional bonds that hold collective entities ... together?" As the work's title suggests, the solution to the riddle of the crowd is sought in the internal workings of the individual psyche. Yet right at the start of this short⁷⁶ treatise, Freud blurs the distinction between group and individual psychology.⁷⁷ Having thus incorporated the problem of mass behavior into his larger project, he then seeks to solve the problem posed by Le Bon in the terms of his own psychological model.⁷⁸

Freud's work occupies a problematic space in intellectual history. As one of the three titanic figures credited with revolutionizing modern thought (along with Marx and

⁷³ Nye 1995:4; Merton vi: "Le Bon's ideas have made themselves felt almost as much among those who disagreed with them ... as among those ... who took them up substantially intact. Opponents could contradict what Le Bon had to say but they could not ignore it ..."

⁷⁴ Jonsson: "[H]istorians have been able to find out who those men and women were that constituted the revolutionary crowds ... [T]he result is that the thing itself – the mass – dissolves and stands revealed as the great simplification it always was." (p. 53). This tension, between historical inquiry and sociological understanding, will be addressed shortly.

⁷⁵ Gay xxiii

⁷⁶ At around 100 pages in the edition cited, it is about half the length of Le Bon's work.

⁷⁷ Freud 1959:1:

It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man [and his] ... instinctual impulses; but only rarely ... is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved ... and so from the very first individual psychology ... is at the same time social psychology as well. The relations of an individual to his parents ... in fact all the relations which have hitherto been the chief subject of psycho-analytic research – may claim to be considered as social phenomena.

⁷⁸ For a study that situates Freud's work on this topic within the tradition of crowd theory I have been narrating, see Pick.

Einstein),⁷⁹ his influence is in some sense inescapable; yet succeeding generations have rejected many of his conclusions and questioned his underlying biases.⁸⁰ In the field of mass psychology specifically, his “leader model” is particularly problematic – yet it was this understanding of group dynamics that structured much of the mid-century discourse on fascism and totalitarianism.

A substantial portion⁸¹ of Merton’s introduction to Le Bon concerns itself with Freud’s reception of his predecessor. As Merton notes, the first chapter of Freud’s work, comprising almost a sixth of the total length, consists entirely of quotes from, glosses on, and critiques of Le Bon’s *The Crowd*. Freud casts Le Bon as a “problem-finder,” and himself as “problem-solver.”⁸² The chief critique is of Le Bon’s notion of “contagion;” Freud notes that “suggestion” is more a synonym than an explanation for this phenomenon.⁸³

Freud “us[es] the concept of *libido* for the purpose of throwing light upon group psychology.”⁸⁴ In a characteristic move,⁸⁵ the object of study – here, the “collective mind” identified by Le Bon as the fundamental characteristic of a crowd – is translated into the Freudian model of the psyche. The external link between members of a crowd, Freud asserts, is a secondary effect of the internal structuring of each member’s mind. “[T]he mutual tie between members of a group is in the nature of an identification . . . and we may suspect that this common [identification] lies in the nature of the tie with the leader.”⁸⁶

⁷⁹ For an early formulation of the trinity, offered at a time when two of its members still lived, see Freehof 1933. Darwin is often cited as a fourth, or as an alternative to one of these three

⁸⁰ E.g. Eysenck.

⁸¹ Gay vii-xiv

⁸² *Id.* ix

⁸³ Freud 1959:12: “We . . . wish only to emphasize the fact that the two last causes of an individual becoming altered in a group (the contagion and the heightened suggestibility) are evidently not on a par, since the contagion seems actually to be a manifestation of the suggestibility. Moreover the effects of the two factors do not seem to be sharply differentiated in the text of Le Bon’s remarks.” 27: “Le Bon traces back all the puzzling features of social phenomena to two factors: the mutual suggestion of individuals and the prestige of leaders. But prestige, again, is only recognizable by its capacity for evoking suggestion.”

On prestige as a system of social control, see Goode.

⁸⁴ Freud 1959:29

⁸⁵ Cf. *Totem and Taboo*, where “sacred” emotions are argued to be expressions of a primitive familial psychodrama, or *Civilization and its Discontents*, where the “oceanic feeling” of transcendental oneness is explained in terms of the development of the individual ego.

⁸⁶ Freud 1959:50. The postwar (re)turn to individualism and behavioral studies in the psychological and sociological sciences rejects this top-down leader-led model, replacing it with a “local” model whereby individual members of a group take their cues from the other members immediately surrounding them, rather than some central leader-figure. See especially Schelling. This “localism” evades the larger question of whether there is a “group mind” by focusing on the individual *experience* of being in (a corner of) a crowd. As Richard Brooks put it to me in conversation, “There may not be a mind in the group – but there is definitely a group in the mind.”

These more recent, economically informed understandings of group formation and behavior, in combination with Canetti’s less easily classifiable writings, fit out a more useful toolbox for investigating representations of group behavior in classical texts. Freud, and his predecessors and successors, both in his own psychological field and in the discourse of mainstream political science, are too concerned with the specific problematic of modern mass society to be easily applied to cultural products from antiquity. It is their “baggage” which needs to be cleared away before we can clearly address the question, not of whether “the” crowd existed in antiquity, but of what *modalities of crowd* are described in ancient texts.

Each member of the group “introjects” the leader as an “ego ideal,” a concept including that of “conscience” but extending to a broader range of function.⁸⁷ Earlier Freud has chosen two groups as paradigms: the Church and the army. In these examples, each member of the group has incorporated that group’s leader (the figure of Christ for the Church; the figure of the Commander-in-Chief for the army) into their “ego ideal.” The bond *between* group members, then, is a secondary effect of the dynamic at work *within* their own mentalities.⁸⁸

This model is most convincing in the case of groups that have a clearly defined leader or venerated figure at their head. For such groups, Freud is ready to give us a formula: “A primary group of this kind is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego.”⁸⁹ Yet what of groups lacking a clear leader? At one point Freud suggests that groups can form around libidinal objects other than such a figure,⁹⁰ but this possibility is not pursued in detail. Instead, after arriving at his formula defining a “primary group,” Freud moves on to the second part of his agenda as revealed in the title: the analysis of the ego. Much of what follows is highly technical and inseparable from a broader consideration of Freudian psychology, removing it from the scope of this survey.

One passage, however, is worth noting: Freud suggests that the individual may be seen as “ha[ving] a share in numerous group minds – those of his race, of his class, of his creed, of his nationality, etc. . . .”⁹¹ Here the individual subject can be seen as a sort of Venn diagram, occupying the point at which all his or her group memberships overlap. Freud contrasts these “stable and lasting group formations” to Le Bon’s “noisy ephemeral groups, which are as it were superimposed upon the others . . .” It is precisely these “noisy ephemeral groups” that I will attempt to trace within archaic and classical Greek texts.

⁸⁷ Freud 1959:52 “[B]y way of functions we have ascribed to it self-observation, the moral conscience, the censorship of dreams, and the chief influence of repression . . . [I]t gradually gathers up from the influences of the environment the demands which that environment makes upon the ego and which the ego cannot always rise to . . .”

⁸⁸ If Freud stands as the intellectual ancestor of later theorists such as Canetti and Theweleit, his contemporary Georg Simmel anticipates much of the work done in the late 20th century by economists and sociologists. Avoiding the larger and only semi-empirical questions of whether and in what sense a “group mind” exists, Simmel attempted to isolate the fundamental units of social geometry. The essential problem of sociology, for Simmel, arises in the shift from a dyadic relationship to a triadic one. When three are together, there is always the threat that two will unite against the remaining one; all of the larger problems of group interaction develop from this fundamental dynamic. See, e.g.: Frisby, III:108 ff. Simmel 1908 is his masterwork.

⁸⁹ Freud 1959:61

⁹⁰ *Id.* 40:

We should consider whether groups with leaders may not be the more primitive and complete, whether in the others an idea, an abstraction, may not take the place of the leader . . . and whether a common tendency, a wish in which a number of people can have a share, may not in the same way serve as a substitute . . . The leader or the leading idea might also, so to speak, be negative; hatred against a particular person or institution might operate in just the same unifying way, and might call up the same kind of emotional ties as positive attachment.

Classicists have identified precisely this mechanism, of negative self-construction as by contrast to a denigrated group of “others,” at work in classical cultural production. See, e.g., Hall 1989; Cohen.

⁹¹ *Id.* 78

Freud's work has the advantage of clarity. In place of Le Bon's shifting vocabulary of "contagion," "suggestion," "hypnotism" and "prestige," we are presented with a simpler, and seemingly more scientific, model of psychological investment. Another advantage of Freud, as contrasted with Le Bon, is that his model of crowd behavior relies less on racist and misogynist assumptions; rather, it infantilizes its objects of study. The traits – lack of ability to reason, fickleness – which Le Bon likened to the putative inferiority of "savages" and women, Freud attributes to a regression of the individual to an earlier stage of psychic development.⁹²

Finally, Freud's work offers the attractive possibility of solving the individual/crowd dilemma decisively in favor of the latter. If the internal psyche is prior to the external bond, we can, as it were, put the crowd on the couch. The crowd, to Freud, acts as a collective mind because it is an aggregation of individual minds aligned in the same direction. Interaction between these individuals may strengthen the common alignment, but does not serve as its origin.⁹³

Not all of Freud's disciples and successors were content with such an explanation of mass behavior. To some, an explanation of groups that focused on the internal dynamics of the individual psyche did not seem to account for the special nature of mass psychology. The attempt scientifically to explain the link between members of a group, pursued to the extreme, is epitomized in the work of Wilhelm Reich.⁹⁴

Reich's career began within the Freudian school, but by the end of his life he had passed beyond the (admittedly vague) borders of "speculative psychology" into the land of the kook. Faced with the horrors of fascism and world war, Reich sought to explain these social pathologies as arising from the misdirection of psycho-sexual energy. He developed a concept of "orgone," envisioned quite literally as a force, like electricity or gravity, flowing through and between individuals. When inhibited or perverted, this energy could be directed towards destructive ends; channeled deliberately by fascist leaders, it provided the impetus for war and genocide.⁹⁵ In the postwar period, Reich took this concept to ever more literal heights, advising his audience to masturbate in specially designed boxes, the better to trap and recycle their "orgone." Reich's passage into kookdom was motivated by an understandable dissatisfaction with Freud's solution of the dilemma of groups. As we will see, a variety of other thinkers, while avoiding Reich's risible pseudo-scientific trappings, will nonetheless insist on blurring the line between the inter-personal and the intra-personal.

In the generation after the Second World War, the study of the crowd flows in two very different streams. Historians adopted more restricted definitions and more rigorous methodologies, while political scientists and general commentators broadened the scope

⁹² The break is not complete, however. Freud introduces the concept of regression, and then immediately reverts to Le Bon's own terms: "[The features of the crowd] so impressively described in Le Bon, show an unmistakable picture of a regression of mental activity to an earlier stage such as we are not surprised to find among savages or children." At least women are, this time, exempt! Of course, Freud's views carry their own hefty baggage, esp. that of phallo- and heteronormativity. Freud is not presented here as a definitive model, but as a stage in the development of the theory of the crowd.

⁹³ Cf. Durkheim, analyzing religion as originating in primeval feelings of connectedness arising from our nature as social animals.

⁹⁴ For an introduction, see Raknes.

⁹⁵ See especially Reich 1980.

of their concern far beyond previous limits. Meanwhile, theorists of institutions and public choice identified problems with aggregate action at a more theoretical level, far removed from the “mob” in the street; economists began to study group formation and psychology in terms of individual preferences and aversions.⁹⁶

First, the broadening scope taken by some authors. The classic statement of the postwar fear of, and conceptual expansion of, the crowd is Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism*.⁹⁷ Under her model, the effect of modernity is to dissolve traditional social bonds, resulting in the “atomization” of society. Traditional societies are structured, relatively rigid organizations; the modern masses are like a gas, aimless, dispersed and homogenized. Fascism and other forms of totalitarianism are the effects, not the causes, of these deep social transformations; only after the public has first been “atomized” can it then be restructured into the Stalinist or Hitlerite mold. In a traditional society, the individual subject is defined by his or her relationship to family members, neighbors, social superiors and inferiors, etc., in a dense web of allegiances and rivalries.⁹⁸ After the totalitarian transformation, the individual subject is defined solely in reference to, and left entirely at the mercy of, the State.

Arendt’s book was first published in 1951. It expresses in dense, intellectualized form what can be found in contemporary bestsellers such as *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man*: a fear of “mass man,” of the increasingly large and impersonal scale of postwar society. John Plotz, in his contribution to the Stanford *Crowds* volume, reads these screeds against mass society as expressions of “worry about the unrestrained,

⁹⁶ E.g. Schelling, ch. 4: “Sorting and Mixing: Race and Sex” (137 ff.). At 149, Schelling uses diagrams to illustrate a “game” modeling “white flight” as a result of preference cascades. Picture a tabletop covered by black and white tiles in perfect alternation, in the form of a checkerboard. If each tile represents an individual who is happy being surrounded by 4 tiles of their own color and 4 of the other color, the group will be stable. However, a slight disturbance in the arrangement – a clumping of one or the other color of tile at some spot on the board – can, even if each tile’s aversion to “too many” of the other color tile surrounding them is quite weak, “cascade” until near-total segregation results.

Granovetter (1424) uses similar modeling to explain the outbreak of riots. If 100 persons are milling about on the street, we can imagine them arrayed along a spectrum from most to least prone to initiate violent action. Let the person whose threshold for violence is lowest cross over into aggression – by hurling a rock through a window, say – and his act might tip off the person whose threshold is second-lowest. Eventually all 100 people may be drawn into a riot, even if without that first mover the other 95 people would have remained peaceful.

See also Becker, one of the first major attempts to explain group identity and behavior on an “economic” rather than a “psychological” level. Becker attempts to explain racial discrimination as a “solution,” however morally reprehensible, to the problem of information costs. In the absence of perfect knowledge, he posits, people will rationally use “shorthand” signifiers to label individuals, predict their behavior, and evaluate their worth. Legal and interdisciplinary scholars such as Richard Brooks (forthcoming) have continued this tradition, conducting field experiments in, e.g., racial self-sorting on public beaches.

For a popularization of these preference models of group behavior see Gladwell.

⁹⁷ Plotz contextualizes Arendt within a general postwar fear of the power of “the social,” before identifying a return, in the 1980s and 90s, to a pro-social message in sociology and political theory. This return is distinct from, although not necessarily incompatible with, the simultaneous turn in other academic circles towards a local/individualized model of group behavior.

⁹⁸ Cf. Freud’s brief allusion, referenced above, to the individual as the meeting point of multiple “group” identities.

licentious, and determinedly egalitarian danger of crowds.”⁹⁹ Here we find Le Bon’s “dispersed crowd” taken to its furthest possible extent: all of society as one enormous crowd, faceless and stifling, omnipotent and threatening:

Whatever the precise nature of the long historical evolution of the bourgeoisie in the various European countries, the political principles of the mob, as encountered in imperialist ideologies and totalitarian movements, betray a surprisingly strong affinity with the political attitudes of bourgeois society, if the latter are cleansed of hypocrisy and untainted by concessions to Christian tradition. What more recently made the nihilistic attitudes of the mob so intellectually attractive to the bourgeoisie is a relationship of principle that goes far beyond the actual birth of the mob. ...

[C]ompletely unprincipled power politics could not be played until a mass of people was available who were free of all principles and so large numerically that they surpassed the ability of state and society to take care of them. The fact that this mob could be used only by imperialist politicians and inspired only by racial doctrines made it appear as though imperialism alone were able to settle the grave domestic, social, and economic problems of modern times. ...

Hobbes affords the best possible theoretical foundation for those naturalistic ideologies which hold nations to be tribes, separated from each other by nature, without any connection whatever, unconscious of the solidarity of mankind and having in common only the instinct for self-preservation which man shares with the animal world. If the idea of humanity, of which the most conclusive symbol is the common origin of the human species, is no longer valid, then nothing is more plausible than a theory according to which brown, yellow, or black races are descended from some other species of apes than the white race, and that all together are predestined by nature to war against each other until they have disappeared from the face of the earth. If it should prove to be true that we are imprisoned in Hobbes's endless process of power accumulation, then the organization of the mob will inevitably take the form of transformation of nations into races, for there is, under the conditions of an accumulating society, no other unifying bond available between individuals who in the very process of power accumulation and expansion are losing all natural connections with their fellow-men. ... For no matter what learned scientists may say, race is, politically speaking, not the beginning of humanity but its end, not the origin of peoples but their decay, not the natural birth of man but his unnatural death.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ 204; Plotz also phrases this as “popular sociology’s dependence on a paradigm that feared the social, particularly the social as manifested in crowd actions.”

¹⁰⁰ Arendt 156 ff.

This, then, is one postwar tendency. At roughly the same time, a new kind of historical inquiry sought to revise and replace the Le Bon-influenced model of the crowd. George Rudé provides a classic example of this new history of the crowd. He identifies the period of his title as one of transition, from the premodern to the modern crowd. The goal is to “get beyond the stereotypes and probe into the crowd’s outlook,”¹⁰¹ to dissect “the crowd and its components ... [before] return[ing] to the question ... [of] the nature and importance of an event in history.” Where earlier theorists of the crowd, represented in this survey by Le Bon and Freud, focused on the “hypnotic” power of the leader, Rudé treats the crowd as an agent in its own right, with comprehensible goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

Throughout his introduction he is careful to define his work against this earlier tradition of mass psychology, which he regards as compromised by reactionary political sympathies. Characterizations of crowds as “fickle, irrational and destructive”¹⁰² are “hoary old preconceptions,” and Rudé – making no secret of his own sympathies for the revolutionary tendency¹⁰³ – will have none of them.

He begins by giving a definition of “crowd” as:

[W]hat sociologists term a “face-to-face” or “direct contact” group, and not any type of a collective phenomenon, such as a nation, a clan, case, political party, village community, social class, the general “public,” or any other “collectivity too large to aggregate” ... [W]e may exclude from our present consideration crowds that are casually drawn together, like sight-seers ... “audience” crowds ... who gather together in lecture hall matches or bullfights ... In fact, our main attention will be given to political demonstrations and to what sociologists have termed the “aggressive mob” or the “hostile outburst” – to such activities as strikes, riots, rebellions, insurrections, and revolutions.¹⁰⁴

Karpyuk’s definition of crowd, it is useful to recall, is as “a group of persons with common traditions intentionally acting together outside of existing channels to achieve one or more specifically defined goals.”¹⁰⁵ The phrase “outside of existing channels” seems, in light of his conclusion that ancient Greece did not have “true” crowds, to mean to Karpyuk something like this “aggressive” or “hostile” component of Rudé’s object of study. It is important to note that by adopting a tightly restricted model of “crowd,” Rudé

¹⁰¹ Rudé 1964:11; see also Rudé 1967. His work “examines crowd events “from below,” analyzing the varied demographic makeup of Revolutionary multitudes and emphasizing the motivated and purposeful nature of crowd behavior” (Schnapp and Tiews xiii).

¹⁰² Rudé 1964:10

¹⁰³ *Id.* 8-9. Especially noteworthy: Rudé criticizes both the reactionary *and* the revolutionary discourse for treating the crowd as an abstraction: to the former, the “mob;” to the latter, the “masses.” Cf. my earlier discussion of the first century of debate following the French Revolution. Rudé will concern himself throughout with the specific historical characteristics and political outcomes of crowd actions – especially the “food riot,” taken as the paradigm of the pre/early-modern crowd.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.* 3-4

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* 100-1

– and Karpyuk – are foreswearing precisely those types of mass aggregation – festival, audience, political assembly – which abound in our classical sources.¹⁰⁶

Rudé explicitly defines his project against Le Bon's: "Gustave Le Bon ... being preoccupied with mental states rather than physical phenomena, includes in his crowd not only castes, clans and classes but electoral "crowds," criminal juries, and parliamentary assemblies."¹⁰⁷ Yet in attempting to narrow his focus, Rudé is too restrictive; surely "assemblies" are physical phenomena? If Karpyuk positions himself towards Rudé's end of the spectrum, I will seek a middle ground. While limiting my survey to the depiction of the "aggregated" crowd, I will adopt a much looser definition of "crowd" than do Karpyuk and Rudé.

While the model of crowd behavior influenced by Le Bon may have been compromised by right-wing politics, the new history of the crowd was not free of its own ideological commitments. "The American school of social psychology, having reached a somewhat similar conclusion [to Rudé's and that of other "leftist historians"] regarding the agency of collectivities ... found itself poised to react to the mass demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s."¹⁰⁸ If Le Bon viewed the trend of his day towards ever-greater mass participation in politics with the horror of a reactionary, many of the postwar scholars had a reaction quite opposite, but equally political, to what seemed to be a resurgence of mass action in their own time, the period defined in historical shorthand as that of the war in Vietnam. The personal testimonies printed in the margins of Schnapp and Tiew's *Crowds*, speaking fondly as they do of civil rights and antiwar protests from this era,¹⁰⁹ are contemporary examples of the ease with which scholarly study of the crowd can blend into political championing of it.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Again, it is important to note that studies of the classical crowd have focused on Rome for obvious reasons. With its much greater population, Rome exhibits group formations that are directly analogous to those found in modern metropolises. By and large, classical Athens would not have had this type of "urban mob" – although in the Piraeus, especially during the Peloponnesian War, things begin to approach that level. Therefore, we will need to look elsewhere for depictions of crowds. Large-scale aggregations are to be found in descriptions of political assemblies (in tragedy and Homer, including the frequent trope of a στρατός in assembly), violent attacks (e.g. in Euripides's *Andromache*), and feasts and festivals (Aristophanes's *Frogs*; Euripides's *Ion*).

¹⁰⁷ Rudé 1964:3; "[I]n spite of [Le Bon's] profession to distinguish between one type and another, he arrives at a generalized conception of the crowd that, disregarding all social and historical development, would be equally appropriate to all times and to all places." This is precisely Canetti's project, and the model I shall adopt. The point is not that crowds are a "one-size-fits-all" phenomenon, but rather that there exists a range of crowd *modalities*, different examples of which are more or less present in a given historical moment and in that moment's cultural productions.

¹⁰⁸ xiii. For an example of this trend in social psychology, see e.g. *Crowd and Mass Behavior*, ed. Helen MacGill Hughes, 1972. From the Introduction: "Social movements today are often on a very large scale and have become normal aspects of daily life. Much behavior that used to be wholly private has now become public and political. Witness, for example, the Women's Liberation Movement ... Corresponding to this development the sociologists are focusing attention on social movements, who is attracted to them, and what becomes of these movements" (viii).

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Rorty; White.

¹¹⁰ Schnapp and Tiew's cite the "millions worldwide who marched against the war in Iraq" as a sign that the era of the crowd might not yet have ended (xvi); yet, earlier in their Introduction, they acknowledge that this and other mass demonstrations are becoming "ever more 'citational' – they quote, sometimes in a nostalgic key, from a previous, now irrecoverable heroic era of crowds ... The result is a decoupling of Le Bon's equation between crowds and contemporaneity" (xi). If the "age of crowds" prophesied by Le Bon is

There is nothing inherently wrong with such political commitment. Indeed, truly “objective” scholarship, detached from the ideology of the author, may well be impossible. Yet the study of the crowd in particular has a tendency to split into two polarized tendencies. Crowds are either lambasted as dangerous, unthinking menaces, or praised as agents of positive social change. This polarization, expressed most starkly in the vast methodological gulf between Arendt and Rudé, transforms the investigation of the crowd into an extension of a larger political debate on the proper political order.

Two thinkers offer a way out of this impasse. Their works differ greatly from the mainstream tradition of crowd studies surveyed above – and from each other. While both have unmistakable (and contrary) ideological presuppositions informing their writings, their theoretical models, while not to be adopted wholesale, present a broader and more flexible framework through which to engage the subject of the crowd.

The first of the two is Elias Canetti. His *Crowds and Power*,¹¹¹ while unmistakably part of the “crowd-phobic” strain of postwar thought,¹¹² provides a series of models for thinking about crowds which have influenced my thinking. Some of these models, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, are of particular use for thinking about the representation of crowds in archaic and classical Greek texts. Canetti’s work is divided into scores of mini-chapters, with little or no unifying structure. Far from restraining himself, as Rudé does, to discussion of actual physical gatherings, Canetti treats as “crowd” phenomena everything from hyperinflation, to cultural understandings of death and the underworld, to the history of the world’s great religions. Particularly suggestive for thinking about Homer is his treatment of “crowd symbols,”¹¹³ defined as “collective units which do not consist of men, but which are still felt to be crowds.” Examples include sand, the ocean, and forests. Canetti never explicitly refers to Homer, but surely the frequent use of animal and natural similes for the mass behavior of the Greek and Trojan armies in the *Iliad* are performing similar cultural work.

I have already announced my intention to avoid, as much as possible, consideration of broader issues such as “public opinion” and “national image;” this aspect of *Crowds and Power* will have little impact on my investigation. Yet Canetti has much

truly over, or, at least, has shifted into something qualitatively different, this may have the beneficial effect of ending the tendency towards polarization in the discourse on the crowd, by rendering obsolete the dichotomy of championing-or-rejecting crowds in their contemporary political effects.

¹¹¹ Canetti’s original German title was *Masse und Macht*. *Mass(e)*, as in Freud’s *Massenpsychologie*, is the German term corresponding to Le Bon’s *foule* and the English scholarly tradition’s “crowd.”

¹¹² Canetti is most often identified as belonging to the “train” of Arendt (Plotz 204). But whereas Arendt’s *Origins* examines a particular historical moment (broadly defined, to be sure, but still with a discrete beginning – the rise of liberal-bourgeois European regimes and the emancipation of Jewry), Canetti’s work takes a much broader view. This makes it less useful as history and sociology, but more productive when applied, as “theory,” to the reading of texts far removed from the mainstream early-modern-to-postmodern tradition of crowd studies.

Bloom 1995 is a more recent attempt at a project similar in theme to (and similarly ambitious in scope as) Canetti’s.

¹¹³ Canetti 75-90. Rudé mentions Canetti’s treatment of “national symbols” as an example of “[S]ome writers in the field . . . cho[osing] to extend the crowd’s boundaries to encompass far wider horizons” (Rudé 1964:3). I will make use of Canetti’s brand of thought while restricting those “boundaries” to the depiction (or description) of “aggregated” crowds, in Le Bon’s sense – in Schnapp’s phrasing, “the physical massing of bodies in public spaces” (Schnapp, “Mob Porn” 3).

to say about crowds in the restricted, “aggregated” sense. First and most striking is his psychological explanation for their formation:

There is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown ... All the distances which men create round themselves are dictated by this fear ... It is only in a crowd that man can become free of this fear of being touched. That is the only situation in which the fear changes to its opposite. The crowd he needs is the dense crowd, in which body is pressed to body ... The more fiercely people press together, the more certain they feel that they do not fear each other. This *reversal of the fear of being touched* belongs to the nature of crowds.¹¹⁴

The essence in the crowd is not to be found, as in Le Bon and Freud, in hypnotic or libidinal attachments to a leader.¹¹⁵ Neither is the crowd to be viewed, as in the work of Rudé and the historians, as a political agent with rational goals. Rather, the crowd is the site of a psychological “discharge”: “[T]he moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal.”¹¹⁶ It is the opposite of and antidote to all the hierarchies and separations structuring human life.¹¹⁷

Unlike Le Bon’s attempt rigorously to categorize crowds,¹¹⁸ Canetti’s classifications always lead to one more instance, one more dimension of the question. Where the mainstream tradition of crowd studies, in both its left- and right- wing varieties, concerns itself with limiting and strictly defining the crowd, Canetti’s model is open-ended.

His first and most basic classification distinguishes the “open” and “closed” crowd.¹¹⁹ The “closed” crowd “renounces growth and puts the stress on permanence,” establishing a boundary between itself and the outside world, growing to a fixed limit and

¹¹⁴ Canetti 15-16; emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ In the later parts of *Crowds and Power*, however, Canetti does devote much attention to the role of the leader – or, in his terms, the “survivor.” The “survivor” is he who creates masses of dead opponents, using the crowd of his own followers as a weapon, while remaining personally inviolable. In the atomic age, the “survivor” takes his ultimate shape as the leader of a nation with a nuclear arsenal, able to destroy the whole of humanity. This concept of leader-as-“survivor” (cf. Odysseus?) resonates with the Platonic understanding of the *tyrant*, ever beset by, and commanding the attentions of, external crowds, while always governed by his own internal disorder and paranoia.

¹¹⁶ Canetti 17

¹¹⁷ At Canetti 303 ff., he details a theory of the “sting of command;” commands leave a physical imprint in those subject to them, and the moment of revolution comes when all these accumulated stings are unloaded in a group act of defiance against the structures and holders of power. Cf. my comments on *Bacchae* 119 in Chapter Three.

¹¹⁸ Canetti 156: “Heterogeneous” v. “Homogeneous,” with sub-categories such as (for the latter) “Sects,” “Castes” and “Classes.”

¹¹⁹ Canetti 16-17. A later typology, at 48-63, categorizes by function five basic types of crowds, which will be discussed in further chapters when relevant to the Greek text under scrutiny: Baiting (e.g. a lynch mob), Flight (e.g. a crowd of refugees); Prohibition (e.g. a worker’s strike or Gandhian demonstration); Reversal (e.g. the storming of the Bastille; this “revolutionary” category comes closest to the sociological/historical category of the “true” crowd); and, finally, Feast (a gathering to celebrate and consume material abundance). However, the multitude of other material discussed throughout the book, little of which is placed within this five-fold list, suggests that this typology is *not* meant to be exhaustive.

no more. It “sets its hope on *repetition*,” it marks a location and promises a regular return thereto. The Athenian assembly would surely fall under this category.

The “open” crowd – the “extreme form of the spontaneous crowd” – has “no limits whatever to its growth.” “The open crowd is the true crowd, the crowd abandoning itself freely to its natural urge for growth.”¹²⁰ Like a cancer, it obeys only the laws of multiplication and aggregation, and “it disintegrates as soon as it stops growing.” It is more destructive, but shorter-lived, than the “closed” crowd, and it does not hold the promise of repetition. It is a “one-off.”

All the thinkers previously surveyed, with the exception of Freud, have insisted to a greater or lesser extent on the uniqueness of the modern crowd. Canetti here suggests that the distinction between the modern and earlier crowd phenomena is more one of quantitative scale than qualitative novelty: “Men might have gone on disregarding [the “open” crowd] if the enormous increase of population in modern times, and the rapid growth of cities, had not more and more often given rise to its formation.”¹²¹

This is the element of Canetti’s project most useful for my inquiry. Ranging over cultures and epochs, his model treats crowds as, for all their variety, expressions of universal impulses. The danger is that of essentialism, of failing to distinguish the historical individuality of particular crowd events. Still, it is this translation of the problem of the crowd into one of *scale* that offers an alternative to the restricted Karpyuk/Rudé criteria for a “true” crowd. To Canetti, any physical aggregation of bodies may qualify as a crowd. The modern political crowd is a “step up” in scale, approaching closer to the “open” end of the spectrum, but it is not the *only* phenomenon worthy of the term “crowd.” The massing of bodies, and the treatment of these masses as entities in their own right, is a universal characteristic of human societies; my project will be to investigate this process as represented in archaic and classical Greek literature.

Some may read Canetti as a reactionary, in the mold of Le Bon, for assuming a universal, dangerous and destructive crowd. This would be inaccurate; rather, he outlines a *continuum* of crowds, from a small pack to a large multitude. At what quantitative level does a crowd begin? (“Three,” of course, is the proverbial answer). To Canetti, the crowd grows out of the “pack,”¹²² most simply in the form of a hunting party, but also forming around functions such as lament or dance. “The pack, in contrast [to sociological groups

¹²⁰ Canetti 20

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Canetti 93 ff; a related and not fully distinguished concept is that of the “crowd crystal” (73-75), “[S]mall, rigid groups of men, strictly delimited ... which serve to precipitate crowds.” The “rigid” nature imputed to these “crystals” by Canetti, in contrast with the “open” and fluid nature of the crowd proper, introduces a more explicit model of aggregated human activity as similar to molecular states of matter, with the “open” crowd as an unconfined gas that soon disperses, as opposed to “denser,” more “rigid” groups, such as those created by military training, being more like solids or crystals. Canetti 312, in describing military training as producing “angularity ... hardness and smoothness,” by the incorporation of repeated commands into the structure of the cadet’s body, anticipates in brief sketch the theoretical model of Theweleit. Cf. Connolly (81) on Canetti’s distinction “by which the crowd is strictly separated from the military unit.” Canetti 313: “Anyone who has to give commands in an army must be able to keep himself free of all crowds, whether actual or remembered. It is his training in the expectation of command which teaches him how to do this.” Although the distinction is never fully developed, the implicit contrast seems to be between the compact, strictly controlled, “solid” military troop on the one hand, and the amorphous, internally driven, “fluid/gas” of the “crowd” proper on the other.

such as “clan”], is a unit of *action*, and its manifestations are concrete.”¹²³ While the “crowd” of the political riot, declared absent by Karpyuk, is indeed hard or impossible to locate in the epic and dramatic texts¹²⁴ in a form analogous to those of modern mass actions, the “packlike” nature of many performance and audience crowds, and the dialectic between the aggregated group and the individual member, will be shown to inform our specimen passages in later chapters.

One special type of Canettian crowd is worth brief notice. This is the “double” crowd:¹²⁵ “The surest ... way by which a crowd can preserve itself lies in the existence of a second crowd to which it is related ... As long as all eyes are turned in the direction of the eyes opposite, knee will stand locked by knee ... All ... curiosity ... is directed towards a second body of men divided from [the first crowd] by a clearly defined distance.”¹²⁶ The clearest example is that of war, in which “the aim is to transform a dangerous crowd of live adversaries into a heap of dead.”¹²⁷ Later, the “two-party system of modern parliaments” is described as a sort of sublimated war, a display of one crowd’s numerical superiority over another.¹²⁸ Perhaps this dynamic can be seen at work not only in the modern parliament.

As difficult to summarize as Canetti’s work is, at least its central theme is clearly that of the crowd, defined however broadly. *Crowds and Power* takes a natural and expected place in any survey of the history of crowd theory. The final author I will discuss, however, holds no such canonical place in this tradition.¹²⁹ Indeed, the crowd as such plays only a tangential role in his work, yet it will help greatly in thinking about the psychological nature of the crowd and the individual’s relation to it. Where Canetti’s main use to us is as a theorist of the crowd-as-aggregation, Klaus Theweleit, writing a generation later, redirects us to the plane of individual experience – only to re-expand such experience back into the intersubjective forces at play in the crowd.

Earlier I located the central riddle of the crowd in its conceptual duality. We have seen that crowd theorists tend to slip between theories of the crowd, treated as an entity in its own right, and theories of the psychological mechanisms at work within the crowd’s

¹²³ Canetti 94. In the discussion of the “pack,” and indeed throughout the work, Canetti blurs the line between sociology and what might be termed anthro-zoology; that is, he treats humans as animals, on a continuum with not only other primates, but occasionally with insects, birds, etc. See especially the chapter “The Entrails of Power” (pp. 203-24), with such sub-chapters as “The Finger Exercises of Monkeys.” For group behavior among primates, see de Waal. The classic general account is Morris 1967.

For an account of “grouping” across a wide range of animal species, see Okubo.

¹²⁴ Though not in historiography. Ober (1996, 1998) argues for an understanding of the Athenian δῆμος as a revolutionary historical agent. The potential for historical group action “from below” is not limited to classical Athens. Indeed, Morris (1986:115-29) reads the Homeric corpus as a product of “the upheavals of the eighth century ... attempt[ing] to fix against alternative constructions an elitist view of the heroic age” (this summary of his earlier work is at Morris 1996:31). Homeric epic may thus be a “photo-negative,” suggesting by its very omission of certain objects of representation that there were in fact challenges to elite dominance afoot during the period of its formation.

¹²⁵ Canetti 63 ff.

¹²⁶ In drama, does the dancing “pack” of the chorus onstage cement the assembled audience into a “crowd?” Such are the potential applications of Canetti’s model to the study of ancient Greece.

¹²⁷ *Id.* 68

¹²⁸ *Id.* 188 ff

¹²⁹ For example, the Stanford *Crowds* contains no reference to his work, even in those essays which treat very similar material, e.g. Schnapp’s “Mob Porn.”

individual members. Is “mass psychology” founded on a useful fiction, or can Le Bon’s “collective mind” really be said to exist? Do the physical boundaries of the human subject present an ultimate boundary to psychic agency, or can we speak of aggregations of subjects as somehow more than and different to the sum of their parts? Such is the project of Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies*.¹³⁰

Theweleit begins with a survey of works by German veterans of the First World War, many of whom throughout the interwar period became proto-fascist paramilitary fighters, suppressing socialist uprisings throughout the greater Reich. The writings include letters, diaries, nonfiction works about the late war, and novels. Theweleit interrogates these texts to reveal their profound, fundamental misogyny. Over the course of hundreds of pages he identifies two opposed complexes of imagery, informing the extreme separation between sex roles characteristic of fascist ideology. On the one hand are those valorized characteristics associated with what Theweleit calls the “warrior male:” hardness, whiteness, purity, order, rigidity, impermeability. On the other, a nexus of threatening forces, against which the warrior male defines himself: softness, blood, mud, mixture, fluidity. The destabilizing inner sensations are projected onto – but, crucially, can also be provoked by – the social mixture and fluid movement of groups of bodies found in the revolutionary crowd.¹³¹

The warrior male constructs psychic “body armor,” rigidly defining the boundaries of his body in a double containment: against the threatening tides without, but also to contain and freeze the flow of tides within. Theweleit develops at length the association between desire and water, establishing the fundamental status of this metaphorical link not just in German literature but throughout the western cultural tradition.¹³² The experience of desire, similar to but less reified than Reich’s “orgone,” is felt by the warrior male as an internal motion of liquid, threatening to break through his “body armor” and dissolve the individual subject within the broader psychic sea. It is against this threat that the warrior struggles, and the goal of his struggle is to reduce what threatens him to a “bloody pulp,” leaving his own self safely dry, pure and hard.

Theweleit demonstrates that these proto-fascist warriors see the revolutionary crowd as a particularly threatening manifestation of “feminine” fluidity. “Theweleit takes us beyond any ground so far explored by feminist theory: from the dread of women to the hatred of communism and the rebellious working class ... Always bear in mind that primal fear of dissolution.”¹³³ Socialism as a system, and particular mass actions of a revolutionary tendency, are spoken of and experienced as “rot, pulp, filth, dirt, slime”: that is, as a contaminating liquid tide threatening to eat away at the “waterproof”

¹³⁰ Theweleit 1987, 1989 (2 vols., cited hereinafter as I and II).

¹³¹ The ancient phenomenon, both as actual cult practice and as object of artistic representation, of group ecstatic religious frenzy, especially in the cult of Dionysos, seems fully to anticipate this “postmodern” model of crowd psychology as tapping into “flows” which pass within and between the “individual” subject.

¹³² Ehrenreich, Introduction to Theweleit vol. I, notes that Theweleit’s project, while starting from a core of historically specific texts, has broader implications for the entire psychic economy of masculinity and sexual difference: “[Y]ou will want to look up from these pages from time to time and try to reassure yourself that you are reading about a certain group of men, of a certain class and nationality, who lived at a certain time now two generations behind us” (Theweleit I:x-xi).

¹³³ *Id.* xiv

boundaries of the warrior male body. What the warrior male fears above all is “dissolution” of the self into the crowd.¹³⁴

At the beginning of his second volume, Theweleit comes as close as he ever does to a concise statement of this psychic process and its political significance:

The emergence of revolutionary masses into the public arena occurs as a consequence of the rupturing of dams. At the same time, it threatens to undermine the internal dams of these men, as if their bodily boundaries might collapse under the pressure of the masses without. Their own inner mass “dissipates” into the mass which is outside, and the external mass comes to embody their own erupted interior ...

This gives us a key to the apparent contradictoriness of the fascist concept of the masses. Alongside his capacity to mobilize great masses of human beings, there exists within the fascist a simultaneous contempt for the masses ... The contradictions cease to appear as such once we understand that the fascist has two distinct and different masses in mind ...

The mass that is celebrated is strictly formed, poured into systems of dams. Above it there towers a leader ... To the despised mass, by contrast, is attributed all that is flowing, slimy, teeming ...

This recognition of the possible origin of terror perpetrated on the mass in a fear of the merging of the individual “interior” with that same mass may serve as a useful addendum to Elias Canetti’s insights in his *Crowds and Power*. The revolutionary mass may usefully be seen as an embodiment ... of the erupted “interior” of the soldier male – an effluent that he perceives in thoroughly objectified form, as a repellent mixture of fluids streaming from the body.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Theweleit may be most useful for classicists in reading Homer. As detailed in Chapter Two, the Iliadic “crowd” is a backdrop against and through which heroic characters move and are recognized. The Homeric crowd offers safety to its members, but only at the price of anonymity. “Glory” may be precisely the preservation of individuality, the avoidance of merger into the larger group.

Theweleit positions himself in the tradition of Reich, as opposed to Freud, in his insistence on the psychic “flowing” between subjects as an object of study (I.254; but see II.422, near the end of the work, where he criticizes Reich as too scientific in his attempt to quantify these forces). He acknowledges his particular debt to a further theoretical model along Reichian lines: Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the “body without organs.” E.g. I.264: “The process of primary accumulation in industry ... set[s] in motion streams of money, commodities and workers ... Running parallel to that is a process of *limitation*, directed against the evolution of human pleasures. Deleuze and Guattari call the first process *deterritorialization* – the opening up of new possibilities for desiring-production across the “body with organs” – and the second process *reterritorialization*, which is the mobilization of dominant forces to prevent the new productive possibilities from becoming new human freedoms. We’ll next look at the course taken by reterritorialization in bourgeois history as a whole; that is, at how *anything that flowed came to inspire the kind of fear that we have seen in our soldier males*” (emphasis added). The revolutionary crowd offers the threatening promise of “new human freedoms” achieved through inter-subjective combination; fascist discipline harshly “reterritorializes” the warrior male’s mind and body through the construction of “body armor.”

¹³⁵ Theweleit II.3-7

Later in the volume, an illustration¹³⁶ captures this distinction between the “strictly formed” and the “flowing” mass. Taken from a Nazi history textbook, the image juxtaposes two photographs of parades passing through the Brandenburg Gate.¹³⁷ The socialist crowd in the picture from 1918 seems to lack a clear structure. Men and women in everyday working- and middle-class dress are moving in a broad group spread across the square, with no obvious leader(s). The second picture, taken in January 1933 at the moment of the Nazis’ ascension to power, shows a tightly compacted body of splendidly dressed soldiers, following a *heil*-ing and goose-stepping leader through the gate. Groups of spectators stand to each side – widely and clearly separated from the marchers, the “masses” here are reduced to the role of passive spectators. The warrior male psyche is maintained; group demonstration is acceptable only under such tightly “channeled” conditions.¹³⁸ If the classical canon is largely void of depictions of mass revolutionary action, this can be read in two ways. Either it means that such actions were always and everywhere absent from the ancient world, or it means that they were so threatening to the structure of values in which elite authors formulated their texts that they simply could not be directly represented in their ideological-cultural matrix. Crowds would then only appear in allegorical or phantastical forms.¹³⁹

Canetti and Theweleit approach the problem of the crowd, as it were, from opposite ends. Canetti, in his multiple typologies of crowd and “pack,” attempts to provide a morphology of the crowd-as-entity.¹⁴⁰ Theweleit, through his detailed

¹³⁶ Theweleit II.80. Theweleit’s use of illustrations, on average once every two or three pages, is highly idiosyncratic. They are never referred to directly in the text, but rather illuminate his argument by subtle reinforcement and allusion. They range from medieval woodcuts to Hollywood publicity stills, with a particular concentration on propaganda from the first and second world wars. Only a small percentage of these images represent crowd formations; a much more common theme is the representation of individual female figures. For studies of the visual representation of crowds, see the contributions of Schnapp (“Mob Porn”), Poggi (“Mass, Pack and Mob: Art in the Age of the Crowd”) and Uroskie (“Far Above the Madding Crowd: The Spatial Rhetoric of Mass Representation”) in Schnapp and Tiews 2006.

¹³⁷ Cf. Fritzsche, who discusses four periods of mass action, from the socialist uprisings of 1918-9 to the triumphant rallies marking the Nazi takeover in 1933, as “snapshots” illustrating the transformation of German society.

¹³⁸ See esp. Theweleit I.429 ff.: “Dam and Flood: The Ritual of Parading in Mass.” 430-41: [A] ritual such as the ‘Entry March of the Banners’ becomes a public staging of the forbidden ... For the moment, at least, [the fascist] felt privileged to be a stream himself, one small part of an enormous, *tamed flood* ... In the course of the ritual, the fascist came to represent both his own liberated drives and the principle that suppressed them ... That is how fascism translates internal states into massive, external monuments or ornaments as a *canalization system*, which large numbers of people flow into; where their *desire can flow*, at least within (monumentally enlarged) *preordained channels*; where they can discover that they are not split off and isolated, but that they are sharing the violation of prohibitions with so many others ...

¹³⁹ Most obviously, perhaps, in crowds of *women*, seen as less of a “real” political threat. E.g. in Aristophanes’s *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Assemblywomen*, and especially in Euripides’s *Bacchae*. A similarly sublimated crowd representation may also be present in art and literature depicting the Gigantomachy and Centauromachy, for instance on the metopes of the Parthenon, where these scenes of group violence (along with the Amazonomachy, again featuring a group of violent women) are juxtaposed against the frieze’s properly ordered procession.

¹⁴⁰ Of course, he also offers individualistic psychological explanations for the formation of crowds. Still, his overriding concern, and his use for my purposes, lies less in these passages than in his insistence on the

investigation of a specific historical-political problem, offers a complex model of the ambivalent relationship between the individual and the group. I will adopt neither scholar's thought as a dogma or template, but will refer to their works when it will illuminate the discussion of particular passages within the Greek text.

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Let us briefly recall the major themes of this survey of the history of crowd theory. The mainstream of this intellectual tradition is founded on the premise that the modern crowd, often dated from the French Revolution and the subsequent spread of mass political action, is in some qualitative way different from previous historical forms of group behavior. At the close of the 19th century, Gustave Le Bon expresses and fixes the long-term influence of a "reactionary" view of the crowd as an irrational "collective mentality," subsuming the identities of its individual members and reducing them to a "primitive" intellectual level. This conceptual duality of the crowd, as a quasi-entity composed of many individual subjects, is approached from different angles by the various subsequent schools of crowd studies.

Freud, dissatisfied with the value of Le Bon's "contagion" as an explanation of the link between crowd members, explains this link in reference to his own model of psychological function. To him, crowd members are united by virtue of having introjected the same leader-figure or central concept into their psyches. This explanation focuses on the "individual" plane of the group/subject duality of the nature of the crowd. Later developments within the psychoanalytic tradition, carried to risible extremes by Reich but recuperated and preserved for future scholars in the "anti-psychiatry" of Deleuze and Guattari, return to the level of the link between crowd members, searching for a way to understand the link between these members in terms of a movement of psychic "energy." The move from archaic epic to classical drama may correspondingly be read as a move from a focus on the individual elite heroic leader figure to a more communal perspective.¹⁴¹ Discussion in later chapters will show that the crowd in turn is represented with more frequency and urgency (and as possessing heightened agency) in drama.

Sobered by the horrors of war and totalitarianism, many thinkers in the 1950s exhibit an extreme antipathy towards "mass society," to some extent re-inscribing the "reactionary" views of Le Bon. These writers are all in a sense descendants of Plato, often independently arriving at arguments and characterizations formulated already in the fourth century B.C.¹⁴²

scalar flexibility of the various *modalities* of crowd: from small "packs" to the largest and most uncontrolled "mob," aggregations of bodies exhibit shared traits.

¹⁴¹ One must not over-emphasize this dichotomy, however. Haubold and Griffith 1998 respectively show that there is much that is communal in Homer, and much that is elite in tragedy. In either genre the relationship between One and Many is dialectical. What my survey attempts to show is the shifting boundaries of what is *available* for representation in a given context; any social organization, and its cultural products, will speak simultaneously from the perspective of the group and its individual members. For a historian's version of the evolving dialectic of One and Many in early Greece, see Starr.

¹⁴² On the surprising persistence of reactionary rhetoric across the centuries, see Hirschmann. Popper treats the historical tendency in light of its extreme eruption in the mid-twentieth century.

Concurrently, a new school of history sought to recuperate the crowd as a rational political agent.¹⁴³ Ideological polarization returns the study of the crowd, in a sense, to its pre-Le Bon state: subordinate to a larger political argument, trending away from an investigation of crowd dynamics on their own terms.

Two scholars offer different ways out of this impasse. Elias Canetti decouples the crowd from the post-French Revolution historico-political debate, by stressing the universal nature of crowds across human societies and epochs; if we renounce the quest for a strict definition of the “true” crowd, we are free to consider “crowd-ness” in the full spectrum of its various expressions. Klaus Theweleit’s study of the psychic economy of fascism is a provocative model of the relations between the individual and the group. Theweleit’s “flow” within and between subjects, while risking a return to the semi-quackery of Reichian “orgone” studies, offers also the possibility of a greater understanding of the riddle of the crowd, its seeming two-fold nature.

*

The stress laid by Theweleit on the ambivalent relationship between the fascist and the “mass” leads me to a preliminary caveat on the nature of our Greek texts. To a greater or lesser extent, they are all expressions of an elite worldview, bearing the class imprint of their authors (or, as in the case of the Homeric tradition, the economy of discourse through which they were produced over time). Thus when we examine these texts’ representation of the crowd we will find, as a recurring theme, the relationship between the elite individual and the broader social group as manifested in a wide range of “crowds” and “packs.” There is a delicate negotiation at work in the elite’s desire to participate in, and fear of being seen by, a crowd. Crowds of spectators, festivalgoers, etc., are a key part of the aristocratic social system, but in their aggregation they constantly suggest the possibility of group violence. The slippage between being a member of a group, being observed by that group, and being subjected to that group’s collective physical force, structures several of the textual moments I will discuss.¹⁴⁴

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I am now able to specify why I think Karpyuk does not have the last word when he says that there was no “crowd” in archaic and classical Greece. We have seen that, by adopting a definition of “crowd” drawn from the discourse of 20th-century sociology, he is taking one of a spectrum of possible approaches to the subject. An analogy to a larger debate within the study of ancient history may be helpful. Eli Sagan summarizes the debate over the use of Marxian categories in the study of the ancient world:

After the [second world] war, a reaction set in, postulating that a backward projection of concepts from a capitalist to a precapitalist world had no validity. A serious thesis was expounded that not only was there no class struggle, but also there were no classes in the ancient world, in effect, that the development of various classes was, itself, the result of capitalism ... My own approach finds the hypothesis of the existence of a “bourgeoisie”

¹⁴³ Cf. in this context the work of Ober, most recently 2008. Part of Ober’s larger agenda is to defend Athens’s period of “radical” democracy against those who criticize it on ochlophobic grounds, and secondarily use it as a way of thinking about what participatory democracy could mean in today’s world.

¹⁴⁴ See especially fnn. 532, 585.

and a “proletariat” [in classical Athens] inaccurate. And yet I would argue that there were such things as classes in ancient society, and a form of “class struggle,” but the latter must be accurately described.¹⁴⁵

Karpyuk holds that there were no crowds in the ancient world, implicitly allying himself with the tradition that sees “the” crowd as properly a modern phenomenon. By allowing for a looser definition of “crowd,” perhaps expressible as “an aggregation of bodies described *as such*; that is, with stress placed on their multiplicity and/or their acting in concert,” I hope to identify points within archaic and classical Greek texts at which a crowd, if not “the (‘true’) crowd,” can be seen. Expanding our focus in this way, I will still follow what Karpyuk announces as his method:

There are two obvious ways to look for appearances of crowds in ancient texts: first, to pick out all the words that are connected with crowds, and to study their usage. Second, to pull out of the context all the situations which indicate any trace of crowd activity or at least crowd existence.¹⁴⁶

This dissertation will mix these approaches. Each Chapter will trace all the relevant uses of particular words in a given author or genre. As identified by Karpyuk, ὄμιλος and ὄχλος are the two “smoking guns” which identify the description of a crowd-like grouping. To these I add ὄμαδος. In some instances, even in the absence of these and other crowd-words, I will examine a periphrastic description of a group to reveal the underlying concept of collectivity. Crowd scenes are often described by periphrasis. πολυ/πολλ- often signals a grouping of people; ἐν μεσῶι can do the same. Homeric similes often emphasize plurality and numerosity, referencing animal groupings, piled leaves, or a series of waves. These are crowd images in the Canettian sense.

While periphrases will be examined, however, I have structured the inquiry, especially in the chapter on Homer, around a core of fixed terms. This is not only to provide structure; by sticking with these terms of more limited valence, rather than extensively exploring similes, which employ words such as “swarm” with multiple poetic and naturalistic valences, the focus on crowds *qua* crowds will be tighter.

Karpyuk’s article establishes a contrast between terms which will lead me into the next chapter and beyond:

ὄχλος surfaces for the first time during a period of the first half of the fifth century BC which was active in word coining and appearance of new concepts. At first it was used on a par with ὄμιλος, well-known since Homeric times, which also had the meaning of “crowd,” “unorganized gathering.” But ὄμιλος had the primary meaning of “connection with something, contact, affinity,” whereas ὄχλος belongs to a completely different semantic group¹⁴⁷ (“anxiety, difficulty, inconvenience”).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Sagan 1994:249-50

¹⁴⁶ Karpyuk 80

¹⁴⁷ Cf. my comments on *Medea* 337 in Chapter Three, where I question whether these “semantic groups” are truly “completely different.”

In addition to these two words, there are other terms which will trigger our “crowd detector.” πλη- words of “filling” and “fullness,” also of “mass” and (in the democratic context) majority, are often used to describe the actions and characteristics of “packs” and crowds. ἄθρ-¹⁴⁹ words of “closeness,” in the sense of multiple objects gathered closely together,¹⁵⁰ are often used of military and other aggregations of bodies. This root is especially common in participles: A general or other elite figure will go somewhere ἄθροίσαζ+ (crowd-noun), “having gathered together [an army, etc.]. The frequency of this formulation suggests an underlying model of a “leader-principle,” similar to the Freudian model discussed above, by which elite figures can gather, shape and direct large groupings of other bodies.

Finally, one word – δῆμος - has a potential crowd valence,¹⁵¹ even as it points the way to a more abstract political concept that comes to its full significance in rhetorical and other texts. Since this word has such a ‘thick’ meaning, and since discussing it would lead inevitably to political considerations beyond the scope of this study, I will mostly overlook it in favor of words whose ‘crowd-ness’ is more direct and univocal.

¹⁴⁸ Karpyuk 81.

¹⁴⁹ The alpha in this root is not privative but intensive: a- + throos: many *sounds*. Thus, the root for “gathering” may be in its origin precisely a crowd descriptor.

¹⁵⁰ And, in a striking and uncanny textual moment (*Bacchae* 725, see Chapter Three), of the “collective mouth” of the bacchantes.

¹⁵¹ E.g. *Iliad* XXIV.776, cited in the following chapter, which describes the thronging Trojan mourners as *apeiron demos*.

CHAPTER TWO HOMERIC CROWD

Previous investigations of “Homeric society” have focused either on attempts to reconstruct the class structure of the society the poems purportedly reflect, or on the individual psyche of the elite subject depicted therein. Both approaches have their limitations. Both have neglected one object of representation: the crowd.

Studies of “Homeric psychology” have been largely studies of the individual. Whether they explain Homeric aggression as a product of the Oedipal complex,¹⁵² or as a struggle for status among elite males,¹⁵³ they treat Homeric aggression, indeed all Homeric action, as an individual phenomenon. Even a recent study of violence in Homer¹⁵⁴ applying insights from evolutionary psychology, where one might expect an investigation of group activity, is almost entirely individualistic in its focus.

This dissertation focuses on the crowd, rather than the individual. “Crowd” is an especially difficult word to define, as I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding chapter. We will not investigate all representations of groups in Homer. Such an investigation would require book-length treatment in its own right, and would in any case be far too general for our purposes.¹⁵⁵ What we are not looking for are descriptions of groups *as such*: as masses of people. Rather, we are looking for representations of the ὄχλος (*ochlos*), the Greek word which most closely approaches “crowd” in the sense of “mob” – an unruly, unauthorized gathering of people. In our search for the prehistory of the fifth-century ὄχλος, we must start with Homer, with the ways in which Homer represents the crowd.

In “The Structure of Authority in the the *Iliad*,” Walter Donlan posits “group authority” as a central theme in the poem, in tension with “position-authority.”¹⁵⁶ In the end, the crisis in relations between elite figures is resolved by a reassertion of “collective” authority. His model stands in stark contrast to Marxian readings of Homer,¹⁵⁷ which understand the poems as ultimately reinforcing an aristocratic ideology, even as they appear to question it. While Donlan may well be correct in reading the *Iliad* as an expression of a pre- or proto-aristocratic textual/historic moment, his article does not directly address the portrayal of the military crowd.

¹⁵² Sagan 1979

¹⁵³ Van Wees; Gottschall.

¹⁵⁴ Gottschall

¹⁵⁵ Haubold has studied the Homeric λαός. His study, however, is precisely not of the λαός as a “group among others” (ix, emphasis added), but rather as a sociological and ritualistic background theme to the Homeric epics.

¹⁵⁶ Donlan 64-5: “Group-authority is the primal element, the matrix, as it were, of normal social interaction [among the early Greeks] . . . [I]ts historical foundation is prior, hearkening back to a time . . . where all action was essentially collective, and ‘leaders’ emerged according to the situational demands and fell back into the ranks.”

¹⁵⁷ Rose 1992, Thalmann 1998. Morris (1986) cautions against reading Homer as a reflection of any particular social scheme or historical moment, especially (97-98) on matters of kingship and social hierarchy.

Geddes makes the contrarian argument that Homer does not depict “lower classes,” as distinct from slaves, at all.¹⁵⁸ Further, Geddes sees the assembly as a universal and fundamental institution in Homeric society, with no *formal* “rules preventing anyone who wanted from speaking.”¹⁵⁹ This model of Homeric society leaves very little room for a permanent hierarchical social order.¹⁶⁰ Geddes concludes: “[T]he poetry should be read again with less prejudice in order to understand exactly what ‘Homeric’ society really is.”¹⁶¹

What follows is my attempt to “read with less prejudice” some passages in which Homer describes crowds *as such*: as masses of people acting more or less in unison. This survey will focus primarily on a few words, which all connote aggregation and/or closeness of persons. Certain other words, while unarguably describing groups, are less helpful for the project of isolating the crowd *qua* crowd. For example, στίξ, a “rank” or “line” of soldiers, is in the *Iliad* a purely military term, without the social and psychological valence of ὄμιλος.

To examine every such collective noun in Homer would require a monograph in itself, and would be a study more of military terminology than of the crowd. Characters often move across or otherwise in relation to the “ranks,” but cataloguing these instances would be less useful than a focus on the terms that carry more weight of “crowd-ness.” These terms will be more “social” or “political,” and will tend to stress the *collectivity* of the persons composing them.

In the first book of the *Iliad*, Achilles ἀγορήνδε καλέσσατο λαόν (“called the people to assembly”).¹⁶² They gather, and Achilles begins the battle of words. Nowhere in the assembly-scene are the reactions of the audience described. At the end of the passage, the assembly is dissolved thus:

“Ὡς τὼ γ’ ἀντιβίοισι μαχεσσαμένω ἐπέεσσιν
 ἀνστήτην, λῦσαν δ’ ἀγορὴν παρὰ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
 “So the two, having battled with wrangling words,
 Stood, and they broke up the assembly by the ships of the Achaians.”¹⁶³

Even in their rivalry, the two elite commanders are linked by the dual article and participle as agents. They dismiss their audience, whose departure is no more described

¹⁵⁸ Geddes 27: “I intended to isolate the lower orders in Homeric society and I have failed . . . As far as Homer goes, they hardly exist at all.”

¹⁵⁹ Geddes 31. Also 32: “Homer is scrupulous in calling attention to the state of public opinion at every stage and makes it clear that he considered it an important factor in the situation.”

¹⁶⁰ Geddes 36: “The notion of kingship seems to be empty of content. Homeric kings . . . reveal nothing about any social structure in the real world.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid. Prior to this political moment – indeed, hard on the poem’s opening lines – the Achaians already constitute a crowd, albeit not one formally summoned by figures in authority. At I.15 Chryses entreats all the Achaians, but most of all the two Atreids; at I.22 ἄλλοι πάντες Ἀχαιοὶ signify their desire to return Chryses’s daughter, but Agamemnon overrides this initial sign of popular approval (I.24-25).

¹⁶² I.54.

¹⁶³ I.304-05. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own, although I have consulted other versions in the case of especially difficult passages.

than was its response to the debate as it occurred. In this first book, the crowd-as-political-audience is almost invisible.

Matters are very different in the second book. When Agamemnon calls a general assembly of all the troops, the actions and reactions of the crowd are described in detail. The first half of the second book of the *Iliad* can be read as a series of attempts to consolidate the unruly mass of the Greek army in a properly ordered form. Only when this consolidation is complete can the famous Catalogue of Ships follow.

On the advice of a dream-messenger sent from Zeus, Agamemnon first gathers a council of elites, then orders his heralds to call all the Achaians to assembly. To the preassembled group he assigns the task:

ὑμεῖς δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἐρητύειν ἐπέεσσιν.

But you restrain (the common soldiers) with words, each man in a different place.¹⁶⁴

(literally *allothen allos*: another-where [adverbial] another-man [noun], or more idiomatically “each man in a different place.”)

Agamemnon is seeding the larger group, about to assemble, with leaders who can act as “crowd crystals” or catalysts, influencing those around them to act properly. Each of these men is to wield asymmetric information to influence the behavior of the general assembly. The elite know Agamemnon’s true plan, but these are not the words (ἐπέεσσιν) they are directed to use. Rather, judging from the tone Odysseus will adopt later when speaking to a “common man” among the panicked crowd, the elite “ushers” of the general assembly are to use direct commands, drawing on their localized prestige and rhetorical advantages.¹⁶⁵

As it assembles, the crowd’s tumult and noise are captured in the bravura simile of the bees. The language of this passage stresses through dense repetition (*botrudon*, *halis*, *iladon*) the clustering of the assembling army into smaller sub-units:

ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας βουλῆς ἐξ ἤρχε νέεσθαι,
οἱ δ' ἐπανεστήσαν πείθοντό τε ποιμένι λαῶν
σκήπτοῦχοι βασιλῆες. ἐπεσσεύοντο δὲ λαοί.
ἦύτε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσάων ἀδινάων,
πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων.
βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν.
αἰ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλις πεποτήαται, αἰ δέ τε ἔνθα.
ὥς τῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ νεῶν ἄπο καὶ κλισιάων
ἠϊόνος προπάρειθε βαθείης ἐστιχόωντο
ἰλαδὸν εἰς ἀγορὴν. μετὰ δέ σφισιν Ὅσσα δεδήει
ὀτρύνουσ' ἰέναι, Δίος ἄγγελος. οἱ δ' ἀγέροντο.
τετρήχει δ' ἀγορὴ, ὑπὸ δὲ στεναχίζετο γαῖα

¹⁶⁴ II.75

¹⁶⁵ On economies of prestige see generally Goode, with a brief mention of “Homeric Greece” as an example of a society with a “strong sense of personal honor,” while noting that “the norms for making public claims to prestige do vary from one society to another and across time” (21).

λαῶν ἰζόντων, ὄμαδος¹⁶⁶ δ' ἦν.
 Speaking thus he led the departure from the council,
 And the scepter-wielding princes rose and obeyed
 The shepherd of the people. And the people rushed forward,
 As go the tribes of thronging bees, ever-new coming
 From a hollow rock. They fly in clusters over spring flowers,
 Some wheeling here, some there, in bands.
 So before the deep beach marched their tribes in abundance
 From ships and huts, in troops to the *agora*. And among them
 Burned Rumor, messenger of Zeus, urging them to go.
 And they gathered. The *agora* shook, and the ground groaned
 Beneath the people as they sat, and there was a *homados*.¹⁶⁷

Royal heralds eventually check their disorder with shouts, and the noise of the multitude ceases:

ἐννέα δέ σφεας
 κήρυκες βοόωντες ἐρήτυον, εἴ ποτ' αὐτῆς
 σχοίατ', ἀκούσειαν δὲ διοτρεφῶν βασιλῆων.
 σπουδῆι δ' ἔζετο λαός, ἐρήτυθεν δὲ καθ' ἔδρας
 παυσάμενοι κλαγγῆς.
 But nine shouting heralds were checking them,
 (To see if) they might ever refrain from their cry,
 And give heed to the god-nourished princes.
 The people seated in haste, and settled themselves in their places,
 Ceasing their clamor.¹⁶⁸

Haubold observes of this moment:

As is traditional in early Greek epic, the people eventually form a space of communal restraint which is marked by the noise they make on arrival. Great care and energy go into organising the ‘turmoil’ (the word ὄμαδος is often used in battle descriptions), but v. 99 also introduces an element of collective will. The change from unstructured to structured social life is made not without aetiological pathos. *If anything, this is a beginning of communal action.* We cannot, of course, say whether for an early Greek audience our scene would have been the most elaborate picture of gathering the people. But certainly for an Iliadic audience it replays the ‘original’ assembly at the beginning of the Trojan war. It comes as a shock that the assembly breaks down only a short while after it has been called. ...¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ As discussed below, *homados* denotes specifically the noise made by a *crowd*.

¹⁶⁷ II.85-96

¹⁶⁸ II.96-100

¹⁶⁹ Haubold 54-55 (emphasis added).

Agamemnon attempts to shame his audience by reminding them of their sheer size and putative outnumbering of their opponents by more than ten to one. Let not future men, he implores the crowd, hear that

μὰψ οὔτω τοιόνδε τοσόνδε τε λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν
ἄπρηκτον πόλεμον πολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι
ἀνδράσι παυρότεροισι, τέλος δ' οὔ πώ τι πέφανται.
εἴ περ γάρ κ' ἐθέλοιμεν Ἀχαιοί τε Τρῳᾶς τε,
ὄρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες, ἀριθμηθήμεναι ἄμφω,
Τρῳᾶς μὲν λέξασθαι ἐφέστιοι ὅσσοι ἔασιν,
ἡμεῖς δ' ἐς δεκάδας διακοσμηθεῖμεν Ἀχαιοί,
Τρῳῶν δ' ἄνδρα ἕκαστοι ἐλοίμεθα οἰνοχοεῦειν,
πολλαὶ κεν δεκάδες δευοίατο οἰνοχόοιο.

Vainly thus fought for so long such a great host of Achaians
A war accomplishing nothing – and fought against fewer men,
But showed no end, no how. For if we Achaians and Trojans both
Were willing to strike oaths of truce, to enumerate both sides,
And the Trojans were counted, however many are householders,
But we Achaians were arranged into bands of ten,
And we bands each chose a Trojan man to be pour our wine,
Many bands of ten would lack a cupbearer.¹⁷⁰

If Haubold is correct in identifying this second Achaian assembly as the birth of “communal action” (a/k/a *politics*), Agamemnon’s image of a “census” of Greeks and Trojans – predicated, of course, on a truce – is the birth of political overreach. As the succeeding passage shows, Agamemnon has overestimated his control over his own people’s movement and obedience; counting and grouping the Trojans is far beyond his abilities. Nevertheless, his words emphasize the enormity of the assembly, which in turn highlights the fact that what follows is a description of mass panic.

Agamemnon attempts reverse psychology on the crowd, imploring them to quit and go home. This provokes an explosive reaction in the assembly:

ὣς φάτο, τοῖσι δὲ θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι ὄρινε
πᾶσι μετὰ πληθύν¹⁷¹, ὅσοι οὐ βουλῆς ἐπάκουσαν.
Κινήθη δ' ἀγορὴ φη κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης,
πόντου Ἰκαρίοιο, τὰ μὲν τ' Εὐρὸς τε Νότος τε
ῶρορ' ἐπαίξας πατρὸς Διὸς ἐκ νεφελῶν.
ὥς δ' ὅτε κινήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήιον ἐλθῶν,
λάβρος ἐπαιγίζων, ἐπὶ τ' ἡμῦν ἀσταχέεσσιν,
ὥς τῶν πᾶσ' ἀγορὴ κινήθη. τοὶ δ' ἀλαλητῶι
νῆας ἔπ' ἐσσεύοντο ...

¹⁷⁰ II.120-28

¹⁷¹ πληθὺς is another word used by Homer to describe groupings of people. The ring composition here makes it particularly clear that the word is to some extent synonymous with ὄμιλος.

“Thus he spoke, and he stirred the spirit in all their (the crowd’s) breasts,
 Throughout the throng, as many as were not privy to the council.
 And the assembly was moved like great waves at sea ...
 Like when Zephyr stirs, coming over the tall wheat ...
 So was the whole assembly of (the soldiers) moved. And they rushed
 To the ships with a cry ...”¹⁷²

The words of the elite speaker provoke a panicked reaction in the crowd. Those whose *thumos* is pricked are specified: they are the rank-and-file, all those who were not present at the earlier “council,” in which Agamemnon announced his intentions to test the resolve of the mass. Here, if anywhere in Homer, is a true crowd of “common” people – those excluded from a higher level of political knowledge.

Their reaction is likened to two natural phenomena: the waves of the sea, and rippling stalks of grain. The latter image maintains the separateness of the soldiers, while conveying their common motion under one impulse. The former image, that of the sea, suggests rather that the soldiers are a fluid mass, with bursts of motion breaking out here and there.¹⁷³ Similes of crowd can either stress the multiplicity of that crowd – that is to say, the accumulation in one space of many essentially identical units – or blur the separation between the crowds’ constituents, making them seem like one larger entity.¹⁷⁴

Haubold says of the disruption of the assembly:
 Agamemnon turns a structured world of groups and leaders in which all the responsibility for success or defeat rests on him ... into a homogeneous social world of equally interested single agents who, *qua* ‘heroes’ ... cannot escape the role they must play in the drama of their own downfall.¹⁷⁵

Haubold here seems to me to have things almost exactly backwards – or rather, to have identified only one of two coexisting dynamics. It is certainly true that Agamemnon’s performance in this second Achaian assembly (the first having witnessed his quarrel with Achilles in Book One) disrupts the “structured” audience. But when Odysseus, fixing the mess which Agamemnon has created, encounters individual “kings” and “men of the people,”¹⁷⁶ he is not appealing to a series of “equally interested single agents” so much as attempting to reverse¹⁷⁷ a *crowd* phenomenon: panicked flight can

¹⁷² II.142-50

¹⁷³ Cf. Theweleit, *passim*, on fluid as a universal theme in depictions of masses of people. Cf. also Reich’s theories of “orgone” as an all-pervading psychosexual energy.

¹⁷⁴ Gone, however, is the potentially riotous bee-swarm of the men first assembling. Grain and water seem more passive; the crowd once duly assembled is a thing to be managed but presents no real threat.

¹⁷⁵ Haubold 56

¹⁷⁶ II.188 and 198

¹⁷⁷ Strictly speaking the phenomenon is the disintegration of the totalistic political crowd into a series of smaller units, down to the level of the individual. These individuals are distinguished by class or role composition (compare II.188 with II.197), but it is worth noting that no distinction is drawn between the *behavior of* (as compared to Odysseus’s strategy in addressing) the panicked leaders and common soldiers.

The overall emphasis is on the breakup of the all-inclusive crowd into fragments. This is not to say, however, that these social fragments did not already exist in the superficially homogenous total

only be addressed at an individual level, in an attempt to “flip” some crowd members back into a more structured pattern which will hopefully spread throughout the mob.

Odysseus’s appeals to the “kings” and “commoners” are different, but only the first are even partially addressed as “agents,” rather than as members of a particular group. To the “king,” Odysseus says:

δαιμόνι', οὐ σε ἔοικε κακὸν ὥς δειδίσσεσθαι,
ἀλλ' αὐτός τε κάθησο καὶ ἄλλους ἴδρυε λαούς.
Good sir, it doesn't suit you to panic like a wretch,
But sit ye down yourself and seat the rest of the people.¹⁷⁸

Here he plays to his addressee’s vanity and self-perception as elite. However, he goes on to construct his addressee not as an individual psychological agent, but as a fellow member of a political cadre, and a social class.¹⁷⁹

ἐν βουλῇι δ' οὐ πάντες ἀκούσαμεν οἶον ἔειπε;¹⁸⁰
Didn't we all hear what (Agamemnon) said in council?

That is to say, “Weren’t you part of the elite crowd, the – as it were – upper house? *Why are you acting as part of the mob?* Why have you lost your elite knowledge? You have failed totally in your task of ensuring orderly behavior within your designated slice of crowd.”

Odysseus’s tone in addressing the “man of the people”¹⁸¹ is starkly different:

δαιμόνι', ἀτρέμας ἦσο καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἄκουε,
οἱ σέο φέρτεροί εἰσι, σὺ δ' ἀπτόλεμος καὶ ἀναλκις,
οὔτε ποτ' ἐν πολέμοι ἐναρίθμιος οὔτ' ἐνὶ βουλῇι.
οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν ἐνθαδ' Ἀχαιοί.
οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη. εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
εἷς βασιλεύς, ὣι δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω
σκῆπτρον τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφίσι βουλευῆσι.
Good sir, sit down with out fear and listen to others' words,
Those who are better than you, for you are unwarlike and weak,
Nor are you to be counted either in war or in council.
For we Achaians won't all be kings here. Multirulership isn't a good.
Let there be one ruler, one king, to whom the child of crooked-scheming
Kronos gave the scepter and customs, that he may rule with them.¹⁸²

assembly-crowd. As discussed below, Odysseus appeals to the “princes” to resume their proper function as what I style a sort of “upper house,” elite crystals within the overall crowd which are supposed to keep it in proper order.

¹⁷⁸ II.190-91

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Thalmann 1988, which explores “strains and conflicts” (3) within Homeric society, heroic ideology, and the epic audience.

¹⁸⁰ II.194

¹⁸¹ Ὀν δ' αὖ δήμου τ' ἄνδρα, II.198

¹⁸² II.200-06

These words would seem more appropriate if addressed to Thersites, who is about to have his moment. He truly is unwarlike, and insubordinate to boot;¹⁸³ Odysseus will need to beat him into silence. However, the “man of the people” is instead addressed as if the *average*, rather than the worst, soldier were “unwarlike” and fit only to listen to and execute the commands of the elite. The scenes of assembly and panic are revealing of both “class” and “political” issues.

We will miss this dynamic if we see this as a crowd of “heroes,” or any other type of “single agents”. The rank-and-file are not failed heroes; they are their own collective entity. Along the lines of Thomas Jefferson’s emendation of the New Testament to leave only the words directly uttered by Jesus, we can imagine a “worm’s-eye view” of the *Iliad* in which all individual actors are removed, leaving only the military and other crowds wrestling back and forth. The crowds are not (just) aggregations of potential or unnamed warrior individuals. They are their own thing, even if their potential agency is difficult to glimpse in this earliest stage of their representation.

GROUP AND SOUND

What words in the Homeric vocabulary denote what we would recognize as “crowd?”

ὄχλος is not a Homeric word; its first appearance is in Pindar.¹⁸⁴ In our investigation of crowd behavior in Homer, our investigation will focus rather on a pair of words: ὄμιλος (*homilos*) and ὄμαδος (*homados*). Etymologically, these words mean “together-group”¹⁸⁵ and “together-sound”.¹⁸⁶

A: *ILIAD*

ὄμιλος

Karpyuk likens ὄμιλος to ὄχλος, attributing to both “the meaning of ‘crowd,’ ‘unorganized gathering.’”¹⁸⁷ This is at best an overstatement; as we will see, ὄμιλος is used to describe a variety of masses of people, rarely if ever with a clear connotation of being ‘unorganized.’ In the *Iliad*, unsurprisingly, it is used almost exclusively of the

¹⁸³ See Rose 1988.

¹⁸⁴ Karpyuk 81; LSJ s.v. θόρυβος is also not found in Homer. As will become clear through the investigation of these words, ὄμιλος:ὄμαδος::ὄχλος:θόρυβος::word for a crowd:word for collective noise made by that crowd.

Snell (III:682-84): “Crowd, throng, mass, assembly, group: social, military and related bucolic/hunting uses ... 1. Basic social, non-military use *crowd, throng, concourse*.”

¹⁸⁵ N.B. the “group” is ἵλη, specifically a military *band* or *troop*. Snell: “-ιλ- either suffix or rel. to ἵλη.”

¹⁸⁶ Welskopf (184-85):

Das Wort ὄμιλος und andere Bildungen mit dem Stamm koennen sich auf das Gewuehl im Kampfe beziehen ... Es kann sich aber bei ‘homilos’ und den Ableitungen auch darum handeln, dass jemand mit anderen, besseren oder schlechteren Maennern Gemeinschaft hat. ... ὄμιλος hat somit ... nicht nur die sozial-technische Bedeutung eines Getuemfels oder Gewuehls, sondern kann auch in der verbalen Form den ethischen Sinn der Gemeinschaft mit Guten oder Schlechten annehmen.

¹⁸⁷ Karpyuk 81.

“throng of battle.”¹⁸⁸ What is worthy of note is this: in almost 80 occurrences of the word throughout the poem, it is only used in the nominative twice. Neither of these instances (discussed in detail below) denote a military group. The military ὄμιλος is never an agent.¹⁸⁹ Rather, it is the field, or backdrop, against and through which heroic and divine characters move and act. They move καθ’ ὄμιλον (seventeen times)¹⁹⁰, ἀν’ ὄμιλον (eight times), etc.; they are seen by other heroes ἐρχομένον προπάροιθεν ὀμίλου μακρὰ βιβάντα, “coming in front of the crowd, taking great strides.”¹⁹¹ They discover one another ὕστατον ὀμίλου ἑσταότα, “standing at the edge of the throng.”¹⁹² Ten times they “enter” or “mingle with” the ὄμιλος, e.g.:

ἡ δ’ ἀνδρὶ ἰκέλη Τρώων κατεδύσεθ’ ὄμιλον
In the likeness of a man, she entered into the crowd of Trojans.¹⁹³

If the crowd is the background against which heroes fight, the taunts and threats they issue show awareness of their relationship as elite individuals to the undistinguished mass. When Achilles confronts Aeneas, he asks him

Αἰνεΐα, τί σὺ τόσσον ὀμίλου πολλὸν ἐπελθων/ ἔστης;
Aeneas, why have you approached to step so far out from the ὄμιλος?¹⁹⁴

In a display of ring-composition, this speech concludes with Achilles attempting to send Aeneas back into the crowd:

ἀλλὰ σ’ ἔγωγ’ ἀναχωρήσαντα κελεύω
ἐς πλήθυν ἰέναι, μηδ’ ἀντίος ἴστασ’ ἐμεῖο,
πρίν τι κακὸν παθέειν.
But I bid you to retreat and go back into the crowd,
Not stand face to face with me,
Before you suffer some harm.¹⁹⁵

For one elite warrior to “order” another one to retreat to the safety of numbers is a particularly stinging insult – one which highlights the Homeric vision of battle as a series of elite encounters contrasted to a background of undifferentiated groupings.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁸ LSJ, second meaning.

¹⁸⁹ Van Wees (1988) analyzes the relations between leaders and the rank-and-file in Homeric ideology.

¹⁹⁰ E.g. II.209. On the constructions with *ana* and *kata*, see George (74).

¹⁹¹ III.22. Here the role of the ὄμιλος as “backdrop” to the actions of the heroic characters is most obvious.

¹⁹² XIII.459

¹⁹³ IV.86, of Athena in disguise. Lattimore renders this “she merged among the Trojans assembled.” The ὄμιλος is, precisely, a group with which one merges and in which one loses one’s identity – whether as an individual human, or, as here, even as a god.

¹⁹⁴ XX.178-79

¹⁹⁵ XX.196-98

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Glaucus’s image of the generations of men as leaves (VI.145-49), which captures the sense of the mass of men as at once ephemeral, fungible and at the mercy of the elements. No two snowflakes are alike,

Achilles's message to Aeneas, while delivered with some irony, is accurate in its portrayal of the ὄμιλος/πληθὺς as a site of relative safety compared to the encounters between elite individuals. Under the guidance of such an elite leader, if the ὄμιλος manages to hold together and follow that leader's directions, its members will remain uninjured. For it is only by being singled out as a named hero, whether one with an elaborately narrated genealogy or one of the many figures for whom we have only a name, that one becomes a potential victim of elite wrath. To remain anonymous and unenumerated is to stay out of harm's way – although it is also of course to remain unremembered, and is therefore definitionally incompatible with hero status.

During the fight over Patroklos's body, Ajax's successful marshalling of the troops highlights the contrasts between one and many, danger and safety:

Αἴας γὰρ μάλα πάντας ἐπώιχετο πολλὰ κελεύων.
οὔτε τιν' ἐξοπίσω νεκροῦ χάζεσθαι ἀνώγει
οὔτε τινα προμάχεσθαι Ἀχαιῶν ἔξοχον ἄλλων,
ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἀμφ' αὐτῶι βεβάμεν, σχεδόθεν δὲ μάχεσθαι. ...
παυρότεροι δὲ πολὺ φθίνυθον. μέμνηντο γὰρ αἰεὶ
ἀλλήλοισι ἀν' ὄμιλον ἀλεξέμεναι φόνον αἰπὺν.
For Ajax went to absolutely all of them, giving many orders.
He ordered no one to yield before the body,
Nor fight in front apart from the other Achaeans,
But to step hard by him, and to fight from afar ...
And far fewer of them were dying. For they remembered always to ward
off utter slaughter, (by bunching) in a ὄμιλος with each other.¹⁹⁷

Later in the same book, the ὄμιλος's potential safety is confirmed. Achilles's charioteer Automedon

ῥεῖα μὲν γὰρ φεύγεσκεν ὑπέκ Τρώων ὄρυμαγδοῦ,
ῥεῖα δ' ἐπαίξασκε πολὺν καθ' ὄμιλον ὀπάζων.
ἀλλ' οὐχ ἦρει φῶτας, ὅτε σεύαιτο διώκειν.
οὐ γάρ πως ἦν οἶον ἐόνθ' ἱερῶι ἐνὶ δίφρῳι
ἔγχει ἐφορμᾶσθαι καὶ ἐπίσχειν ὠκέας ἵππους.
He easily fled out from under the Trojan tumult,
And easily he darted along the great ὄμιλος.
But he could not kill men, when he rushed to chase them.
For, being alone in his chariot, he was not able to pursue with the spear
And hold his swift horses in check (at the same time).¹⁹⁸

but for the purposes of this simile all leaves are much the same. Only heroic exploits and noble lineage, memorialized in verse, takes heroes out from the anonymous mass.

¹⁹⁷ XVII.356-65

¹⁹⁸ XVII.461-65. On chariots as “taxis” taking elite characters to and from the battlefield, rather than as platforms for mounted attack, see Greenhalgh (9 and *passim*).

Here, a character of ambiguous status – identified by name but playing an auxiliary role as servant to another, indisputably heroic character – cannot crack the surface of the ὄμιλος. Therefore, he cannot single out any member of that group for a confrontation, which would trigger some sort of description of his opponent (whether merely a name or a more elaborate lineage) and mark them for possible death. The collective ὄμιλος is the object of heroic aggression in the sense of providing a “pool” of potential victims, but the epic way of death requires that these victims be individuated before their demise.

The protection offered by the ὄμιλος is certainly not absolute. An example of successful intrusion by Ajax into and election of a victim from among the ὄμιλος occurs earlier in the same book:

τὸν δ' υἱὸς Τελαμῶνος ἐπαίξας δι' ὀμίλου
πληῖξ' αὐτοσχεδιήν ...

The son of Telamon, rushing through the crowd, struck him (Hippochoos)
at close range ...¹⁹⁹

In the previous book, Patroklos's death scene sets individual figures' danger against the safety provided by the crowd. After Apollo strikes Patroklos, the first human to join in the killing is Euphorbos. Here the narrator directly addresses Patroklos, before shifting back into third-person description:

ὅς τοι πρῶτος ἐφῆκε βέλος, Πατρόκλεες ἱππεῦ,
οὔδε δάμασς'. ὁ μὲν αὖτις ἀνέδραμε, μίκτο δ' ὀμίλωι,
ἐκ χροὸς ἀρπάξας δόρυ μείλινον, οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε
Πάτροκλον γυμνόν περ ἔοντ' ἐν δηιοτήτι.
Πάτροκλος δὲ θεοῦ πληγῆι καὶ δουρὶ δαμασθεὶς
ἄψ ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ ἀλεείνων.
Ἔκτωρ δ' ὡς εἶδεν Πατροκῆα μεγάθυμον
ἄψ ἀναχαζόμενον, βεβλήμενον ὄξει χαλκῶι,
ἀγγίμολόν ῥά οἱ ἦλθε κατὰ στίχας ...

He first hurled a missile at you, horseman Patroklos,
But did not slay you. He thereupon ran away, and mixed with the ὄμιλος,
Snatching his ash spear from your flesh, nor did he remain-to-face
With Patroklos, unarmed though he was, in (one-on-one) combat.
But Patroklos, beaten by the strike of the god and by spear,
Sought to withdraw back to his “tribe”²⁰⁰ of companions and flee death.
But when Hektor saw great-hearted Patroklos
Retreating back, struck with the bronze spear,
He came near to him across the ranks ...²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ XVII.293-94

²⁰⁰ ἔθνος in this sense is another “crowd word,” cf. II.87, 91. This is, as it were, a reversal of the “ethno-geographic” usage of ὄμιλος in Pindar and Aeschylus, discussed in Chapter Three. There, a crowd-term is used to speak of an entire nation of people; here, a term which normally means “group” in a broad demographic sense is used to denote a particular physical grouping of people.

Patroklos is only a few lines away from death. The contrast between Euphorbos's and Patroklos's motions in this scene illuminates the role of the ὄμιλος within the political economy of Homeric prestige. At the end of his *aristeia*, Patroklos in his glory is brought down by divine intervention, in the form of a blow from Apollo. His second, human attacker is in a sense merely “piling on” – dispensing a blow which further wounds but does not kill Patroklos, softened up by Apollo's ambush as he is.

Having failed to achieve the glory owed to the killer of the most successful Greek berzerker to date, Euphorbos merges back into the ὄμιλος, becoming again an “extra.” He is temporarily safe from retribution, but by the same token his part in this death scene will not flower into a moment of true glory.²⁰² The safety of the ὄμιλος is precisely its anonymity. Patroklos, in his til-now triumphant rampage, exists at a level of social prominence and military excellence well above Euphorbos's; unlike his hit-and-run opponent, Patroklos cannot return to the safety of numbers.

Unable to merge into the anonymous crowd, Patroklos - μέγας Πάτροκλος, we are reminded, trapped by his very excellence – is exposed to the predatory gaze of an even greater hero. Hektor sees that he's wounded and swoops across the ranks to kill him.²⁰³ Euphorbos's strike, then, is an aborted effort from a character neither fully separated from the general ὄμιλος nor particularly distinguished within the list of minor characters. Patroklos is worthy of a greater opponent, and only the highly privileged and irreducibly singular Hektor can claim ultimate victory over Achilles's body double.

The line at XVI.817 (ἄψ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείνων) is a repeat of III.32. There the would-be retreator is Alexandros, and his pursuer Menelaos:

τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν ἀρηΐφίλος Μενέλαος
ἐρχόμενον προπάραιθεν ὀμίλου μακρὰ βιβάντα,
ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας,
εὐρών ἢ ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα
πεινάων. μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει, εἴ περ ἂν αὐτὸν
σεύωνται ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροὶ τ' αἰζηοί.
ὥς ἐχάρη Μενέλαος Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδὼν. φάτο γὰρ τείσεσθαι ἀλείτην.
αὐτίκα δ' ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε.
τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς
ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα, κατεπλήγη φίλον ἦτορ,
ἄψ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείνων.
ὥς δ' ὅτε τίς τε δράκοντα ἰδὼν παλίνορσος ἀπέστη
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσηις, ὑπὸ τε τρόμος ἔλλαβε γυῖα,

²⁰¹ XVI.812-20

²⁰² In the opening passage of Book XVII, the slain Euphorbos is likened to a cow killed by a lion.

²⁰³ XVI.818-21

ἄψ δ' ἀνεχώρησεν, ὄχρος τέ μιν εἶλε παρειάς,
 ὡς αὔτις καθ' ὄμιλον ἔδν Τρώων ἀγερώχων
 δείσας Ἄτρεός υἱὸν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής.
 As Menelaos, beloved of Ares, saw him coming,
 Going out in front of the ὄμιλος with broad steps,
 Rejoiced his heart like a lion coming across a great carcass,
 Finding a horned deer or wild goat, hungry, and gulps it down
 Fiercely, even if swift dogs and robust youths are rushing him,
 So Menelaos rejoiced seeing godlike Alexandros with his eyes,
 And saying he would punish the thief, leapt straightaway from his chariot
 To the ground with his armor. And when godlike Alexandros saw him
 Appearing in the front ranks, he was struck in his dear heart.
 And fleeing death, retreated into his band of friends,
 As when a man who sees a snake turns around and steps aside
 In mountain glens, and a trembling seizes under his limbs,
 And he withdraws, and paleness takes his cheeks.
 So in turn did he enter the ὄμιλος of the mighty Trojans,
 Alexandros god-like, fearing the son of Atreus.²⁰⁴

Menelaos feels pleasure in seeing his intended victim step out in front of the ὄμιλος; this is both the thrill of the hunt, as well as an implicitly *spectatorial* pleasure. Alexandros (a man of exceptional beauty, by the way; Menelaos relishes his apparently imminent conquest of his wife's seducer with an almost erotic joy) as imminent corpse thrills the one who "picks him out of a line-up," so to speak. Menelaos pays no more attention to the background ὄμιλος than the simile's lion does to the dog pack.

When Alexandros sees Menelaos "appearing in the front ranks" (ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα) his reaction is quite different. Alexandros trembles and retreats back into the ὄμιλος. Being out in front is glorious, when you want to display yourself to others or when you've locked your sights on an inferior enemy. Still, when you lose control, of the fight or even, as here, of your limbs, best to rejoin the group, where you will not be called upon to perform individual feats of bravery and skill, and your chance of being targeted is greatly reduced. One must negotiate a tradeoff between glory and safety.

Ὅμιλος as Agent

Only twice in the poem is ὄμιλος, in the non-military sense of "any assembled crowd, throng of people,"²⁰⁵ the subject of a verb. The first occurrence is in the description of the Shield of Achilles:

πολλὸς δ' ἱμερόεντα χορὸν περίσταθ' ὄμιλος/τερπόμενοι
 "... and a great crowd stood round the lovely dancers, enjoying"²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ III.21-37

²⁰⁵ LSJ, first meaning; Snell calls this (III:682) the "[b]asic social, non-military use."

²⁰⁶ XVIII.603-04

The plural participle agrees with the conceptual plurality of the formally singular noun “crowd;” this plurality is further stressed by the adjective πολλός.²⁰⁷ The action performed by the ὄμιλος is merely to “stand around” the already round χορός,²⁰⁸ in keeping with the Shield’s overall pattern of concentric circles.²⁰⁹ This is the last scene described on the Shield, followed immediately by the encircling band of Ocean, the outermost limit.

The second and final occurrence of ὄμιλος in the nominative comes near the end of the poem, as Hektor’s body is wheeled inside Troy:

κλαίων δ’ ἀμφίσταθ’ ὄμιλος
 “and the crowd stood around, weeping.”²¹⁰

Again, the crowd is arranged in the manner of an audience; again there is a participle (singular, this time) describing their emotional reaction to what they see. From these two instances we see that a “crowd of spectators” is one potential meaning of ὄμιλος - a crowd whose actions are limited to passive observation and joyful or pitiful response to what they see. Yet while the Homeric ὄμιλος is distinctly passive, it does not seem to have the socially pejorative connotations which ὄχλος will carry in later literature.²¹¹

Ὀμιλεῖν

The verbal form is also worthy of consideration. This verb has two major valences of meaning, which at first sight seem contradictory: “I: To be in company with, consort with ... II: In hostile sense, join battle with.”²¹² Karpyuk notes of ὄμιλος that the “primary meaning [is] ‘connection with something, contact, affinity.’”²¹³ This contact can be associative or hostile, and this ambivalence is at the heart of the phenomenon known as Crowd. If one is part of a crowd, one is “associated” with it; if one encounters a crowd

²⁰⁷ The people in the agora depicted on the shield are specifically said to be grouped close together: λαοὶ δ’ εἰν ἀγορῇ ἕσαν ἀθροῖ.

²⁰⁸ At 600, the chorus’s movements are likened to a wheel.

²⁰⁹ The roundness of group arrangement is stressed throughout the *ekphrasis*, especially at XVIII.504-05: οἱ δὲ γέροντες/ ἦατ’ ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις ἱερῶι ἐνὶ κύκλωι (“and the old men sat on hewn stones in a sacred circle.”) A κύκλος-crowd thus viewed externally as an aesthetic object, or internally from the point of view of one of its members, is a manifestation of proper order. From the perspective of an individual fearing or surrounded by a crowd, the κύκλος is an enveloping threat. Contrast (all tragic passages discussed in Chapter Three) *Ajax* 723 (a crowd surrounding Ajax) with 749 (the “tyrannic circle” as a place of elders and elites to deliberate, as on the Shield). At *Orestes* 919 the κύκλος of the agora is a site of contamination which the good yeoman farmer avoids entering.

²¹⁰ XXIV.712

²¹¹ Particularly noteworthy is the Trojan crowd (δῆμος ἀπείρων, XXIV.776) of female mourners in Book XXIV (707-14, etc). They are portrayed without pejorative connotations, although it is also true that they and their actions are not described with the same terminology as the crowds examined here.

²¹² LSJ s.v.; cf. Snell: “Consort with, associate with ... (2) be joined in battle with, fight with or against or among.”

²¹³ Ibid.

from the outside, as it were, the encounter is likely to be at best unsympathetic, at worst fully “hostile.”

The first occurrence of this verb in the *Iliad* showcases its ambivalence:

Τυδείδην δ' οὐκ ἂν γνοίης ποτέροισι μετείη,

ἢ ἐ μετὰ Τρώεσσιν ὀμιλέοι ἢ μετ' Ἀχαιοῖς.

But you [addressed to audience as a single “implied reader”] wouldn’t have known which side the son of Tydeus was on,/ whether he *homilei*’d with the Trojans, or with the Achaeans.²¹⁴

This passage highlights the double meaning of the word. It is difficult, if not impossible, to tell which meaning of ὀμιλεῖν is intended – “associating with,” or “fighting against.” Obviously, Diomedes will be associated with one army and joining battle with the other, but which is which? In the broader context of the poem, the answer is obvious – the audience knows that Diomedes is Greek - but at the micro-level, meaning is suspended.

Sometimes the verb does not merely connote “association” in the hostile or solidaristic sense. It is sometimes clearly used to mean “swarm” – to form a *homilos* in a sense we are interested in: e.g., in the simile of flies around Sarpedon’s corpse: οἱ δ’ αἰεὶ περὶ νεκρὸν ὀμίλειον.²¹⁵

“Ομαδος

“Noise, din, esp. of the confused voices of a number of men ... noisy throng or mob of warriors ... din of battle.”²¹⁶

ὄμαδος is the voice of the crowd. Two passages above all make this clear. The first, discussed already above, occurs early in the second book of the *Iliad*. After Agamemon has announced his plan to the council of leaders, the mass of the army rushes in,²¹⁷ likened in a simile to swarms of bees.²¹⁸ As the men assemble:

τετρήχει δ' ἀγορή, ὑπὸ δὲ στεναχίζετο γαῖα

λαῶν ἰζόντων, ὄμαδος δ' ἦν.

And the assembly(-space) shook, and the earth groaned beneath the peoples as they sat, and there was a ὄμαδος.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ V.85-86. The passage goes on to explain this unreadability of Diomedes’s affiliation by likening him to a river in full stream (ποταμῶι πλήθοντι ἔοικώς, at 87). For Theweleit, water is the ultimate image of crowd in its liberating and associative potential; a man whose energy converts him to a fluid state will accordingly blur group boundaries.

²¹⁵ XVI.641, 644

²¹⁶ LSJ s.v., italics in original. Cf. Snell (III:673): “Lärm, Tumult, Getümmel, Haufen.”

²¹⁷ II.86 ἐπεσσεύοντο δὲ λαοί

²¹⁸ N.B.: two parallel adverbs are used in this simile, at II.89 and 93. Just as bees fly βοτρυδόν (“like a bunch of grapes”), so the “many tribes” (ἔθνεα πολλά) come forward ἰλαδόν, “in troops.” The ἰλα- in this second adverb is a root of the word ὄμιλος, reinforcing the crowd-ness of the army as it assembles.

²¹⁹ II.95-96

The ὄμαδος is a prodigious phenomenon, in its essence a product of the *multiplicity* of the crowd. Just as thousands of limbs moving in concert shake the very earth, the voices of thousands gathered together take on the dimensions of the roar of an earthquake.

A later occurrence of the word, again in the context of public assembly, confirms that ὄμαδος has already in Homer a *political* valence. Agamemnon and Achilles are ending their quarrel; Agamemnon prefaces his response to Achilles's overture thus:

ὦ φίλοι ἦρωες Δαναοί, θεράποντες Ἄρηος,
έσταότος μὲν καλὸν ἀκούειν, οὐδὲ ἔοικεν
ὕββάλλειν. χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἐπισταμένῳ περ ἔόντι.
ἀνδρῶν δ' ἐν πολλῶι ὀμάδῳι πῶς κέν τις ἀκούσαι
ἢ εἴποι; βλάβεται δὲ λιγύς περ ἑῶν ἀγορητής.
“O dear hero-Danaans, servants of Ares,
It is meet to listen to the speaker (literally “stander”), nor is it right
To interrupt, for that is harsh even for one who knows (sc. how to speak).
In a great ὄμαδος of men, how could one hear or speak?
He is interfered with, although he is a clear public speaker.”²²⁰

This anxious *captatio benevolentiae* is unique in the poem. Elsewhere, the elite speakers perform their ‘flyting-contests’²²¹ in front of a mostly mute audience. Here we glimpse an alternative: that the masses assembled to view these performances might interfere, that they may go beyond passive reaction to elite speech, and become in their noisy multiplicity a threat to the successful performance. Agamemnon, a hero notably insecure in his position, is the appropriate character to voice this concern, which points ahead to future political possibilities that will be realized in fifth-century Athens.

Finally, one other instance of ὄμαδος is worthy of note, if only for its location in the text. The final line of the twelfth book, coming at the absolute low point in the Greeks' fortunes (and, after the epic was divided into books,²²² its precise midpoint), is this:

Δαναοὶ δὲ φόβηθεν
νῆας ἀνά γλαφυράς, ὄμαδος δ' ἀλίσστος ἐτύχθη.
The Danaans fled-in-terror among their hollow ships,

²²⁰ XIX.78-82

²²¹ Martin 1989 (esp. 68-75) popularized the concept of ‘flyting’ in *The Iliad*. His analysis only briefly touches on the poem's internal audiences, e.g. at 60, 222, and does not discuss their reactions *qua* group behavior.

²²² Heiden surveys the debate over the origin of book divisions, arguing that they are not merely later superimpositions, but rather demonstrate a pattern of coming between scenes of low importance and ones of high importance (80 and *passim*). He declares their effect one of diversion rather than closure (75). Heiden notes (78) that “the Athenian fortifications do not become a factor in the story until ‘Book 12.’” Since a portrayal of the Greek camp as a besieged community emphasizes the *group* identity and physical aggregation of those within, the location of this passage at the midpoint of the work is evidence that these themes of groups and crowding are also central to a full understanding of the work as a whole.

And an endless ὄμαδος arose.²²³

Here ὄμαδος is perhaps the quintessential crowd expression: the noise of panic. At this moment of rout, the Greeks are reduced to a brute mob, on the threshold of being overpowered by a momentarily triumphant crowd of enemies.²²⁴ The first half of the *Iliad* begins with heaps of Greek corpses accumulating due to plague, followed shortly by a gathering of the army in proto-political assembly. It ends with the Greeks forming yet another crowd, this one in panicked disarray. Here the crowd on the Greek side previews the future “mob” of classical Athens, just as at the end of the *second* half of the poem, the Trojan city’s crowd assembles to mourn its fallen champion.²²⁵

Periphrases

There are several passages in the *Iliad* that describe crowd behavior without using any of the special words already surveyed.²²⁶ These periphrases seem to come in places where the poem is groping towards some new object of representation: the political crowds, and the politics of crowding, which will achieve full expression in Aristophanic Athens.

Achilles accuses his Myrmidons of *collective* insubordination:

ταῦτα μ’ ἀγειρόμενοι θάμ’ ἐβάζετε ...
ὥς εἰπῶν ὄτρυνε μένος καὶ θυμὸν ἐκάστου.
μᾶλλον δὲ στίχες ἄρθεν, ἐπεὶ βασιλῆος ἄκουσαν.
“Often you’d gather together and say these things against me ...”
So saying, he stirred the strength and spirt of each.
And the ranks closed together more, when they heard from the king.²²⁷

The crowd draws tighter, enhancing its status as properly regimented, when its leader upbraids them for having taken to illicit (or at least, conducted without him there) gatherings directed against the leader.

In another moment, during a Trojan battlefield assembly, Hektor mocks his interlocutor, who wishes to retreat into the city:

²²³ XII.470-71; a very similar line occurs at XVI.296.

²²⁴ At his apparent moment of triumph, Hektor relies upon, indeed almost merges with, the Trojan *homilos*, which breaches the Greek defenses like a river pouring over a floodwall: κέκλετο δὲ Τρώεσσιν ἐλιζάμενος καθ’ ὄμιλον τεῖχος ὑπερβαίνειν. τοὶ δ’ ὄτρύνοντι πίθοντο. αὐτίκα δ’ οἱ μὲν τεῖχος ὑπέρβασαν, οἱ δὲ κατ’ αὐτὰς ποιητὰς ἐσέχυντο πύλας, “and whirling around through the *homilos* he called on the Trojans to o’erleap the wall, and they obeyed him as he urged them on. And straightaway some Trojans leapt over the wall, while others poured in through the wrought gates themselves.” XII.467-69.

²²⁵ As observed in fn. 210 above, the crowd of Trojan mourners is portrayed as orderly and decorous; cf. the orderly crowd that assembles to hear Pericles’s funeral oration at Thuc. II.34.

²²⁶ There are of course more depictions of groups and group action than can be discussed, even briefly, in this project. For example, the representation of the army in ranks, e.g. at II.244 ff., must be bracketed. I am most interested in the army, and in other Homeric groups, when they act either inappropriately or otherwise similarly to what in later texts are more directly recognizable as “crowds” in the pejorative sense of “mob.” Similarly, the souls of the dead in *Od.* xi. might be read as a crowd. As explained in the opening Chapter, I have focused this survey around the key terms *homilos* and *homados* to provide some structure and limit, while acknowledging that this analysis could be extended to many other Homeric passages.

²²⁷ XVI.207, 210-11

ἦ οὐ πῶ κεκόρησθε ἐελμένοι ἐνδοθι πύργων;
Aren't you sick of being cooped up inside the walls?²²⁸

This is all but our only glimpse of an *urban* crowd in either of the Homeric epics.²²⁹

While Iliadic armies are constantly in motion, in the social sense the poem's "crowds" are quite passive, existing mainly to be manipulated by their heroic leaders and to serve as a backdrop for great deeds. As we will see, the Odyssean crowd is more variable, and at its active extreme foreshadows later representations of the "mob."

B: ODYSSEY

Generally speaking, crowd words are significantly less common in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*. Verbal and noun forms of ὄμαδ-, for instance, occur six times in the former and thirteen in the latter.²³⁰ Yet the ὄμιλος of this poem is, perhaps by virtue of this very limitation, more determinate and therefore more significant than those in its companion.

“Ὀμιλος

Ten of fourteen total instances of the word in the *Odyssey* refer, directly or indirectly, to the suitors. The significance of this association will inform the concluding portion of this chapter. Setting this subject aside for the moment, here is a survey of the remaining occurrences:

Twice the word is used in the martial sense, with the passages again showing the double valence of the word. First, Odysseus boasts

πρῶτός κ' ἄνδρα βάλοιμι ὄϊστεύσας ἐν ὄμίλῳ
Taking my mark, I'd be the first to hit a man in a ὄμιλος of enemies.²³¹

Later, he assures Achilles's ghost that his son Neoptolemos

οὐ ποτ' ἐνὶ πληθυῖ μένεν ἀνδρῶν οὐδ' ἐν ὄμίλῳ,
ἀλλὰ πολὺ προθέεσκε, τὸ ὄν μένος οὐδενὶ εἴκων
was never wont to stay in the mass (πληθυῖ) or throng (ὄμίλῳ) of men,
but he ran forward by far the first, yielding nothing in his might.²³²

Together these passages emphasize the ὄμιλος as a field against which an elite warrior demonstrates his prowess, either by being the first to leap out from one's own ὄμιλος to attack the enemy, or by being the first to attack the enemy's ὄμιλος. Either way, the ὄμιλος is an undifferentiated mass of fighters, apart from or against which the subject acts.

²²⁸ XVIII.287

²²⁹ Other examples are the mourners in Book XXIV mentioned briefly above, as well as the crowd watching the youths dance on the Shield at XVIII.603-06.

²³⁰ Gehring s.v.

²³¹ viii.21

²³² xi.514-15

Shortly before the first of the two passages quoted above, we find the single most figurative use of the word in the Homeric corpus, denoting not a crowd of people but a pile of stones. Odysseus has thrown his stone, and a disguised Athena proclaims:

Καί κ' ἀλαός τοι, ξεῖνε, διακρίνειε τὸ σῆμα
ἀμφοφόων. ἐπεὶ οὐ τι μεμιγμένον ἐστὶν ὁμίλωι,
ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρῶτον.

“Yea, stranger, even a blind man could make out your mark by feeling it; for it is in no way mixed in with the mass (ὁμίλωι), but it is by far the first.”²³³

The champion’s stone stands out far in front of the ὄμιλος of the other competitors’ stones, a metonymic translation of the competitive function described above. Just as the hero is marked apart from the ὄμιλος -as-background, whether on the battlefields of the *Iliad* or in the games of the *Odyssey*, so too is his stone not mixed with the ὄμιλος of lesser competitors’ stones.

The word appears earlier in the eighth book, in the non-military “crowd of people” sense. A herald takes the blind bard Demodokos by the hand and

ἄρχε δὲ τῶι αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ἣν περ οἱ ἄλλοι
Φαιήκων οἱ ἄριστοι, ἀέθλια θαυμανεόντες.
βὰν δ' ἴμεν εἰς ἀγορὴν, ἅμα δ' ἔσπετο πούλυς ὄμιλος,
μυρίοι. ἂν δ' ἴσταντο νέοι πολλοὶ τε καὶ ἐσθλοὶ.
“He led him down the same road which the other Phaeacians,
The best ones (travel), to be spectators at the games.
And they went forward into the ἀγορά, and together followed a great
ὄμιλος, countless. And youths, many and noble, stood up (as
competitors).”²³⁴

Here the multiplicity of the ὄμιλος is hyper-emphasized: it is “great” and “myriad” (literally “in the tens of thousands”). The herald and bard, not themselves figures of the elite but in their service, take the path which the “best” (elite) Phaeacians take, when going to watch the games. Even the ἄριστοι can form a crowd of spectators, but the presence of a more “common” crowd is attested by the following lines.

After the “great throng” is assembled in the *agora*, the noble youths separate out from the many; they will be the active participants in the spectacles to follow. It is worth noting that while there are “many” (πολλοὶ) of these competitors, this “many” seems few in the wake of the triplicate multiplier above (πούλυς ὄμιλος, μυρίοι). Odysseus’s eventual feats of valor will distinguish him from his “many” elite rivals, who in turn are posed against a “countless” throng of non-elite spectators.

²³³ viii.195-97

²³⁴ viii.107-10

Ὅμιλεῖν

The verbal form is even more strongly associated than the nominal with the suitors. Of fourteen verbal (including one participial) instances, *all* refer to them in some way.

Three times²³⁵ in the poem this line is repeated:

τοῖος ἐὼν μνηστρῆσιν ὁμιλήσειεν Ὀδυσσεύς.
“Oh, that Odysseus, being such a man, might *join (battle) with* the suitors
...”

In context, it is clear that the verb is meant in the hostile sense. Still, the conceptual ambivalence is evident in the other appearances of this word.²³⁶ The second occurrence is clearly meant in the associative, non-hostile sense. In the second book, Aigyptios is the first to speak at the assembly called by Telemachos. Of his four sons, we are told, one followed Odysseus to Troy.

τρεῖς δέ οἱ ἄλλοι ἔσαν, καὶ ὁ μὲν μνηστρῆσιν ὁμίλει,
Εὐρύνομος, δύο δ' αἰὲν ἔχον πατρώϊα ἔργα.
He had three other (sons), and one *associated with* the suitors,
Eurynomos, but the (other) two still held their ancestral lands.²³⁷

The contrast with the above quotation could not be clearer. Odysseus's friends and relatives hope that he will “join with” the suitors in battle, to conquer them while retaining (indeed, redeeming) his individual identity. Eurynomos “joins with” the suitors in the sense of *becoming one of them*, submerging his individual identity in the unruly ὄμιλος.²³⁸

Four uses of the verb²³⁹ describe Telemachos as “joining with” the suitors. He is told by Athena, disguised as Mentor, to return home and *homilei* with them. Shortly thereafter, he is described as doing so. Fifteen books later, Odysseus tells him to do the same. Finally, Penelope, inspired by Athena, announces her intentions:

Εὐρυνόμη, θυμός μοι ἐέλδεται, οὐ τι πάρος γε,
μνηστήρεσσι φανῆναι, ἀπεχθομένοισί περ ἔμπτῃς.
παιδί δέ κεν εἴποιμι ἔπος, τό κε κέρδιον εἴη,
μὴ πάντα μνηστῆρσιν ὑπερφιάλοισιν ὁμιλεῖν,
οἱ τ' εὔ μὲν βάζουσι, κακῶς δ' ὄπιθεν φρονέουσι.
“Eurynome, my spirit wishes – it did not previously –
To show (myself) to the suitors, hateful though they are still.
But I would say a word to my child, and may it be for the better,

²³⁵ i.265, iv.345, xvii.136

²³⁶ For this ambivalence, see the discussion *supra* of Diomedes in the *Iliad*.

²³⁷ ii.21-22

²³⁸ The only other mention of this figure, at xxii.243, comes in a list of suitors “by far the best in war.” Eurynomos, then, seems to be part of an elite cadre within the suitors, but still very much defined by his membership in the group *qua* group.

²³⁹ ii.281, ii.381, xvi.271, xviii.164

Not to always be in the company (ὄμιλεῖν) of the o'erweening suitors,
Who speak well to him, but intend ill (for him) in the future."²⁴⁰

Almost a third of the total instances of this verb, then, refer to Telemachos's interaction with the suitors. Unlike Aigyptios's son Eurynomos, Telemachos is able to *homilei* with them without becoming one of them. *Homilei*-ing with a ὄμιλος, then, does not necessarily entail loss of individual identity. It is precisely due to Telemachos's "truly" elite nature²⁴¹ that he can be set among this crowd of suitors without becoming one of them.²⁴²

Indeed, we are introduced to Telemachos thus:

Τὴν δὲ πολὺ πρῶτος ἴδε Τηλεμαχος θεοειδής,
ἦστο γὰρ ἐν μνηστῆρσι φίλον τετιμημένος ἦτορ,
ὀσσόμενος πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, εἴ ποθεν ἔλθῶν
μνηστήρων τῶν μὲν σκέδασιν κατὰ δῶματα θεΐη ...
Telemachos, godlike, *saw* her (Athena-in-disguise) by far the first,
For he sat *among the suitors* grieved in his dear heart,
Seeing in his mind his noble father, as it were coming from somewhere
And causing a *scattering of the suitors* throughout the household ...²⁴³

Telemachos sits among the suitors yet is clearly apart from them. While they, in their numbers, entertain themselves with games, he alone sees the unusual new element of the situation. He sees his father's divine patroness, while "seeing" in his mind Odysseus himself, arriving home and breaking up this throng of suitors. This first appearance of Telemachos and the suitors unfolds according to the dialectic of One and Many.²⁴⁴

Also worthy of note in the passage quoted immediately above is Penelope's own relation to the suitors. While her son, as an elite male, interacts with the suitors as almost a peer (though they often treat him with great condescension), Penelope is separated from them by gender. She intends to *appear* to them, placing them in the role of a group

²⁴⁰ xviii.164-68

²⁴¹ Cf. Thalmann 1998:104 on the suitors as "debased" aristocrats. Cf. Rose (1992:99-100), who (following the lead of Whitman 1958:306-08) sees the suitors as oligarchs. Of the suitors' suppression of popular discontent in the assembly in Book Two, he says "[t]his first, tentative opposition of the many and the few in Greek literature is met by a decisive shift to the relative numerical superiority of the few to the one king." Indeed, if we depart from an anachronistically Marxist or otherwise modern understanding of crowd as solely a class/mass phenomenon, and adopt a Canettian model of crowd modalities, we see all the more clearly that whatever their *class* status, the suitors are definitely a *group*, relying on their sheer plurality to protect them and prone to unruly behavior. See Chapter Three for more explicit ancient descriptions of groups as unable to properly control their behavior, or carrying out coordinated and frenzied attacks.

²⁴² This may be a working definition of a Homeric character: one who may be temporarily situated as a member of a group, without ever fully losing their individuality. Groups have collective names, characters proper ones.

²⁴³ i.113-16

²⁴⁴ The tension between One and Many is established from the poem's opening lines. Odysseus sees the cities of 'many' men, but cannot save his followers and is the sole survivor of that group and the lone remaining Greek exile (i.1ff., 11-12); Poseidon alone of the gods is absent as the other gods assemble (i.26).

audience of a spectacle, while Telemachos is variously given advice for or against *mingling with* them.

Ὅμαδος

As with ὀμιλεῖν, the verb ὀμαδεῖν is the linguistic “property” of the suitors. All five instances of the verb²⁴⁵ have the suitors as their subject. Twice²⁴⁶ they roar at or in anticipation of the appearance of Penelope.²⁴⁷ At xvii.360, they raise a ruckus after the bard has performed, as Odysseus prepares to beg among them. Twice,²⁴⁸ they make a ὀμαδος in anger at, or, after he begins to slaughter them, in fear of Odysseus. Whereas in the *Iliad*, ὀμαδος is primarily the noise of the crowd as it gathers or flees, in the *Odyssey* another dimension is added: the crowd as “audience,” the crowd watching athletic performance.²⁴⁹

It is time to examine directly the implications of the association between the words ὀμιλος and ὀμαδος and the suitors’ status as a group.

WHO ARE THE SUITORS?

What is the significance of these associations? In the *Iliad*, ὀμιλος denotes the often-invisible mass of the army, around and among whom the “name” characters move and act. In the “poem of War,” it is unsurprising that this word would appear often, and have the meaning it does. In the “poem of Peace,” the word’s significance is less obvious.

Perhaps the first instance of the word in the *Odyssey* shows us the way. The disguised Athena addresses Telemachos (after he notices her in the scene quoted above):

τίς δαίς, τίς δαί ὀμιλος ὄδ’ ἔπλετο; τίπτε δὲ σε χρέω;
εἰλαπίνη ἢ γάμος; ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔρανος τάδε γ’ ἐστίν.
ὥς τέ μοι ὑβρίζοντες ὑπερφιάλως δοκέουσι
δαίνυσθαι κατὰ δῶμα. νεμεσσήσαιτό κεν ἀνὴρ
αἴσχεα πόλλ’ ὀρώων, ὅς τις πιτυτός γε μετέλθοι.

“What feast, what ὀμιλος here goes about? What’s it got to do with you?

A banquet, or a marriage? For surely this isn’t a potluck.

They seem outrageous, o’erweening, eating all around the house.

A man would be wroth seeing (these) many shameful (deeds/things),

At least anyone sensible who should come along.”²⁵⁰

A group acting so inappropriately cannot be participating in an ἔρανος, a “meal to which each contributed his share.”²⁵¹ What, then, is this peculiar ὀμιλος, which does not

²⁴⁵ The one occurrence of the nominal form, at x.556, comes as Elpenor awakes to the ὀμαδος of Odysseus and the rest of the crew reveling in Circe’s house; the similarity to the suitors, in their never-ending party, is obvious.

²⁴⁶ i.365, iv.768. Both times the suitors make this collective noise *after* Penelope has retired. The noise is therefore directed not at her, but rather functions to unite the suitors as a collective (even though they are, individually, each expressing their desire to possess her). It is a homosocial staging of heterosexual desire.

²⁴⁷ Slater (1990) 217: “*Hybris* and *thóruβos* prevent all chance of peace-promoting song or *charis*.”

²⁴⁸ xviii.399, xxii.21

²⁴⁹ Of course, the crowd as audience appears in the *Iliad*, e.g. during the funeral games (XXIII.448: Ἀργεῖοι δ’ ἐν ἀγῶνι καθηήμενοι εισπορώωντο). But that crowd is, of course, the military force in a different mode.

²⁵⁰ i.225-29

correspond to any proper category of gathering? It is precisely an anti-*eranos*, a meal at which *none* (bar Telemachos) contributes their share. Any “sensible” man would recoil at this display. The line makes this the only instance of ὄμιλος in Homer with a clear moral connotation.²⁵²

In relation to beggars and servants, the suitors are abusive masters; in relation to Odysseus’s family and estate, they are a ravenous horde.²⁵³ While the suitors are, taken individually, elite, as a collective they are the ὄμιλος of the poem. Homer either cannot or does not directly represent “lower class” crowds. If we search his corpus for something recognizable as a “mob,” we are led to the suitors.

Another unique usage, late in the poem, of the word ὄμιλος is of particular interest. At xii.263 (repeated by the narrator at 282), Odysseus exhorts his companions to μνηστήρων ἐς ὄμιλον ἀκοντίσαι, “fire into the ὄμιλος of suitors.” This is the only instance in the Homeric corpus where direct transitive contact is established between individual figures and a ὄμιλος. In *The Iliad*, figures move ἐς ὄμιλον, but they do not do anything *to* it. At this moment of Odysseus’s triumph over the suitors, contact is at last established between the elite individual and the mass (a mass of elites, to be sure, but a mass nonetheless). This is reminiscent of what Theweleit identifies as a primary fantasy of the fascist “warrior male”: to reduce the mob-which-threatens to a “bloody mass,”²⁵⁴ leaving in the aftermath of the violence the intact male ego, surrounded by the remains of his enemies.

Haubold²⁵⁵ examines a moment²⁵⁶ at which the suitors are referred to as λαοί, the Iliadic term for the general “people” of the army as contrasted with their heroic leaders. “[The suitors] often come close to turning into *laoi*, and there is always a residue of ambiguity as to what, precisely, their relationship to Odysseus should be.”²⁵⁷ Again, after Odysseus has slain the ringleader Antinoos, the suitor Eurymachus begs him to spare the rest, referring to them as “your people.”²⁵⁸ λαός does not emphasize the collectivity and physical aggregation of a group as do the words surveyed earlier in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, but it confirms that the suitors’ social status is in flux.

That the suitors are, individually, elite figures is indisputable; their status is what qualifies them to seek Penelope’s hand. And yet, when gathered together they constitute a

²⁵¹ LSJ s.v.

²⁵² The Iliadic ὄμιλος as refuge, a group that provides safety at the cost of anonymity (discussed in detail above), may connote cowardice. While escape to the crowd may deserve “moral disapproval” as a violation of ideal standards of heroic performance, however, in these scenes any detectable sense of stigma does not attach to the crowd as a *whole*, as it does in this Odyssean passage.

²⁵³ Cf. Rose 1975.

²⁵⁴ Theweleit II:34, 274

²⁵⁵ Haubold 118-21

²⁵⁶ xvii.64: τὸν δ’ ἄρα πάντες λαοὶ ἐπερχόμενον θεῶντο (“And all the λαοὶ gazed at him as he approached.”) Again we see the theme of sight, which informs the dialectic of One and Many in Homer and beyond: the gaze of the many directed at the one can be one of amazement, adulation or fear, as here or in spectator sports (Scanlon 278 and *passim*), or it can be a disapproving or threatening gaze, as in the interaction between a mob and Teucer described in Sophocles’s *Ajax*, discussed in Chapter Three. If we take from Canetti the precept that crowd phenomena are universal, the feelings of being part of, and being exposed to the gaze of, a crowd would also be a universal human experience. The representation of crowds in Greek literature offers us a window onto the modalities of this experience.

²⁵⁷ Haubold 120

²⁵⁸ λαῶν σῶν, xxii. 54-55.

ὄμιλος. In this sense, the prolongation of the courtship produces a sociological slippage. If Penelope were to accept one of them as a husband, he would in a sense become the new Odysseus. The disruptive crowd would be removed, and the elite system of ties between discrete individuals and families would be restored. As it is, the suspended courtship results in the accumulation of a mass of suitors, and a mass of even aristocratic individuals assumes the characteristics of a mob; it violates the traditional code of aristocratic behavior.

In the *Odyssey*, the suitors, acting as a collective, form a ὄμιλος in the worst sense. That is to say, they are a proto-ὄχλος.

CHAPTER THREE TRAGIC CROWD

Tragedy is “about” crowds in three senses, only the last of which will structure this survey.²⁵⁹ First, it was performed before an assembly of something close to the entire population, or at least its male members.²⁶⁰ This is not a study of the audience, but it is worth starting with Beye’s vivid account of the importance of this aspect of the tragic context:

Tragedy was a *public* event. At Athens the Theater of Dionysus ... was large enough to accommodate fourteen to seventeen thousand. The sense of the group, of community, was moreover enhanced by the fact that the audience sat together on stone benches without seat division so that arms, legs and haunches could touch, and emotions could race through the audience, physically making them over into one common response. ... Performances were out of doors, in daylight, continuously, starting at dawn in a large arena, where there must have been constant movement, as at present-day sporting events. People leaving to relieve themselves, people going home to eat, hawkers selling food, these were moving elements of the panorama as much as actors and chorus ... A large crowd is characteristically animal; the atmosphere is charged with passion and a tension that betrays the crowd’s volatile nature. Large crowds are not at all primarily rational and theater was in any case an emotional experience.²⁶¹

Secondly, since the chorus is an integral feature of the genre in its classical flourishing, every tragedy is in some sense “about” crowds, in that it features a homogenous group that speaks and moves as a collective.²⁶² This chapter, however, does not aim to study the chorus,²⁶³ but rather to examine the third and most crucial way in

²⁵⁹ Carter 59 draws the same tripartite distinction (audience/onstage characters/description of offstage events) in his survey of tragic representation of the *demos*, a project with obvious connections to my own. We agree that references to offstage gatherings are “by far the most promising.”

²⁶⁰ On the difficulty of estimating the size of the “immense audience,” as well as whether or not women were part of it, see Pickard-Cambridge 1988:263. On this and other issues, Csapo and Slater 286ff. Roselli has recently (2011) produced a comprehensive study of Athenian audiences and the Athenian discourse *on* the audience. See especially Chapter 1, “The Idea of the Audience and its Role in the Theater.” For a parallel study of the cultural history of the audience in the United States, see Butsch.

²⁶¹ Beye 243-44

²⁶² Modern crowd theory, as discussed in the first Chapter, suggests that homogeneous crowds are elite fantasies, while the subversive or rebellious crowd is figured as mixed-gender, mixed-class, etc. Even when representing socially marginal types, then, the tragic chorus does not take the further step of presenting an internally mixed group. Only the offstage crowds of the *Bacchae*, as discussed below, constitute “mixed groups” in an analogous sense to the modern revolutionary mob.

²⁶³ Carter (63-65) cautions against what he calls “the collective fallacy: “It is easy [but perhaps misleading] to assume that, since twelve or fifteen is more than one, the chorus more naturally resembles a mass of people than it does the small group that it really is.” This may make it harder to read the chorus as standing for the *demos*, but it does not prevent us from seeing the chorus as a site of representation of crowd and crowd-like formations in the broader sense argued for in the first Chapter.

which tragedy deals with crowds: the descriptions given of crowds, groups and masses of people *as such* – whether words used to describe groups of characters onstage, or the construction through messenger speeches and other dialogue of crowds that exist “offstage.” Examining the range of such crowd construction will show that much of tragic discourse concerns the intentions and actions of offstage groups.

Euripides’s descriptions of groups, especially the two extreme cases of a mass political assembly and a violent conspiratorial mob, are much more frequent and extensive than either of the other tragedians’, even accounting for the larger size of the Euripidean corpus. Aeschylus mostly uses the terminology available already to Homer to describe groups, especially ὄμιλος; while occasionally using the newer word ὄχλος,²⁶⁴ his works lack such explicit descriptions of crowd behavior and psychology as are found in Euripides. Sophocles’s references are, almost without exception, even more indirect and allusive, with only a handful of instances of the words identified in the previous Chapters as pertaining to crowd.

A passage from the chorus’s entry-chant in *Agamemnon* serves as an example of this more allusive type of crowd representation:

δέκατον μὲν ἔτος τόδ’ ἐπεὶ ...
 Μενέλαος ἄναξ ἠδ’ Ἀγαμέμνων ...
 στόλον Ἀργείων χιλιοναύτην
 τῆσδ’ ἀπὸ χώρας
 ἦραν, στρατιῶτιν ἄρωγὴν ...
 This is the tenth year since ...
 Lord Menelaos and Agamemnon ...
 Raised a thousand-ship expedition of Argives
 From this land, a rescue army ...²⁶⁵

The army is not here – it has gone from this land, but:

ἡμεῖς δ’ ἀτίται σαρκὶ παλαιᾷ
 τῆς τότε ἄρωγῆς ὑπολειφθέντες
 μίμνομεν ἰσχὺν
 ἰσόπαιδα νέμοντες ἐπὶ σκήπτροις.
 We, on account of our dishonored ancient flesh,
 Left behind from that long-ago rescue
 Wait (here), resting our childlike strength on our walking-sticks.²⁶⁶

The chorus thus constructs an offstage aggregation of the community’s fighting-age men, by contrasting it to the onstage group they compose. Such construction of an offstage group is, in a sense, a “representation” of crowd, but in a very allusive and indirect sense. Euripides’s crowd discourse is much more frequent and direct. Therefore, I have

²⁶⁴ Carter 48, 59 n.54 surveys some instances of tragic ὄχλος, concluding that it is “usually derogative” when not referring to the sheer size of an enemy’s forces. As discussed in the next chapter, the word may have a less universally negative valence in comedy (esp. used of a festival crowd in the *Frogs*).

²⁶⁵ *Agamemnon* 40, 42, 45-47

²⁶⁶ *Agamemnon* 72-75

surveyed only selected scenes from Aeschylus and Sophocles, whereas my study of Euripides is much more complete, with each of his surviving plays receiving at least some attention.

AESCHYLUS

Persians

The *Persians* contains three out of the five instances of ὄχλος in Aeschylus's surviving oeuvre, two out of seven uses of ὄμιλος²⁶⁷, and *eleven out of twelve* instances of πλῆθος.²⁶⁸ On vocabulary alone, before considering the plot and themes of the play, we can already see that it is shot through with descriptions of great aggregations of people.

The chorus's opening chant enumerates the military divisions sent by the provinces of the Persian Empire πολέμου στῆφος παρέχοντες (“supplying a throng of war”).²⁶⁹ Throughout this opening passage, sections of the Persian army are described with words that emphasize sheer size: the rowers from the marshlands are δεινοὶ πλῆθός τ' ἀνάριθμοι (“a multitude terrible and countless”);²⁷⁰ Babylon sends πάμμεικτον ὄχλον σύρδην (“a mixed-together ὄχλος in a line”).²⁷¹ Even the dainty Lydians muster a throng of their own: ἀβροδιαίτων δ' ἔπεται Λυδῶν ὄχλος (“and an ὄχλος of Lydians who live in luxury follows”).²⁷²

This Catalogue of Hosts is far from a simple expression of jingoistic pride at the size of the Persian forces, however. Rather, the old men forming the chorus are worried that with such an aggregation of the empire's young men having been led off to war, a power vacuum has developed, since only two groups are left behind: they themselves, impotent with age, and a crowd of women:

ταῦτά μου μελαγχίτων φρῆν ἀμύσσεται φόβωι,
 ὄᾶ, Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος, τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθηται
 κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστν Σουσίδος.
 καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ' ἀντίδουπον ἄισεται,
 ὄᾶ, τοῦτ' ἔπος γυναικοπληθῆς ὄμιλος ἀπυών,
 βυσσίνοις δ' ἐν πέπλοις πέσση λακίς.
 πᾶς γὰρ ἰππηλάτας καὶ πεδοστιβῆς λεῶς
 σῆνος ὡς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμωι στρατοῦ ...

²⁶⁷ These (at lines 123 and 1028) are discussed below; three occur in the *Suppliants* (lines 234, 355, 993, discussed above). The final occurrence is at *Prometheus Bound* 417, where it is deployed in the ethnographic mode as the chorus describes all the world's peoples lamenting Prometheus's punishment: Σκύθης ὄμιλος, “the horde of Scythia.”

²⁶⁸ In addition to line 40, quoted below, these occur at lines 166 (χρήματων ἀνάνδρων πλῆθος, “a quantity of goods without men”); 334, 337, 342, 352, 413 (of the size of the Persian fleet); 429 (a host of evils); 432-33 (εὔ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδάμ' ἡμέρα μιᾷ πλῆθος τοσοῦτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν, “For well know this: never on a single day did so great in number a mass of men die” – a fitting epigraph for the play as a whole); 477 (a great host of woes); 803 (the select group of soldiers which Xerxes leaves behind). The only other occurrence of this word in Aeschylus is at *Suppliants* 469, where (as twice in the *Persians*, 429 and 477) it is used metaphorically (κακῶν δὲ πλῆθος ποταμὸς ὡς ἐπέρχεται, “a mass of evils comes on like a river”).

²⁶⁹ 20; LSJ s.v. στῆφος: *body of men in close array* (citing this passage).

²⁷⁰ *Persai* 40

²⁷¹ *Persai* 53-54

²⁷² *Persai* 42

My black-cloaked heart is torn with fear over this,
 Ah! For the Persian army, lest the city learn that the great town of Sousa is
 empty of men.
 And the resounding Cissian city will sing out,
 Ah! The woman-full ὄμιλος uttering this word, and a rending may fall on
 their linen robes.
 For the whole horse-driving and foot-stamping people have departed like a
 swarm of bees with the leader of the army ...²⁷³

In the three Aeschylean plays surveyed here we can see a pattern. As the plays begin, a male crowd is described as looming – raising dust by its approach in the *Suppliants*; amassing in arms in *Seven Against Thebes*; forming a polyglot army in the *Persians*. Onstage is left a smaller, weaker crowd formation: the suppliants themselves; the women of Thebes; the impotent pack of old men forming the Persian chorus. While 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.

Χο. Ἴάνων λαὸς οὐ φυγαίχμας.
Ξε. ἄγαν ἄρειος. κατείδον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπτον.
Χο. τράπεντα ναύφαρκτον ἐρεῖς ὄμιλον;
Ξε. πέπλον δ' ἐπέρρηξ' ἐπὶ συμφοραῖ κακοῦ.
Χο. παππαῖ παππαῖ.
Cho. The Ionian people are not spear-fleeing.
Xe. (They are) fiercely warlike. And I saw a grief unexpected.
Cho. Do you speak of the routed ship-fenced²⁷⁴ ὄμιλος?
Xe. I tore my robe when faced with this evil event.
Cho. (Lamentation).²⁷⁵

The horde offstage – ship-packed (with obvious political significance in contemporary Athens) – communicates an emotional charge that converts the king into the head of the lamenting group of “women” predicted at the beginning.²⁷⁶

Seven Against Thebes

πληροῦτε θωρακεῖα, κάπῃ σέλμασιν
 πύργων στάθητε, καὶ πυλῶν ἐπ' ἐξοδοῖς
 μίμνοντες εὖ θαρσεῖτε, μηδ' ἐπηλύδων
 ταρβεῖτ' ἄγαν ὄμιλον. εὖ τελεῖ θεός.
 Man the breastworks, and stand on the scaffolds²⁷⁷ of the towers,
 And, holding firm, be of good spirit, nor fear o'er-much this ὄμιλος
 Of foreigners. God will perfect.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ *Persai* 116-30

²⁷⁴ LSJ s.v. ναύφαρκτος.

²⁷⁵ *Persai* 1025-31

²⁷⁶ On collective and individual grief in tragic representation and audience response, see Loraux 2002.

²⁷⁷ LSJ s.v. σέλμα (citing this passage).

²⁷⁸ *SCT* 32-35

In the same way that Danaos’s observation of an approaching crowd of armed men will set the tone near the beginning of the *Suppliants* – where the group of women, central characters of the play, will be contested over by opposing groups of men – here Eteokles gathers the fighting men of Thebes, drawing them into a military crowd, to fight the invading ὄμιλος. From the opening speech of the play, *Seven Against Thebes* announces itself as a drama of the city besieged, formed into a war-crowd by the threat of a horde of invaders.

Ετ. ἀνδρῶν τάδ’ ἐστί, σφάγια καὶ χρηστήρια

θεοῖσιν ἔρδειν πολεμίων πειρωμένους,

σὸν δ’ αὖ τὸ σιγᾶν καὶ μένειν εἴσω δόμων.

Χο. διὰ θεῶν πόλιν νεμόμεθ’ ἀδάματον,

δυσμενέων δ’ ὄχλον πύργος ἀποστέγει.

τίς τάδε νέμεσις στυγεῖ;

Et. This is men’s work, to offer sacrificial victims to the gods

When putting enemies to the test. But yours is to shut up

And stay inside the home.

Cho. On account of the gods we inhabit an unconquered city,

And the rampart wards off the ill-intentioned ὄχλος. What *nemesis* resents

these things?

The ὄχλος here is that of the invading army. In Euripides’s plays of supplication and siege, e.g. the *Herakleidae*, attention will be drawn to the formation of disruptive and hostile groups *within* the city itself; in Chapter Four, we will examine the comic representation of the crowded city at siege.

Suppliants

After the opening choral ode, Danaos warns his daughters of an approaching group of men, conjuring the image of the Iliadic crowd, the crowd in arms.²⁷⁹

ὄρῳ κόνιν, ἄναυδον ἄγγελον στρατοῦ.

σύριγγες οὐ σιγῶσιν ἀξονήλατοι.

ὄχλον δ’ ὑπασπιστῆρα καὶ δορυσσόν

λεύσσω ξὺν ἵπποις καμπύλοις τ’ ὀχήμασιν.

I see dust, silent herald of the host.

The axle-whirling wheel-holes are not mute.

And I see an ὄχλος bearing shield and spear,

With horses and with bent-(wheeled) chariots.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Taplin (1977: 201-03) argues against the traditional concept of “the spectacular Aeschylus” (203): “The armed men ... are no mere spectacle for its own sake ... The Argives have to have a strong force at their command ... But the presence of armed men ... also has a significance through contrast: all the power at Pelasgus’s command is no help to him in his vital decision ...”

²⁸⁰ *Suppliants* 180-83

As he enters, the Argive king speaks of the titular chorus precisely as a crowd – one marked with signifiers of foreignness.²⁸¹

ποδαπὸν ὄμιλον τόνδ' ἀνελληνόστολον
πέπλοισι βαρβάροισι κάμπυκῶμασι
χλίοντα προσφωνοῦμεν; οὐ γὰρ Ἀργολις
ἔσθης γυναικῶν οὐδ' ἀφ' Ἑλλάδος τόπων.
Whence this ὄμιλος which we address, unHellenically dressed,
Luxuriant with barbarian robes and headbands? For this is not
Argive women's rainment, nor from the lands of Greece.²⁸²

Danaos spies the crowd of Argive soldiers in the distance; the Argive king speaks of the crowd of Danaids as they appear before him on his entrance. Soon thereafter, as the king considers Danaos's plea for asylum, he “sees” another crowd – this time a divine crowd that (he hopes²⁸³) approves of the foreigner's request.

ὄρῳ κλάδοισι νεοδρόποις κατάσκιον
νεύονθ' ὄμιλον τόνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν.
I see a nodding ὄμιλος of gods assembled,²⁸⁴
O'er-shaded by the fresh-plucked branches.²⁸⁵

After the Egyptian Herald has come, made his threats and left,²⁸⁶ Danaos warns his daughters of the difficulty in gauging the character and friendliness of a strange ὄμιλος, and of the dangers posed by societal reputation to those who are not full members of their host society:

καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμ' ἐγγράψασθε πρὸς γεγραμμένοις
πολλοῖσιν ἄλλοις σωφρονίσμασιν πατρός,
ἀγνῶθ' ὄμιλόν πως ἐλέγχεσθαι χρόνῳ.
πᾶς δ' ἐν μετοίκῳ γλῶσσαν εὐτυκον φέρει
κακὴν, τό τ' εἰπεῖν εὐπετέες μύσαγμα πάως.
ὕμᾶς δ' ἐπαινῶ μὴ καταισχύνειν ἐμέ,
ὥραν ἐχούσας τήνδ' ἐπίστρεπτον βροτοῖς.
And write these words together with the many other notes
Of wisdom from your father: test out an unknown ὄμιλος over time,
For each man bears a tongue ready for evil in a foreign resident('s case);
Easy it is to say slander. And I beg you not to disgrace me,

²⁸¹ Cf. Hall 118, 130 on the chorus as “alien.”

²⁸² *Suppliants* 234-37

²⁸³ The cited lines are followed by an expression of hope that the affair not damage the city: εἴη δ' ἀνατον πρᾶγμα τοῦτ' ἀστοξένων, “but may this matter of the city-guests be harmless . . .” (356).

²⁸⁴ LSJ s.v. ἀγώνιος: “[E]ither gods *in assembly*, or the gods *who presided over the great games* . . .” (citing this passage).

²⁸⁵ *Suppliants* 354-55

²⁸⁶ Garvie (82) says of this passage that “[t]he change of subject is more abrupt than anything else in Aeschylus.”

You who possess beauty to-be-“turned”²⁸⁷-for-men (for men’s gaze).²⁸⁸

Christian Meier’s political reading of the play²⁸⁹ recognizes the importance of the offstage assembly and its relation to the elite figure we see onstage:

The people meet together at another place. ... We only hear that Pelasgos, using the most persuasive rhetoric and references to the threat of the anger of the gods, elicited a unanimous decision to take in the women as resident aliens (metics). ...

Pelasgos goes before the people’s Assembly with clear intentions: he is no longer interested in hearing their opinions, but simply wants them to agree with his own decision. ... This long process [of P’s attempt to avoid making a decision, his “long and meditative soliloquy” (*id.*), and his offstage encounter with the Assembly] does not merely set out the general problem of the necessity of making decisions. ... Rather, it highlights the conflict between considerations of purely earthly expediency and the observance of god-given laws. At the same time, it has a bearing on the problem of the different responsibilities of the political leaders and the people. ...

This consisted in the question of how political decisions should be reached and, above all, who should make them. In the play it seems that, in the end, it is a matter for whoever happens to be leader. The people’s role is merely to endorse his decision through spontaneous approval and without the usual referendum.

Contrast this with Theseus’s view of his relationship with the Athenian assembly in the *Herakleidae*, discussed below.

SOPHOCLES

Of the three great tragedians, Sophocles’s surviving works make the least use of the crowd-related terms we have identified. For example: ὄμιλος appears not at all; πλῆθος in the relevant sense appears only three times. While the difference on this point between Aeschylus and Sophocles may be a simple accident of preservation, Euripides, as discussed below, uses crowd terms with a frequency sufficiently higher as to obviously represent a difference in usage, not merely an artifact of preservation.

While Sophocles does not often use the specific *words* we have identified, his characters at several points describe offstage group activity in a manner that highlights the crowd-ness of these groups. One passage surveyed below – Hyllos’s speech from the

²⁸⁷ Cf. *Alcestis* 1052: καὶ πῶς ἀκραιφνῆς ἐν νέοις στρωφωμένη/ἔσται; (“And how will she be inviolate, “turned about” among the youths?”). As discussed below, tragic characters often express anxiety about women, especially young girls, being exposed to the gaze of men, particularly a *group* of men. Even before their entry into their host community has succeeded, Danaos warns his daughters that they must avoid public exposure. For his daughters to test out a *homilos* in a new place is not as simple a matter as it would be for a group of sons.

²⁸⁸ *Suppliants* 991-95

²⁸⁹ 1993:87ff.

Trachiniae – makes no direct reference to the crowd, but nevertheless evokes the dialectic of One and Many to make a fitting close to this selective survey of the two tragedians whose work is less overtly concerned with mass behavior.

Ajax

The chorus enters warning Ajax that he is – and they are, as his followers - suffering reputational harm in the offstage zone of group meetings and common discourse:

ὡς καὶ τῆς νῦν φθιμένης νυκτὸς
μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς
ἐπὶ δυσκλείαι ...
[I am afraid], as with the night now waning
Great θόρυβοι are putting us in disrepute ...²⁹⁰

The chorus speaks here not of rumors, which can be transmitted by a single individual working quietly,²⁹¹ but of θόρυβοι, outbursts of *group* noise which attempt to drown out and intimidate those who would oppose group will or try group patience.²⁹²

μετὰ γὰρ μεγάλων βαιὸς ἄριστ' ἄν
καὶ μέγας ὀρθοῖθ' ὑπὸ μικροτέρων.
ἀλλ' οὐ δυνατὸν τοὺς ἀνοήτους
τούτων γνώμας προδιδάσκειν.
ὑπὸ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν θορυβῆι
χῆμεῖς οὐδὲν σθένομεν πρὸς ταῦτ'
ἀπαλέξασθαι σοῦ χωρὶς, ἄναξ.
ἀλλ' ὅτε γὰρ δὴ τὸ σὸν ὄμμ' ἀπέδραν,
παταγοῦσιν ἅτε πτηνῶν ἀγέλαι.
μέγαν αἰγυπιὸν <δ'> ὑποδείσαντες
τάχ' ἄν, ἐξαίφνης εἰ σὺ φανείης,
σιγῆι πτήξειαν ἄφωνοι.
The weak man would be best off with the great,
And a great man is supported by smaller fry.
But it's not possible to enlighten their brainless
Judgments. You are subject to θόρυβος
By that sort of man, and we are powerless in the face of these things
To ward them off apart from you, lord –
But when they go out of range of your eye,
They chatter like flocks (*agelai*) of birds.
But fearing the great eagle, if suddenly you should appear,

²⁹⁰ *Ajax* 141-43

²⁹¹ A few lines later (149 ff.), they do describe Odysseus precisely as spreading *rumor*, but only after here expressing their fear of the result of that rumor-spreading: outbreaks of θόρυβος.

²⁹² Bers (4) notes this as “one of a number of terms in the play that strongly suggest the fifth-century courtroom,” citing Knox (1961:36; 1979). Knox includes *thorubos* in his list of juridical terminology in *Ajax*, at note 110. For *thorubos* in the assembly, see Tacon.

Swiftly would they cower in silence, voiceless.²⁹³

Much of the chorus's entrance-song, we see, is about groups and the relationship between groups and individuals. Elite and mass each fare best when they work together; in Ajax's absence from the offstage "political" zone of assembly and opinion formation, his group of followers cannot help him. The chorus can pass between the world offstage, where crowds form and elites plot, and the scene onstage, confined to Ajax's camp, but they are powerless to affect the action or to save Ajax from the forces aligning against him offstage. If only he would appear to confront those who assault him with *θόρυβος*, he would drive them off in a group panic. But Ajax is trapped onstage, in his drama of elite honor and shame, and cannot go to confront the hostile group offstage (as can and do characters in other plays, especially those of Euripides, with varying degrees of success).

Later in the play, a messenger arrives onstage after the choral interlude following Ajax's penultimate scene. When Ajax will next arrive, it will be to deliver his final speech before killing himself. Whereas his suicide is one of the rare instances in which violence is directly represented *on* the tragic stage, the intervening messenger speech describes a scene of potential violence occurring *offstage*. He describes Ajax's brother, Teucer, as having almost been lynched by an angry crowd of Greek soldiers. I take this to be paradigmatic of the true nature of the "rebellious" crowd in tragedy: an offstage presence that looms in the consciousness of the heroic characters whose onstage actions and speeches form the business of the play.

This offstage crowd can take various forms: in Aeschylus's *Suppliants* or Euripides's *Orestes*, a political assembly; here, the Greek military *λαός*, which in Homer (as discussed in Chapter Two) is mainly a passive backdrop for its leaders' accomplishments but which here (as described by the messenger) almost crosses the threshold into the violence of lynch law.²⁹⁴ None of the words for or associated with crowds which we have surveyed occur in this passage, but the messenger nonetheless is clearly describing a scene rife with the potential of mob violence:

μέσον δὲ προσμολῶν στρατήγιον
κυδάζεται τοῖς πᾶσιν Ἀργεῖοις ὁμοῦ.
στέιχοντα γὰρ πρόσωθεν αὐτὸν ἐν κύκλῳ
μαθόντες ἀμφεστήσαν, εἴτ' ὄνειδεσιν
ἤρασσον ἔνθεν κᾶνθεν οὔτις ἔσθ' ὅς οὔ ...
λήγει δ' ἔρις δραμοῦσα τοῦ προσωτάτῳ
ἀνδρῶν γερόντων ἐν ξυναλλαγῇ λόγου.

Coming forth into the middle of the generals' meeting place,

²⁹³ *Ajax* 160-71

²⁹⁴ Griffith (2005:339-40):

Subordinates ... occasionally ... will voice [their] misgivings ... and thus present a momentary lower-class perspective on the action. ... In general, however, while such characters may mutter or grumble, the rank-and-file soldiers or sailors never make any concerted move to challenge their leader, and never take action on their own behalf – in marked contrast to the world of Old Comedy, and to actual Athenian political practice.

While true as a general rule, this makes the event described by the messenger all the more noteworthy.

He is reviled by all the Argives at once.
 For knowing him as he approached far off, they stood around him
 In a circle, and they ripped him here and there with taunts, nor is there one
 Who didn't ... but the strife, running to the extreme, ceased, with an
 Exchange of words from the old men.²⁹⁵

When the messenger speaks of a prophecy whose imminent fulfillment he fears, the chorus asks of what he speaks and how he heard of it. The messenger explains:

τοσοῦτον οἶδα καὶ παρῶν ἐτύγχανον.
 ἐκ γὰρ συνέδρου καὶ τυραννικοῦ κύκλου
 Κάλχας μεταστὰς οἶος Ἀτρειδῶν δίχα,
 ἐς χεῖρα Τεύκρου δεξιᾶν φιλοφρόνως
 θεῖς ...

This much I know, (since I) happened to be present.
 For Calchas, stepping out from the council and royal circle,
 Apart from the Atreidae, grasping Teucer's right hand with kind intent
 ...²⁹⁶

The τυραννικός κύκλος²⁹⁷ forms its own “crowd,”²⁹⁸ but one possessing the opposite attributes to those of the ephemeral mob which has just been dispersed. The messenger is positioned as an outsider with respect to *both* crowds. He describes as an external observer the incipient mob that formed on Teucer's arrival, then stresses that he only knows what passed between the elite characters because he *chanced* to be present. Single figures stand out against a background of collective formations: Teucer is attacked by one and implicitly excluded from the other; Calchas steps out of the ruling “circle” to warn Teucer; the messenger, and through his words we the audience, “see” both from the outside.

Trachiniae

An ὄχλος can sometimes threaten a character not with direct violence, but rather through a sort of reputational poisoning.²⁹⁹ The “crowd” can be a site of gossip and slander:

Αγ. οὐκουν σὺ ταύτην, ἦν ὑπ' ἀγνοίας ὀραῖς,
 ἰόλην ἔφασκες Εὐρύτου σποράν ἄγειν;
Λι. ποίοις ἐν ἀνθρώποισι; τίς πόθεν μολῶν
 σοὶ μαρτυρήσει ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ κλυεῖν παρῶν;
Αγ. πολλοῖσιν ἀστῶν. ἐν μέσῃ Τραχινίῳ

²⁹⁵ *Ajax* 721-25, 731-32

²⁹⁶ *Ajax* 748-52

²⁹⁷ LSJ s.v. τυραννικός; κύκλος τ. – *the circle or assembly of kings* (citing this passage). Cf. *Iliad* XVIII.504, where the elders sit ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις ἱερωῖ ἐνὶ κύκλωι (“on carved stones in a sacred circle”).

²⁹⁸ The κύκλος is a spatial boundary, but by metonymic transfer also signifies the groups occupying such spaces.

²⁹⁹ On gossip and the “politics of reputation” in Athens, see Hunter 2001:96 ff.

ἀγοραῖ πολὺς σου ταῦτά γ' εἰσήκουσ' ὄχλος.

Mess. Didn't you say that you were bring her, whom you look at (now)
With (feigned) ignorance, Iole, seed of Eurotos?

Li. Among which men? Who, coming from where,
Will stand as witness to you that he heard these things
From me, in my presence?

Mess. Among many of the townsmen! A great ὄχλος
Overheard these things from you in the middle of the
Trachinians' *agora*!

Here two non-elite characters speak of the ὄχλος not as something to be feared or manipulated, but a commons of information, a site of community knowledge. We will find a description of this type of crowd-threat exploited to deadly effect by Orestes in the *Andromache*. This type of group may be what is often imagined as waiting around the entrances to cities – the group that will see you as you enter (discussed below in then sections on *Andromache* and *Herakles*), and which may send a bad rumor about you throughout the community.

Hyllos narrates the scene of his father's poisoning from the perspective of a member of the crowd of spectators, until at a crucial moment Herakles singles him out of the crowd:

ἅπας δ' ἀνηυφήμησεν οἰμωγῆι λεῶς ...
κούδεις ἐτόλμα τάνδρὸς ἀντίον μολεῖν ...
τότ' ἐκ προσέδρου λιγνύος διάστροφον
ὀφθαλμὸν ἄρας εἶδέ μ' ἐν πολλῶι στρατῶι
δακρυροῦντα, καί με προσβλέψας καλεῖ:
“ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε, μὴ φύγηις τούμὸν κακόν ...
ἀλλ' ἄρον ἔξω, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν με θές
ἐνταυθ' ὅπου με μή τις ὄψεται βροτῶν.”³⁰⁰

And the whole λεῶς cried out for appropriate speech with a groan ...³⁰¹

And no one dared to come face to face with the man.

Then, raising his distorted eye from the smoke nearby,³⁰²

He saw me crying among the great army, and looked at me

And called on me: “O child, come forth, don't flee from my suffering ...

But take me out of here, and place me where no mortal will see me.”

As his father addresses him, Hyllos is yanked from the anonymity of the λεῶς into the intimacy of the elite father-son relationship. He stands crying before his father, exposing his lack of decorum to the paternal gaze;³⁰³ the father in turn asks the son to remove *him* from the sight of the crowd that has just witnessed a public performance of piety gone disastrously wrong.

³⁰⁰ *Trachiniai* 783, 785, 794-96, 799-800

³⁰¹ Davies comm. ad loc.: “a blasphemous paradox.”

³⁰² LSJ s.v. πρόεδρος (citing this passage).

³⁰³ Cf. Griffith 1998 on the father's gaze in tragedy.

EURIPIDES

The crowd and the political and social dangers posed are a central concern of Euripides's work in all of its phases.³⁰⁴ The danger of a survey of Euripides is the opposite of the problem with Aeschylus and Sophocles. With those authors the challenge is to avoid chasing allusive, and possibly illusory, constructions of crowd; with Euripides, the danger is one of overload. It's a question of isolating which passages are truly important.

Ochlos, for instance, which appears five times in Aeschylus and just once in Sophocles's extant plays, appears some thirty times in the surviving works of Euripides. This 6:1 ratio between instances of *ochlos* in Euripides's corpus against Aeschylus's is no accident. The increased use of *ochlos* is evidence not only of a change in background political *vocabulary* – though, as Euripides's career coincides almost exactly with the rise and fall of the radical democracy at Athens and the crisis period of the Peloponnesian War, it surely does in part reflect such a change – but also of a heightened salience of crowds and crowd behavior in the representational agenda of tragedy. This is confirmed by the fact that Euripides also uses the *other* crowd terms (*homilos*, e.g.) at a much higher rate than do his fellow tragedians. Euripidean crowds span the Canettian spectrum, from a pack of assassins to the entire Greek army in assembly; Euripidean characters speak of the crowd as a real presence, and a clear danger.

Cyclops

As the only complete surviving satyr play, the *Cyclops*'s 709 lines - a mere two-thirds the length of the shortest surviving tragedies (and well under half the length of longer ones) – contain a large number of instances of key crowd words. In a now-familiar trope,³⁰⁵ Odysseus on his initial entrance speaks of the group already onstage:

τί χρῆμα; Βρομίου πόλιν ἔοιγμεν ἐσβαλεῖν.
Σατύρων πρὸς ἄντροις τόνδ' ὄμιλον εἰσορῶ.
What's the deal? We seem to have landed at Bromiopolis.³⁰⁶
I see a ὄμιλος of satyrs in front of some caves.³⁰⁷

Odysseus and his men are themselves reduced to a group referent when the Cyclops himself appears:

ἔα. τίς ὄχλον τόνδ' ὄρῶ πρὸς αὐλίοις;
ληισταί τινες κατέσχον ἢ κλῶπες χθόνα;
Hey! What's this ὄχλος here I see before the caves?

³⁰⁴ The possible exceptions, as mentioned below, are the earlier “domestic” plays such as *Alcestis* and *Medea*. With so few of even Euripides's works surviving, it is impossible to say whether this represents an actual shift in his representational agenda.

³⁰⁵ Cf., e.g., the Argive king's entrance in Aeschylus's *Suppliants*, discussed above: ποδαπὸν ὄμιλον κ.τ.λ.

³⁰⁶ Seaford 1984 comm. ad loc.: “[F]or the original audience this phrase might be tinged with a suggestion of the Athenian spring festival of the Anthesteria, in which it seems that satyrs participated ...” It also suggests that arrivals to a town could expect to find a ὄμιλος or ὄχλος at its gates, and to draw information from this group's appearance or discourse.

³⁰⁷ *Kyklops* 99-100

Have some pirates or robbers occupied the land?³⁰⁸

A ὄμιλος may not be dangerous, but this variation in repetition suggests that an ὄχλος is more likely to be so. The first word was used almost as if synonymous with χορός, purely a description of the satyrs as a group of dancers on the stage; ὄχλος in the second passage more clearly has the sense of an enemy “horde” or “throng” (Arrowsmith translates it simply as “crowd”).

Throughout the play Odysseus explains his motivations in terms of the dialectic of One and Many.³⁰⁹ At 199 he explains to Silenos why he and his men will not run from the approaching Cyclops:

ἐπεὶ τὰν μεγάλα γ' ἡ Τροία στένοι,
εἰ φευξόμεσθ' ἐν' ἄνδρα, μυρίον δ' ὄχλον
Φρυγῶν ὑπέστην πολλάκις σὺν ἀσπίδι.
Since great Troy would groan,
If we fled from one man; I often with my shield
Withstood a countless ὄχλος of Phrygians.³¹⁰

This passage simultaneously humanizes the monstrous Cyclops, referring to him simply as “one man,” and dehumanizes the “Phrygians,” merging them into a numberless and faceless enemy horde.

Odysseus later describes the horrors inside the Cyclops’s cave, contrasting his individual reaction to the initial murders with that of his surviving companions:

ἐγὼ δ' ὁ τλήμων δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν χέων
ἐχριμπτόμην Κύκλωπι κἀδιακόνουν.
ἄλλοι δ' ὅπως ὄρνιθες ἐν μυχοῖς πέτρας
πτήξαντες εἶχον, αἶμα δ' οὐκ ἐνῆν χροί.
But in my suffering, shedding a tear from my eyes,
I approached the Cyclops and attended him.
But the others stayed trembling in the recesses of the rock
Like birds, and there was no blood in their flesh.³¹¹

He then explains to the chorus leader that he cannot bear to save himself by abandoning his friends:

σιγαῖτέ νυν. δόλον γὰρ ἐξεπίστασαι.
χῶταν κελεύω, τοῖσιν ἀρχιτέκτοισιν
πείθεσθ'. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄνδρας ἀπολιπῶν φίλους
τοὺς ἔνδον ὄντας οὐ μόνος σωθήσομαι.
[καίτοι φύγοιμ' ἂν κάκβεβηκ' ἄντρου μυχῶν.
ἀλλ' οὐ δίκαιον ἀπολιπόντ' ἐμοὺς φίλους

³⁰⁸ *Kyklops* 222-23

³⁰⁹ Cf. *Odyssey* viii.21 and xi.514-15, discussed in Chapter Two, where Odysseus’s speaks of his and Achilles’s individual exploits against a backdrop of ὄμιλος and πληθύς (both allied and hostile).

³¹⁰ *Kyklops* 198-200

³¹¹ *Kyklops* 405-08

ξὺν οἷσπερ ἦλθον δεῦρο σωθῆναι μόνον.]
 Be quiet now. For you've learned about my trick.
 And when I give the order, obey your overseers.
 For I can't save myself alone, leaving my friends inside.
 [Indeed I'd like to flee and have stepped out of the folds of the cave.
 But it's not just to leave my friends, those with whom I came here,
 And save myself alone.]³¹²

In their initial conversation, Odysseus asks Silenos about the social organization of the island:

Οδ. τίνες δ' ἔχουσι γαῖαν; ἢ θηρῶν γένος;
Σι. Κύκλωπες, ἄντρ' ἔχοντες, οὐ στέγας δόμων.
Οδ. τίνος κλύοντες; ἢ δεδήμευται κράτος;
Σι. μόναδες³¹³. ἀκούει δ' οὐδὲν οὐδεὶς οὐδενός.
Οδ. Who possesses this land? A race of beasts?
Si. The Cyclopes, dwelling in caves, not the roofs of houses.
Οδ. Obeying whom? Or is power wielded by the δῆμος?
Si. (They are) singletons. No one listens to no one, no how.³¹⁴

Later, Odysseus observes that wine has made Polyphemos desirous to interact with his fellow monsters, in the form of a κῶμος, a characteristically *group* activity:

ἐπὶ κῶμον ἔρπειν πρὸς κασιγνήτους θέλει
 Κύκλωπας ἠσθεὶς τῶιδε Βακχίου ποτῶι.
 He wants to go on a κῶμος to visit his Cyclops-relatives
 Now that he's buzzed on this drink of Bacchus.³¹⁵

To execute his plan, Odysseus will need to prevent the Cyclops from seeking the company of others:

Κυ. μισῶ τὸν ασκόν. τὸ δὲ ποτὸν φιλῶ τόδε.
Οδ. μένων νυν αὐτοῦ πῖνε κεύθυμει, Κύκλωψ.
Κυ. οὐ χρή μ' ἀδελφοῖς τοῦδε προσδοῦναι ποτοῦ; ...
Οδ. ὦ τᾶν, πεπωκότ' ἐν δόμοισι χρή μένειν.
Κυ. ἠλίθιος ὅστις μὴ πιῶν κῶμον φιλεῖ.
Οδ. ὅς δ' ἂν μεθυσθεὶς γ' ἐν δόμοις μείνη σοφός.
Κυ. τί δρῶμεν, ὦ Σιληνέ; σοὶ μένειν δοκεῖ;
Σι. δοκεῖ. τί γὰρ δεῖ συμποτῶν ἄλλων, Κύκλωψ;

³¹² *Kyklops* 478-82. On 480-82, Diggle: “del. nescioquis.” Seaford 1984 comm. ad loc. sees a “decisive case for deletion,” noting that “[t]he interpolator seems to have used material from 407[.]” If so, the interpolator agreed with me in noticing in that earlier passage a similar opposition of the One to the Many, despite the absence of a word such as μόνος there.

³¹³ Seaford 1984 comm. ad loc. argues for the rejection of the variant νομάδες (L). μόναδες stresses the isolation of each individual Cyclops, and heightens the contrast with the passages quoted next.

³¹⁴ *Kyklops* 117-20

³¹⁵ *Kyklops* 445-46

Cyc. I hate the wineskin, but I love this drink.
Od. Stay here, drink of it and be cheery, Cyclops.
Cyc. Shouldn't I pass on some of this drink to my brothers? ...
Od. Good sir, a drinker should stay at home.
Cyc. That man's a fool who, drinking, doesn't love a κῶμος.
Od. The man who stays at home when drunk is wise.
Cyc. What shall we do, O Silenos? Does it seem right to you to stay?
Sil. It does. For what need is there of other drinking buddies, Cyclops?³¹⁶

Odysseus, with Silenos's assistance, counteracts this newfound impulse towards sociability by appealing to the Cyclops's selfishness. There is no need to join a group, he assures him; no need for any ἄλλοι, Silenos seconds. Remaining alone, the Cyclops is soon attacked by Odysseus and his companions. The isolated monster is brought down by humans working together.

Alcestis

Alcestis has among the fewest references to crowds of any of Euripides's surviving plays.³¹⁷ Its concerns are almost entirely "domestic," with little sense of the larger civic sphere – let alone political or military institutions – in which other plays situate group activity. Still, Admetus's marriage and subsequent bereavement take place within a broader network of relations between elite families, and his description of his wedding night reveals the connection between individual elite life experiences and the groups that gather to celebrate them:

ὦ σχῆμα δόμων, πῶς εἰσέλθω,
 πῶς δ' οἰκήσω, μεταπίπτοντος
 δαίμονος; οἴμοι. πολὺ γὰρ τὸ μέσον.
 τότε μὲν πεύκαις σὺν Πηλιάσιν
 σὺν θ' ὑμεναίοις ἔστειχον ἔσω
 φιλίας ἀλόχου χέρα βαστάζων,
 πολυάχητος δ' εἶπετο κῶμος
 τήν τε θανοῦσαν κᾶμ' ὀλβίζων
 ὡς εὐπατρίδαι κάπ' ἀμφοτέρων
 ὄντες ἀριστέων σύζυγες εἶμεν.
 O form of my palace, how can I enter,
 How can I dwell (here), once my *daimon* has changed?
 For "the middle" (the distance or change between now and then) is great.
 Then, with Pelian torches and with wedding songs
 I strode inside, holding the hand of my dear bride,
 And a great-voiced κῶμος followed and blessed me and her now dead,
 (Saying) that we were of noble birth on both sides, and were yokemates of
 gentility.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ *Kyklops* 529-31, 536-540

³¹⁷ The play is unique in that it is the only surviving play performed as the fourth of a set that is not a satyr-play. See Buxton 2003:184-86; on satyr-play generally, Harrison & Ambrose.

³¹⁸ *Alcestis* 912-21

Shortly after this he explains that his wife's death has trapped him in a double bind:

ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἔνδον ἐξελαῖ μ' ἐρημία ...
τὰ μὲν κατ' οἴκους τοιάδ'. ἔξωθεν δέ με
γάμοι τ' ἐλῶσι Θεσσαλῶν καὶ ξύλλογοι
γυναικοπληθεῖς. οὐ γὰρ ἐξανέξομαι
λεύσσω δάμαρτος τῆς ἐμῆς ὁμήλικας.
For the loneliness inside will drive me out ...
So much for matters at home. But outside,
The weddings and get-togethers of Thessalians, full of women,
Will drive me (back again). For I won't be able to stand
Seeing the agemates of my wife.³¹⁹

The death of Alcestis does not just deprive Admetus, as an individual, of companionship. It also renders him unable to attend further social gatherings of the sort he has just been remembering.³²⁰ Gatherings full of women – gatherings at which there will be *groups* of women, or of women together with their husbands – will only make him feel the pain of loss and singleness more acutely.

Medea

Crowds are even less present in *Medea* than *Alcestis*. One line does, however, deploy a crowd-word in a non-crowd sense.³²¹ Kreon is attempting to expel Medea from his kingdom by main force:

Κρ. τάχ' ἐξ ὀπαδῶν χειρὸς ὠσθήσῃ³²² βίαι.
Μη. μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ', ἀλλὰ σ' ἄντομαι, Κρέον.
Κρ. ὄχλον παρέξεις, ὡς ἔοικας, ὦ γύναι.
Cr. Swiftly you'll be thrust out by force
At the hand of one of my attendants.
Med. Not that – but I implore you, Creon.
Cr. You seem to provide an ὄχλος, woman.³²³

Stevens translates ὄχλον παρέχειν as “to be a nuisance. ... ὄχλος in the sense “nuisance”, “trouble”, as distinct from the usual sense “crowd” may in itself have a colloquial flavor.”³²⁴ Whatever the subtleties of the word's register, it is particularly appropriate for a scene of violence with the potential to attract a crowd and threaten public order.

³¹⁹ *Alcestis* 944, 950-53

³²⁰ ξ/σύλλογος is a very broad word for “gathering;” elsewhere in Euripides it is often used of a military force, esp. in *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

³²¹ Cf. the much more unusual use of ὄχλος at *Hecuba* 1014, discussed below, where I detect a conscious pun or unconsciously motivated connection of some kind.

³²² Note that this verb is related to the ὠστι- words identified in Chapter Four as typical descriptors of crowd behavior, e.g. at *Acharnians* 24.

³²³ *Medea* 335-37

³²⁴ 1976:56-57

Stevens notes that the regular way of saying this is *πράγματα παρέχειν*. He cites other examples of this alternate phrase in literature of the period, including *Helen* and *Orestes* 280-82. The former is deployed in a context with similarities to that of the passage from *Medea*:

τίς πρὸς πύλαισιν; οὐκ ἀπαλλάξει δόμων
καὶ μὴ πρὸς αὐλείοισιν ἔστηκῶς πύλαις
ὄχλον παρέξεις δεσπότηαις;
Who's that before the gates? Won't you depart from the palace
And not make an ὄχλος for the lordly gates, standing before the halls?³²⁵

Both passages feature a clear power/class relation, as the king (or here his servant) accuses a weaker opponent of disrupting his rule by the creation of an ὄχλος at the gates.³²⁶ However, the passage from *Orestes* resonates with that from *Medea* along lines of *gender*:

σύγγονε, τί κλαίεις κρᾶτα θεῖς' ἔσω πέπλων;
αἰσχύνομαί σοι μεταδιδούς πόνων ἐμῶν
ὄχλον τε παρέχων παρθένωι νόσοις ἐμαῖς.
O brood-mate, why do you cry, placing your head inside your robes?
I am ashamed to share my woes with you
And give you, a maiden, an ὄχλος with my ailments.³²⁷

ὄχλος as “nuisance” experienced between *individuals*, then, is not always distinct from ὄχλος as a disruption of proper *social* relations – whether between rulers and ruled, men and women, or (as in *Medea*) both.

Herakleidae

The “Children of Heracles” is the first³²⁸ Euripidean play to acknowledge the role played by social, political and military crowds in the life of the *polis*. A line in Iolaos’s opening speech is part of a series of Euripidean passages confirming that the confinement of women indoors is intended to protect them from mixing with, and especially from being *seen by*, the crowd.³²⁹

ἐγὼ μὲν ἀμφὶ τοῖσδε καλχαίνων τέκνοις,
ἦ δ' αὖ τὸ θῆλυ παιδὸς Ἀλκμήνη γένος

³²⁵ *Helen* 437-39

³²⁶ For disruptions at the threshold of a ruler’s house or tent, cf. *IA* 317, 605; *Rhesos* 45.

³²⁷ *Orestes* 280-82

³²⁸ Following the order of the plays as presented in Diggle’s OCT. I use temporal/sequential expressions like “first,” “already,” etc., throughout this Chapter mainly as a framework for structuring the survey *faute de mieux*, and make no claims to discovering a trend in Euripides’s work over time that tracks on to any societal changes – although it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that the *Bacchae* and *IA*, his final plays, each have offstage crowds (of quite different types) playing central roles in the plot. (I would argue that Euripides’s work as a whole is much more concerned with crowds than his predecessors’, and that this development does track societal and political trends.)

³²⁹ Cf. *Acharnians* 257, discussed in Chapter Four; *Orestes* 108: ἐς ὄχλον ἔρπειν παρθένωισιν οὐ καλόν.

ἔσωθε ναοῦ τοῦδ' ὑπηγκαλισμένη
σώιζει. νέας γὰρ πάρθενους αἰδούμεθα
ὄχλωι πελάζειν κάπιβωμιοστατεῖν.

I “ponder deeply”³³⁰ about these boy-children. Alcmene for her part
Keeps the female brood inside this temple, clasped within her arms.
For we are ashamed to have young virgin girls
Come near the ὄχλος and “stand suppliant”³³¹ at the altar.”³³²

As he enters a short time later, King Demophon uses this same word while demanding to know why his citizens have gathered at this temple precinct:

λέξον, τίς ὄχλον τόνδ' ἀθροίζεται³³³ τύχη;
Tell me, what circumstance gathers this ὄχλος?³³⁴

The characters have used the same word, but their attitudes toward the ὄχλος are distinct. Iolaos speaks the language of norms, propriety and piety – as well as a hint of elite fear of the commons, a theme Euripides will develop in increasing focus and detail as his career progresses. Demophon, on the other hand, views an ὄχλος not as a site of threat to vulnerable female members of his household within the societal economy of display and prestige, but rather as a *political* threat. Crowds that form without the knowledge and approval of a town’s ruler threaten his authority.³³⁵

Indeed, later in the play Demophon tells Iolaos that
καὶ νῦν πυκνάς³³⁶ ἄν συστάσεις ἄν εἰσίδοις,
τῶν μὲν λεγόντων ὡς δίκαιος ἦ ξένοις
ικέταις ἀρήγειν, τῶν δὲ μωρίαν ἐμοῦ
κατηγορούντων. εἰ δὲ δὴ δράσω τόδε,
οἰκεῖος ἤδη πόλεμος ἐξαρτύεται.
And now you’d see close “knots of men assembled,”³³⁷
With some saying that I’m right to come to foreign suppliants’ defense,
But others denouncing my folly. But so yeah, if I do this,
Already domestic war would be at hand.³³⁸

Small, ephemeral groups of passersby, drawn together for a while to watch a display of elites in distress, pose little threat to community order. These more turbulent and factious

³³⁰ LSJ s.v. καλχαίνω; Gladstone trans. “see to the safety of.”

³³¹ LSJ s.v. ἐπιβωμιοστατέω.

³³² *Herakleidai* 40-44

³³³ ἀθρ-/ἄθρ- words, as seen already in Chapter One, are common descriptors of crowd action and characteristics. See especially the discussion of *Andromache* 481 below.

³³⁴ *Herakleidai* 122

³³⁵ Cf. Carter on “this kind of demos, unseen and potentially critical of its leaders” (74).

³³⁶ πυκνάς could be read to refer either to the dense composition of the individual groups of disputing citizens, or to the closeness/frequency of distribution of these groups as between themselves – here a group, there a group, everywhere a group.

³³⁷ LSJ s.v. σύστασις.

³³⁸ *Herakleidai* 415-24

groupings – συστάσεις – are different.³³⁹ If unchecked, they have the potential to spread until the entire community is a stage for οἰκεῖος πόλεμος, a periphrasis for the most extreme form of *internally* directed group violence: στάσις.

As the focus of offstage concern shifts from the city's internal reaction to the arrival of the suppliants to the army's performance beyond the city walls, the sheer size of the opposing force is emphasized:

Io. πόσον τι πλῆθος συμμάχων πάρεστ' ἔχων?
Θε. πολλούς. ἀριθμὸν δ' ἄλλον οὐχ ἔχω φράσαι.
Iol. Coming with how great a πλῆθος of allies is he here?
Servant Many. I don't have another number to declare.³⁴⁰

The crowd of onlookers offers a moral and social threat to Alkmene's female wards, and the formation of factions within Athens's citizenry threatens the political order, but the approach of a great military host threatens the community's very existence.

Hippolytos

In her opening speech, Aphrodite complains that rather than seek sexual intimacy with his fellow humans, Hippolytos communes with Artemis:

χλωρὰν δ' ἄν' ὕλην παρθένωι ξυνὼν ἀεὶ
κυσὶν ταχείαις θῆρας ἐξαιρεῖ χθονός,
μείζω βροτείας προσπεσῶν ὀμιλίας.
Always together with the maiden, across the green wood
He clears out wild beasts from the land with swift hounds,
Always falling in with company (ὀμιλία) greater than mortal.³⁴¹

Aphrodite narrates Hippolytos's arrival and draws attention not to his divine companion – for she is not present yet – but rather the group of human companions which follows him onstage:

πολὺς δ' ἄμ' αὐτῶι προσπόλων ὀπισθόπους
κῶμος λέλακεν ...
A great κῶμος of attendants walking-behind
Shouts out together with him ...³⁴²

Later, the nurse chides Phaedra for inappropriate public behavior, exposed to the eyes and ears of the crowd:

³³⁹ Carter 81: "We should not read democratic practice into this speech: the πυκνὰς ... συστάσεις are not plenary assemblies but a series of tight-knit factional groups; and (unlike Pelasgus or Theseus in other plays) Demophon has led his city into a likely war without consultation of any kind."

³⁴⁰ *Herakleidae* 668-69. For the trope of a speaker's inability to recount the army's size in tragedy, see *Rhesos* 309. The *locus classicus* is of course *Iliad* II.488 ff., introducing the Catalogue of Ships.

³⁴¹ *Hippolytos* 17-19

³⁴² *Hippolytos* 54-55

ὦ παῖ, τί θροεῖς;
οὐ μὴ παρ' ὄχλωι τάδε γηρύσει,
μανίας ἔποχον ρίπτουσα λόγον;
O child, what are you saying?
Surely you won't voice these things in front of an ὄχλος,
Hurling out speech that rides on madness's back?³⁴³

The private life of the elite is vulnerable to the prying gaze and attentive ear of the crowd – whether a group of servants as here, or the people at large in a social and political sense. As this survey reveals, the political crowd becomes a more frequent and urgent object of representation over the course of Euripides's career. Later in the play, it is Hippolytos's turn to receive a similar warning from the nurse:

ὁ μῦθος, ὦ παῖ, κοινὸς οὐδαμῶς ὄδε.
This tale here, O child, is in no way public.³⁴⁴

Then, in his confrontation with his father, Hippolytos expresses his own frustration with the disconnect between elite intimacy and public display:

ἐγὼ δ' ἄκομπος εἰς ὄχλον δοῦναι λόγον,
ἐς ἡλικας δὲ κωλίγους σοφώτερος.
ἔχει δὲ μοῖραν καὶ τόδ'. οἱ γὰρ ἐν σοφοῖς
φαῦλοι παρ' ὄχλωι μουσικώτεροι λέγειν.
ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη, ξυμφορᾶς ἀφιγμένης,
γλωσσάν μ' ἀφεῖναι.
But I'm not fancy when it comes to giving a speech to an ὄχλος,
But I'm a bit cleverer when speaking to my peers – and few of them.
This too has its part.³⁴⁵ For those more skilled at speaking before the
ὄχλος
Are held as base among the wise. All the same, it is necessary, with
Disaster imminent, for me to loosen my tounge.³⁴⁶

At the end of the *agon*, Hippolytos wishes for a double of himself to witness his grief:

εἴθ' ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον
στάνθ', ὡς ἐδάκρυσ' οἷα πάσχομεν κακά.
If only it were possible to stand across from myself
And look me in the face, that I might weep over the evils I suffer.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἔποχος; Barrett comm. ad loc.: “A strange metaphor.”

³⁴⁴ *Hippolytos* 609

³⁴⁵ Barrett comm. ad loc.: “These two lines (988-89) add nothing to his plea ... and serve only to underline his contempt for the occasion.” To the extent that they are rhetorically superfluous, they suggest all the more strongly the salience of the ὄχλος in the formation of elite self-understanding.

³⁴⁶ *Hippolytos* 986-91

³⁴⁷ *Hippolytos* 1079-80

Barrett observes: “He is on the verge of tears, yet too proud to shed them for himself; hence this rather odd wish that he could become another person to weep for his own misfortune.” Read together with his preliminary comment about his preferred audience, however, Hippolytos’s concern here is not simply “pride.” He wants an audience for his performance – here, to witness the sincerity of his emotional response to the conflict with his father as evidence of his innocence – but he wants that audience to be as similar and sympathetic to him as possible.

The “few peers” of his ideal audience at line 987 are here replaced with the ultimate peer: oneself, duplicated. According to the “lowest common denominator” understanding of the crowd, by which it is not a problem *per se* but only because it entails the aggregation of disparate social elements (including the majority that are φαῦλοι), replicating oneself – or, since that is impossible, limiting the gathering to ἥλικες δὲ κώλιγοι – will remove the threat the crowd poses. Of course, if the trouble with crowds is something to do with multiplicity and aggregation itself, rather than the character of the individuals who come together (the “Group Mind” view), screening participants will not solve the problem.

After Hippolytos’s departure into exile, a messenger brings news of his death.

ὁ δ’ ἦλθε ταῦτόν δακρύων ἔχων μέλος
 ἡμῖν ἐπ’ ἀκτάς, μυρία δ’ ὀπισθόπους
 φίλων ἄμ’ ἔστειχ’ ἠλίκων <θ’> ὀμήγουρις.
 And (Hippolytos) came to the beach, having the same
 Song of tears as us, and a countless following ὀμήγουρις
 Of his agemate-friends came with him.³⁴⁸

This crowd echoes both Aphrodite’s original description of Hippolytos’s hunting band (ὀπισθόπους), as well as Hippolytos’s own statement of the company he prefers (ἠλίκων). However, where in the earlier passage Hippolytos’s preferred audience (987) would be ὀλίγοι, here his band of companions is said to be μυρία. The sympathetic messenger’s exaggeration of the band’s size highlights its impotence. In this moment, the group³⁴⁹ can neither threaten nor assist the elite figure; all it can do is watch helplessly as the curse of death against him is fulfilled.

Andromache

It is in *Andromache* that political violence is first explicitly narrated.³⁵⁰ As a preliminary matter, the titular character reproaches Hermione with language that gives us a view of Hippolytos’s sociology of rhetoric from the other side:

οἱ γὰρ πνέοντες μεγάλα τοὺς κρείσσους λόγους

³⁴⁸ *Hippolytos* 1178-80

³⁴⁹ The ὀμ- in ὀμήγουρις emphasizes the homogeneity of this band of elite companions. Even when exaggerated into “countless” numbers, its elite status prevents its transformation into a true “crowd” (contrary to the transformation of the suitors argued for at the end of Chapter Two). Thanks to Mark Griffith for this observation.

³⁵⁰ For a close reading of the Messenger’s speech – albeit one that does not analyze the events *qua* group violence – see de Jong 2003:379-82.

πικρῶς φέρουσι τῶν ἔλλασόνων ὕπο.
For those full of hot air³⁵¹ find it hard to bear better arguments
Superior arguments coming from their inferiors.³⁵²

The high-and-mighty – the few – do not lightly suffer losing an argument to the lowly – the many. Later in the play the chorus expresses what at first sight might appear to be an aristocratic explanation for why this should be so:

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν πόλεσι δίπτυχοι τυραννίδες
μιᾶς ἀμείνονες φέρειν,
ἄχθος τ' ἐπ' ἄχθει καὶ στάσιν πολίταις. ...
πνοαὶ δ' ὅταν φέρωσι ναυτίλους θοαί,
κατὰ πηδαλίων διδύμα πραπίδων γνώμα
σοφῶν τε πλῆθος ἀθρόον ἀσθενέστερον
φαυλοτέρας φρενὸς αὐτοκρατοῦς.
ἐνὸς ἄρ' ἄνυσις ἀνά τε μέλαθρα
κατὰ τε πόλιος, ὅπότεν εὐρεῖν θέλωσι καιρόν.
For in cities, twofold tyrannies get no better results than one,
Grief upon grief and στάσις for the citizens....
And when swift winds knock sailors around,
A double judgment of minds at the tiller
And a packed crowd of wise men is weaker
Than an inferior mind with sole authority.
Indeed, accomplishment (comes from) *one*, in the home
And across cities, when they want to find out the proper time.³⁵³

Here the chorus expresses anti-crowd sentiment in its most extreme form (the “Group Mind”). They do not say that a crowd is worse than an individual at making decisions because it is dragged down to its lowest common denominator. Nor do they say that otherwise intelligent people get less intelligent as they grow in number. Rather, they appear to be saying that multiple strong minds are in aggregate *worse* at getting things done than is one, even one *weaker*, mind.³⁵⁴

Taken at face value, this would *a priori* problematize collective action – unless the meaning is that a single intelligence is better specifically in periods of *crisis*. Since it is in such periods that swift and correct decisions are most valuable, however, this sentiment casts serious doubt on the wisdom of entrusting a leadership role to any πλῆθος ἀθρόον tasked with a leadership role.

³⁵¹ LSJ s.v. πνέω: “giving themselves airs” (citing this passage).

³⁵² *Andromache* 189-90

³⁵³ *Andromache* 471-75, 479-485

³⁵⁴ This extreme pessimism regarding group deliberation prefigures the quote from Federalist No. 51: “Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob.” Cf. the debate at Herodotus 3.80 ff., especially Megabyzus’s contention that ὁμίλου γὰρ ἀχρηίου οὐδὲν ἐστι ἀξυνετώτερον οὐδὲ ὑβριστότερον, “nothing is more lacking in wisdom nor more insolent than a useless *homilos*” (3.81.1). For a rare alternative view, see Aristotle, *Politics* 1281b, arguing that collective opinion may in some instances be superior to an individual’s.

In the play's central agon, Peleus taunts Menelaos with aspersions against the chastity of Spartan women, and contrasts Helen's trifling character with the enormous force assembled to retrieve her:

κᾶπειτ' ἐκείνης οὔνεχ' Ἑλλήνων ὄχλον
τοσόνδ' ἀθροίσας ἤγαγες πρὸς Ἴλιον;
And so for *her* sake you gathered such a great ὄχλος
Of Greeks and led it to Ilium?³⁵⁵

Already in the *Herakleidae*, at 122 and 668, we have seen that crowd-terms such as ὄχλος and πλῆθος are routinely used of military forces, and that ἀθρο- adjectives and verbs are often used to describe their appearance and behavior. Here we see that the social economy of military command is tied to the psychic economy of sexuality. The futility of the Trojan War, as elsewhere in Euripides,³⁵⁶ is summed up in these two lines: so many men died in battle as a result of the failure of one elite marriage.³⁵⁷

In his final speech of the agon, Peleus goes beyond his particular criticisms of the expedition to critique the basic assumptions of merit and responsibility undergirding the ideology of elite dominance:

ὅταν τροπαῖα πολεμίων στήσῃ στρατός,
οὐ τῶν πονούντων τοῦργον ἡγοῦνται τόδε,
ἀλλ' ὁ στρατηγὸς τὴν δόκησιν ἄρνυται,
ὃς εἰς μετ' ἄλλων μυρίων πάλλων δόρυ,
οὐδὲν πλέον δρῶν ἑνός, ἔχει πλείω λόγον.
When an army sets up trophies of triumph over enemies,
They don't recognize the task as the work of those who labored over it,
But the general gets the reputation – he
Who is one guy wielding a spear among countless others,
Doing no more than one (man's share) – but he has a greater account.³⁵⁸

Here the dialectic of One and Many, which in the *Cyclops* was the mode in which Odysseus expressed his heroic unwillingness to abandon his companions, is reversed. Leaders still do stand out against a backdrop of “extras,” as in Homer - but this distinction is undeserved, as they are really just component parts of a fighting force, no more inherently worthy than any other soldier. If we question elite dominance, the One starts to look less like a survivor and more like a parasite.³⁵⁹

Note too that this contradicts the sentiments of the chorus discussed above. If one controlling mind is required to achieve the right results, shouldn't that mind's owner get

³⁵⁵ *Andromache* 605-06

³⁵⁶ E.g. *Troïades* 864.

³⁵⁷ See especially *IA* 1264, discussed below; also Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 62 and *passim*.

³⁵⁸ *Andromache* 694-98

³⁵⁹ Completing the reversal, the mass of nonheroic common people becomes the survivor. Carter 84: “The demos, and with it the broader community of the polis, is generally a survivor in a literary genre [tragedy] marked by suffering and death.”

more recognition? Euripides's plays are consistently polyvocal, with a full range of elite ideology and non-elite counter-ideology expressed by the characters.

Menelaos disengages from his confrontation with Peleus by disavowing any intention to initiate violence inside the town:

ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς βίαν μὲν ἐς Φθίαν μολῶν
οὔτ' οὖν τι δράσω φλαῦρον οὔτε πείσομαι.
But I won't do nor suborn any act of violence
On a visit to Phthia.³⁶⁰

The liminal spaces at the edge of established centers of human habitation pose to the arriving stranger a heightened threat of group violence. Despite Menelaos's finely worded renunciation of the use of force when coming in/to the city, Andromache fears violence will erupt in just such an uninhabited place:

ὄρα δὲ μὴ νῶϊν εἰς ἐρημίαν ὁδοῦ
πτήξαντες οἶδε πρὸς βίαν ἄγωσί με,
γέροντα μὲν σ' ὀρῶντες, ἀσθενῆ δ' ἐμὲ
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε νήπιον. σκόπει τάδε,
μὴ νῦν φυγόντες εἶθ' ἀλῶμεν ὕστερον.
Beware, lest those guys, hiding in a deserted spot on the road,
Carry me off by force, once they see that you're an old man,
I'm weak, and this child is still an infant. Look out,
Lest escaping now we're then caught later.³⁶¹

Andromache is wrong about the location and victim, but right about the inevitability of a violent resolution to the conflict. In his narration of the events leading to Neoptolemos's death, the messenger stresses the role of groups:

ἐπεὶ τὸ κλεινὸν ἦλθομεν Φοίβου πέδον,
τρεῖς μὲν φαεννὰς ἡλίου διεξόδους
θεαὶ διδόντες ὄμματ' ἐξεπίμπλαμεν.
καὶ τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ'. ἐς τε συστάσεις
κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκήτωρ θεοῦ.
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ παῖς διαστείχων πόλιν
ἐς οὔς ἐκάστωι δυσμενεῖς ἡῦδα λόγους.
“Ὄρατε τοῦτον ...;”
When we came to the famed plain of Phoebus,
We spent three courses of the sun giving our eyes
Over to sight-seeing.³⁶² And it seems this was suspicious.
And the λαός that dwells in³⁶³ the temple
Went off into clumps and cliques.

³⁶⁰ *Andromache* 730-31

³⁶¹ *Andromache* 752-56

³⁶² See Stevens comm. ad loc. for construction of this difficult passage.

³⁶³ LSJ s.v. οἰκήτωρ.

And the son of Agamemnon stalked through the city
Uttering hostile words into the ears of each man (he met).
“Do you see that man ...?” [Orestes accuses Neoptolemos
Of intending to loot the temple.]³⁶⁴

At *Herakleidae* 415, Demophon spoke of συστάσεις disrupting public order as if they were spontaneous formations: καὶ νῦν πυκνὰς ἄν συστάσεις ἄν εἰσίδοις. Here the line of sight through which the crowds are invoked is not that of the addressee. The visitors to Delphi direct their sight, presumably, to its temples (much as today’s modern tourists do!) – all the while falling under the gaze of a suspicious and hostile public.

κάκ τοῦδ’ ἐχώρει ρόθιον ἐν πόλει κακόν,
ἀρχαῖσί τ’ ἐπληροῦτο βουλευτήρια
ἰδία³⁶⁵ θ’ ὅσοι θεοῦ χρημάτων ἐφέστασαν
φρουρὰν ἐτάξαντ’ ἐν περιστύλοις δόμοις.
And from this a wave of evil went about in the town,
And the council-chambers filled with officers³⁶⁶
And privately, however many who looked after the god’s affairs,
Posted a guard in the columned halls.³⁶⁷

Orestes’s slanderous words have caused a “wave” (ρόθιον)³⁶⁸ of opinion and group formation to ripple through the town, with acts of coordination both inside (here) and outside (the “conspiratorial” groups named earlier) formal and appointed offices of community action.

ἡμεῖς δὲ μῆλα, φυλλάδος Παρνασίας
παιδεύματ’, οὐδὲν τῶνδέ πω πεπυσμένοι,
λαβόντες ἡμεῖν ἐσχάραις τ’ ἐφέσταμεν
σὺν προξένοισι μάντεσίν τε Πυθικοῖς. ...
But we, in no way aware of these things,
Had with us our sheep, reared on leafy Parnassus,

³⁶⁴ *Andromache* 1085-92

³⁶⁵ Cf. *Orestes* 445, where Menelaos raises the possibility of individuals pursuing “rough justice” on their own account (ἰδία πρὸς ἐχθρῶν ἢ πρὸς Ἀργείας χερός;), only to be contradicted by Orestes, who accepts that those threatening him do so with the force of community will.

³⁶⁶ Diggle’s text. Stevens comm. ad loc. prefers to read ἀρχαὶ δ’ ἐπληροῦντ’ ἐς τὰ βουλευτήρια ἰδία θ’ ὅσοι ... “and the civic authorities flocked into the council chamber and unofficially (i.e. not waiting for the ἀρχαί) those responsible for temple treasures posted a guard.” Stevens notes “There is no indication of what part these sentries took in the subsequent proceedings.”

³⁶⁷ *Andromache* 1096-99

³⁶⁸ See below for a discussion of ῥε-/ρόθ- words for crowd response and the underlying “hydraulic” model of group psychology. Stevens comm. ad loc.:

‘a wave of malice and resentment began to surge through the town.’ The primary sense of ῥόθος and cognates seems to be a combination of noise and movement, and these words are most often used of the surge and roar of the waves, and hence also of a shouting and surging crowd, e.g. Hes. *WD* 220; cf. S. *Ant.* 259; *ibid.* 413.

LSJ cites this instance as evidence of an alternate definition of ῥόθιον as “tumult, riot[.]”

And stood at the altars with our *proxenoi* and the Pythian prophets. ...³⁶⁹
[Asked his purpose, Neoptolemos responds that he has come to repent.]

With the hostile group waiting for him not taking the form of a manifest crowd, but rather a conspiratorial squad, Neoptolemos and his group advance to the altar. Their attempt to achieve ritual cleansing is thwarted by Orestes's plan:

κάνταυθ' Ὀρέστου μῦθος ἰσχύων μέγα
ἐφαίνεθ'...

And thereupon Orestes's story was revealed as having great force ...³⁷⁰

Neoptolemos's declaration of his good intentions is outdone by the pre-existing "wave" of rumor that has set the scene for mob action. The present speaker is overpowered by one who spoke in advance to groups elsewhere – by one who has pre-seeded the social scene with packs of violent partisans.

τῶι δὲ ξιφήρης ἄρ' ὑφειστήκει λόχος
δάφνηι σκιασθείς, ὧν Κλυταιμῆστρας τόκος
εἷς ἦν, ἀπάντων τῶνδε μηχανορράφος.
χῶ μὲν κατ' ὄμμα στὰς προσεύχεται θεῶι,
οἱ δ' ὄξυθήκτοις φασγάνοις ὠπλισμένοι
κεντοῦσ' ἀτευχῆ παιδ' Ἀχιλλέως λάθραι. ...

And waiting for (Neoptolemos) was a band of swordsmen
Hidden in the laurel, of whom the offspring of Clytaemnestra
Was one – contriver of all these things.

And as he stood with eyes downcast and prayed to the god,
They, armed with sharp-tipped swords,
Stabbed the unarmed child of Achilles unaware ...³⁷¹

The squad (or, in Canetti's terminology, the "pack") of assassins is described in terms of One and Many, betraying the basic ambivalence in the concept of the crowd first seen in Homer. Orestes is just one among the others, but as author of the plot, he is somehow pulling the strings of the entire group. At this point he drops out of the narrative, however, and the attacking mob is described purely as a collective:

βοᾷ δὲ Δελφῶν παῖδας ...
τῶν δ' οὐδὲν οὐδεὶς μυρίων ὄντων πέλας
ἐφθέγξατ', ἀλλ' ἔβαλλον ἐκ χειρῶν πέτροις.
πυκνῆι δὲ νιφάδι πάντοθεν σποδοῦμενος
προύτεινε τεύχη κάφυλασσετ' ἐμβολὰς
ἐκεῖσε κάκεῖσ' ἀσπίδ' ἐκτείνων χερί.
ἀλλ' οὐδεν ἦνον, ἀλλὰ πόλλ' ὁμοῦ βέλη,
οἰστοί, μεσάγκυλ' ἔκλυτοί τ' ἀμφώβολοι

³⁶⁹ *Andromache* 1100-03

³⁷⁰ *Andromache* 1109-10

³⁷¹ *Andromache* 1114-19

σφαγῆς ἐχώρουν βουπόροι ποδῶν πάρος.
δεινὰς δ' ἂν εἶδες πυρρίχας φρουρουμένου
βέλεμνα παιδός. ὡς δέ νιν περισταδὸν
κύκλωι κατεῖχον οὐ διδόντες ἀμπνοάς,
βωμοῦ κενώσας δεξιμήλον ἐσχάραν,
τὸ Τρωικὸν πῆδημα πηδήσας ποδοῖν
χωρεῖ πρὸς αὐτούς. οἱ δ' ὅπως πελειάδες
ἰέρακ' ἰδοῦσαι πρὸς φυγὴν ἐνώτισαν.
πολλοὶ δ' ἔπιπτον μιγάδες ἔκ τε τραυμάτων
αὐτοῖ θ' ὑφ' αὐτῶν στενοπόρους κατ' ἐξόδους.

And he shouted at the children of Delphi ...

But none of the countless ones nearby made any sound,

But they struck him with rocks from their hands.

And pelted with a thick shower on all sides

He stretched out his armor and guarded himself from the missiles

Stretching out his shield with his hand this way and that.

But they accomplished nothing, but there were many missiles,

Arrows, javelins, easily-loosed spits, knives for bull-slaughter gathered

Before his feet. You'd have seen from the boy fierce pyrrhic dance steps

As he guarded himself from the missiles. But as they stood around him

In a circle, not giving him room to breathe,

Emptying the flock-receiving hearth-ring of the altar

Leaping the leap with his feet which Troy knew, he

Advanced towards them. And they like doves seeing a hawk

Turned their backs and fled. And many fell mixed together,

Both from their wounds and under their own (feet) crammed against

The narrow exits.³⁷²

The pack closes in in a circle (κύκλωι), only to be driven away in mindless panic, trampling one another to escape from the hero rampant. The scene is reminiscent of the common Homeric simile³⁷³ of a pack of hunting dogs encountering a lion or other wild animal – but the setting here is not the field of battle, but rather one of Greece's holiest sites. The mob, like a flock of birds, makes the whole precinct ring with its panic, until a mysterious voice rallies it to complete the assassination:

κραυγὴ δ' ἐν εὐφήμοισι δύσφημος δόμοις
πέτραισιν ἀντέκπλαγξ'. ἐν εὐδίαι δέ πῶς
ἔσθη φαενοῖς δεσπότης στίλβων ὄπλοις,
πρὶν δὴ τις ἀδύτων ἐκ μέσων ἐφθέγξατο
δεινὸν τι καὶ φρικῶδες, ὥρσε δὲ στρατὸν

³⁷² *Andromache* 1124, 1127-43

³⁷³ E.g. *Iliad* XI.548-57, XVII.61-69. Lion similes are common in the *Iliad* but rarer in the *Odyssey*; the “victimized lion” is confined to the *Iliad*, with the exception of the lion ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὁμίλωι at *Od.* iv.791-93 (describing Penelope). For an analysis of the lion similes in the *Odyssey*, and an argument that taken together they show some degree of “conscious artistry,” see Magrath; see also Glenn (examining Odysseus's encounter with Nausicaa, where the lion frightens and scatters a group instead of being attacked by one).

στρέψας πρὸς ἀλκὴν. ἔνθ' Ἀχιλλέως πίτνει
παῖς ὀξυθήκτωι πλευρὰ φασγάνωι τυπεῖς
[Δελφοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὅσπερ αὐτὸν ὤλεσεν]
πολλῶν μετ' ἄλλων. ὡς δὲ πρὸς γαῖαν πίτνει,
τίς οὐ σίδηρον προσφέρει, τίς οὐ πέτρον,
βάλλων ἀράσσω; πᾶν δ' ἀνήλωται δέμας
τὸ καλλίμορφον τραυμάτων ὑπ' ἀγρίων.
An ill-voiced shout in the home of good speech
Rang out from the stones. In full light then he stood
The lord gleaming in his shining armor,
Before some voice from the middle of the sanctum
Shouted out something wild and hair-raising,
Rousing the force and turning it to the fight.
Then the child of Achilles fell, struck in the ribs
By the sharp-pointed sword, [at the hands of some Delphian
Man, whoever killed him], among many others (dead).
As he fell to the ground, who didn't jab a sword, who
Didn't throw a rock, to strike him? His whole fair-formed hide
Was wrecked by savage wounds.³⁷⁴

The crowd is rallied by “someone.” While the voice is understood to be Apollo’s, the text does not say that;³⁷⁵ coming as it does at the inflection point between rout and rally, it may also be read as the expression of the group’s will – the restoration of collective intent overpowering the elite individual in his glorious last stand.

Hecuba

Hecuba introduces the army as crowd, both as a potentially chaotic and violent group actor, and as a body that engages in deliberative assembly. As the entering chorus in Sophocles’s *Ajax* warns the titular character of the trouble brewing for him offstage, so too the chorus of Euripides’s *Hecuba* enters with news of a “crowd gone wild” offstage whose actions and reactions mean doom for the interests of an onstage elite character.

ἐν γὰρ Ἀχαιῶν πλήρει ξυνόδωι
λέγεται δόξαι σὴν παῖδ' Ἀχιλεῖ
σφάγιον θέσθαι.
For it's said to have been decided
In the full meeting of the Achaeans
To make of your child a sacrifice to Achilles.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ *Andromache* 1144-55

³⁷⁵ Stevens, comm. ad loc., asserts that “[i]t is clear from 1161-5 that the narrator holds Apollo to be responsible ... The indefinite τις is used elsewhere in similar contexts either because the identity of the deity is uncertain or to add a touch of mystery.” But τις can also be “everyman,” or more pointedly “mass man,” the prototypical and anonymous member of a group. See de Jong 1987; see also Carter 53ff. on single demotic characters as “common-man” stand-ins for the community as a whole.

³⁷⁶ *Hecuba* 107-09

The language here is that of contemporary politics;³⁷⁷ the army here is clearly standing in for the Athenian assembly. The detailed description of the speakers³⁷⁸ and the crowd's reaction to them, then, can be taken as representing roles and behavior characteristic of mass political gatherings:

πολλῆς δ' ἔριδος συνέπαισε κλύδων,
 δόξα δ' ἐχώρει δίχ' ἄν Ἑλλήνων
 στρατὸν αἰχμητήν, τοῖς μὲν διδόναι
 τύμβωι σφάγιον, τοῖς δ' οὐχὶ δοκοῦν.
 And a wave of great discord crashed,
 And a double opinion went through the spear-bearing
 Army of Greeks – to some it seemed right to make this
 Sacrifice to the tomb – to others it didn't.³⁷⁹

Both in tragedy³⁸⁰ and comedy³⁸¹ verbs of “flowing” are used to describe the behavior of different types of crowds, but this is the clearest example of a “hydraulic” model of crowd psychology.³⁸²

ἦν δὲ τὸ μὲν σὸν σπεύδων ἀγαθὸν
 τῆς μαντιπόλου Βάκχης ἀνέχων
 λέκτρ' Ἀγαμέμνων. τῷ Θησείδα δ'
 ὄζω Ἀθηνῶν, δισσῶν μυθῶν,
 ῥήτορες ἦσαν, γνώμη δὲ μιᾷ
 συνεχωπέιτην τὸν Ἀχίλλειον
 τύμβον στεφανοῦν αἵματι χλωρῶι,
 τὰ δὲ Κασσάνδρας λέκτρ' οὐκ ἐφάτην
 τῆς Ἀχιλείας
 πρόσθεν θήσειν ποτὲ λόγχης.
 And Agamemnon was pursuing his own good,
 Having as he did relations with the prophecy-mongering

³⁷⁷ Gregory comm. ad loc.: “The contemporary terminology serves to sharpen the spectators’ awareness of parallels or contrasts between the mythical past and their own present.” See generally Meier.

³⁷⁸ Note that (as in other descriptions of assembly scenes, e.g. that in *Orestes*) the speakers’ words are not presented in direct discourse, but rather indirectly and briefly summarized. The description is thus focused not on individual rhetorical technique, but rather precisely on the crowd’s reaction thereto.

³⁷⁹ *Hecuba* 116-19

³⁸⁰ E.g. *Rhesos* 290-91, reproduced below: πολλῆι γὰρ ἠχῆι Θρήικιος ῥέων στρατὸς ἔστειχε; *Andr.* 1096 (discussed above) of the ῥόθιον ἐν πόλει κακόν.

³⁸¹ E.g. *Acharnians* 23-26, discussed in Chapter Four: οἱ πρυτάνεις ἤκουσιν ... ἄθροοι καταρρέοντες.

³⁸² *Orestes* 901 (discussed below) provides a useful comparison. There, too, an assembly is divided between praise and blame of a speaker; the verb in that passage is ἐπιπροθέω, ultimately deriving from an onomatopoeic root ῥοθ-. The link between crowd-noise and water/sea-noise may be due to sonic similarity, a concept of the fluidity and volatility of crowd reactions, or some combination of the two. In Aristophanes’s *Ecclesiazusae*, discussed in Chapter Four, the description of the assembly at which Praxagora seizes power is similarly focused on crowd reaction rather than the content of speakers’ addresses.

For an example from Latin literature, see the simile at Virgil *Aeneid* I.148-53 where Neptune’s calming of the stormy seas is likened to a leader’s quelling of an incipient riot. The “hydraulic” understanding of group behavior could not be more explicit.

On hydraulic crowd imagery, Theweleit *passim*; for the sea and rivers specifically, Canetti 80-84.

Bacchant. But the twin sons of Theseus, scions of Athens,
Were utterers of double speeches, but with one intent
Both proposed to crown the Achillean tomb with fresh blood,
And said Cassandra's bed should never be put before Achilles's spear.³⁸³

Agamemnon is seeking to protect his private pleasures and public face – just as he strips Achilles of both simultaneously in the first book of the *Iliad*. The sons of Theseus, dual ὄζω of a city synonymous with popular government and mass deliberative assembly, devalue such elite individual concerns in comparison to the ritual and symbolic needs of the army as a whole. Now that he is dead, the figure of Achilles is a rallying point and node of common identification for the entire Greek army – serving the role of a “leader figure” introjected into the individual soldiers' sense of themselves, along the model of Freudian mass psychology – and an affront to the honor of his memory insults the army as a whole and outrages the passions of the individuals who comprise its rank and file.

The chorus continues its description of the assembly session:
σπουδαὶ δὲ λόγων κατατεινομένων
ἦσαν ἴσαι πῶς, πρὶν ὁ ποικιλόφρων
κόπις ἠδυλόγος δημοχριστῆς
Λαερτιάδης πείθει στρατιάν
μὴ τὸν ἄριστον Δαναῶν παντῶν
δούλων σφαφίων οὔνεκ' ἀπωθεῖν
And enthusiasms³⁸⁴ for the contending speeches
Were more or less equal, before the complex-minded
Sweet-talking, δῆμος-pleasing “knife,”
Son of Laertes, persuaded the army
Not to spurn the best of the Danaans on account of the sacrifice of
slaves.³⁸⁵

Odysseus's skill with words, and his ability to engage with the δῆμος on its own terms, give him the power to channel, or steer (or cut) through, the “flow” of crowd sentiment.³⁸⁶ It is unclear whether his oratory would be capable of making the mass switch its already settled opinion, but when the opposing sides are equally poised, he can provide the catalyst for a resolution and the triumph of one faction.

Odysseus then enters, and announces the result he has just brought about as if he were not its author and sponsor. Just as the chorus did initially, he delivers the news in the political language of contemporary Athens, speaking not of what *he* has persuaded the group to do, but rather of what seemed good *to them*; his own role in guiding their action is elided.

γύναι, δοκῶ μὲν σ' εἰδέναι γνώμην στρατοῦ
ψηφόν τε τὴν κρανθεῖσαν. ἀλλ' ὅμως φράσω.

³⁸³ *Hecuba* 120-29

³⁸⁴ LSJ s.v. σπουδή: “zeal for the conflicting arguments.”

³⁸⁵ *Hecuba* 130-35

³⁸⁶ See Buxton 1982, esp. 12-16, for a study of persuasion in tragedy.

ἔδοξ' Ἀχαιοῖς παῖδα σὴν Πολυξένην
 σφάξαι πρὸς ὀρθὸν χῶμ' Ἀχιλλείου τάφου. ...
 Woman, I think you know the judgment of the army
 And the vote that has been cast. But all the same, I'll announce it.
 It has been decided by the Achaeans to sacrifice your child Polyxena
 To the standing mound of Achilles's tomb ...³⁸⁷

Posing as an authorized medium for transmitting the will of the collective, he warns Hecuba not to resist this will:

οἷσθ' οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον. μήτ' ἀποσπασθῆις βίαι
 μήτ' ἐς χερῶν ἄμιλλαν ἐξέλθῃς ἐμοί ...
 So you know what to do. Don't draw her away by force,
 Nor enter into a contest of hands with me ...³⁸⁸

Odysseus combines an appeal to legitimacy with a threat of superior force. In effect his warning echoes the words of Kreon to Medea, discussed above: he is warning her not to ὄχλον παρέχειν, “cause a disturbance.” Only one ὄχλος - which, he conveniently omits to mention, is subject to manipulation at his own hands – can legitimately choose violence; individual resistance to its decrees will lead to a bad end.

In a short span of lines, Hecuba presents two different accounts of the precise nature of Odysseus's demagogic powers. First, she reacts furiously to his arrival and proclamation:

ἀχάριστον ὑμῶν σπέρμ', ὅσοι δημηγόρους
 ζηλοῦτε τιμάς. μηδὲ γιγνώσκοισθέ μοι,
 οἱ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτοντες οὐ φροντίζετε,
 ἦν τοῖσι πολλοῖς πρὸς χάριν λέγητέ τι.
 Your breed is most unpleasant, all you who seek public speaking honors.
 May you not make my acquaintance, who harm your friends without
 Thinking of it, if you can say something that gratifies the masses.³⁸⁹

Here Hecuba castigates Odysseus for his disordered values: he places the pursuit of popular politics above elite friendship networks.³⁹⁰ As framed by her attack, he is in thrall to the commons, wooing it like a besotted lover to the expense of his other obligations. Shortly thereafter, however, Hecuba asks Odysseus to plead her case before the Argives assembled.³⁹¹ In doing so, she assures him that his powers come not from special attentiveness to the crowd's whims, but rather from a quality of personal charisma:

³⁸⁷ *Hecuba* 218-21

³⁸⁸ *Hecuba* 225-26

³⁸⁹ *Hecuba* 254-57

³⁹⁰ Michelini (154-55): “The play ... takes no stand vis-à-vis democracy and the rule of the *ochlos*; instead, it uses this theme to mark a contrast between world views.”

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*: “The theme of the *ochlos* serves also to bridge a necessary gap in the play's structure. Rhetoric typically is exercised before *ochloi* and *plethe*; but Hekabe, because of the limitations of the drama, must exercise it on individuals. Emphasis on the *ochlos* reinjects into Hekabe's impromptu discovery of the arts of *peitho* the political elements that would otherwise necessarily be absent.”

τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα, κἄν κακῶς λέγῃς, τὸ σὸν
 πείσει. λόγος γὰρ ἔκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν
 κἂκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς οὐ ταύτῳ σθένει.
 But your reputation, even if you should speak poorly,
 Will persuade. For a speech coming from those without esteem
 Does not have the same force as one from those with it.³⁹²

In explaining to Hecuba why he cannot do as she asks, Odysseus grounds the necessity for appeasing the mass in this particular instance in the need to preserve the possibility of manipulating *future* gatherings:

τί δῆτ' ἐρεῖ τις, ἦν τις αὖ φανῆι
 στρατοῦ τ' ἄθροισις πολεμίων τ' ἀγωνία ...
 [If we revoke the decision to honor Achilles posthumously,]
 Indeed, what would someone say, if there should ever appear
 A gathering of the army and a contest of enemies ...³⁹³

The elites cannot muster an army or engage with the enemy on their own. Their prestige and leadership qualities must be maintained if they are to have any chance of raising a sufficient force and successfully prosecuting a war.

Talthybios's description of Polyxena's death repeatedly notes the behavior of the crowd of spectators:

παρῆν μὲν ὄχλος πᾶς Ἀχαιικοῦ στρατοῦ
 πλήρης πρὸ τύμβου σῆς κόρης ἐπὶ σφαγᾶς,
 λαβῶν δ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς Πολυξένην χερὸς
 ἔστησ' ἐπ' ἄκρου χώματος, πέλας δ' ἔγω.
 λεκτοί τ' Ἀχαιῶν ἔκκριτοι νεανίαι,
 σκίρτημα μόσχου σῆς καθέξοντες χεροῖν,
 ἔσποντο. πλήρες δ' ἐν χεροῖν λαβῶν δέπας
 πάγχρυσον αἶρει χειρὶ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως
 χοᾶς θανόντι πατρί.
 The entire full ὄχλος of the Achaean army
 Was there around the tomb, (waiting) for your daughter's slaughter,
 And the child of Achilles, taking Polyxena by the hand
 Set her at the top of the mount – and I was nearby.
 And youths adjudged and picked out from the Achaeans
 To contain the leaping of your calf,
 Followed. And the child of Achilles, taking a full solid-gold ritual dish
 In his hands, raised up libations to his dead father.³⁹⁴

³⁹² *Hecuba* 293-95

³⁹³ *Hecuba* 313-14

³⁹⁴ *Hecuba* 521-29

The size and comprehensive nature of the gathering is emphasized by the redundant πᾶς and πλήρης. As in the Achaean assembly in the second book of the *Iliad*, discussed in Chapter Two, an elite cadre distinct from the larger group is “seeded” throughout it to help maintain order – here, by bringing the victim to the altar while separating her from the threat of attack by the crowd-as-mob.³⁹⁵ Talthybios then relates his own role in controlling the assembly as a whole:

σημαίνει δέ μοι
 σιγὴν Ἀχαιῶν παντὶ κηρῦξαι στρατῶι.
 κάγῳ καταστάς εἶπον ἐν μέσοις τάδε:
 Σιγᾶτ', Ἀχαιοί, σίγα πᾶς ἔστω λεώς,
 σίγα σιώπα. νήνεμον δ' ἔστησ' ὄχλον.
 And he gave me the sign
 To proclaim silence to the whole Achaean army.
 And taking my stand in the midst (of the crowd) I said these things:
 “Quiet, Achaians! Let the whole λεώς be silent,
 Quiet! Hush!” And I set the ὄχλος up motionless.³⁹⁶

Talthybios brings order to the crowd not by a display of his own authority, but rather as a representative of the high command, even of the army as a whole.

τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε, πᾶς δ' ἐπηύξατο στρατός. ...
 λογάσι δ' Ἀργείων στρατοῦ
 νεανίας ἔνευσε παρθένον λαβεῖν. ...
 λαοὶ δ' ἐπερρόθησαν Ἀγαμέμνων τ' ἄναξ
 εἶπεν μεθεῖναι παρθένον νεανίας. ...
 ὁ δ' οὐ θέλων τε καὶ θέλων οἴκτωι κόρης
 τέμνει σιδήρῳι πνεύματος διαρροάς.
 κρουνοὶ δ' ἐχώρουν. ἡ δὲ καὶ θνήσκουσ' ὄμως
 πολλὴν πρόνοιαν εἶχεν εὐσχήμων πεσεῖν,
 κρύπτουσ' ἅ κρύπτειν ὄμματ' ἀρσένων χρεών.
 Thus he spoke, and the whole army prayed with him.
 And then he nodded to the youths selected from the Argive army
 To sieze the maiden ...
 But then he, wanting and not wanting (to kill her) out of pity,
 Cut with steel the girl's windpipe.
 And the springs (of blood) gushed forth. And she, dying,
 Nevertheless showed great forethought in falling modestly,
 Hiding those things that should be hidden from the eyes of men.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Loraux (1987:44) sees the chosen band of youths as needed to *overcome* Polyxena's “virginal refusal to be ‘seized and hoisted.’” Read together with these other passages, however, the cadre can be understood as also *protecting* Polyxena in the last moments of her life against the chaotic violence of the mob, while transporting her to the site of solemn sacrifice. Cf. *Andromache* for an offensive, rather than protective, instance of crowd-seeding.

³⁹⁶ *Hecuba* 529-33

³⁹⁷ *Hecuba* 542, 544-45, 553-54, 556-70

Even in death, Polyxena observes the code of female isolation from the crowd. Out of respect for the nobility and modesty of her death, the group here polices itself – even as it divides into different work-gangs, losing the unity of the crowd at a spectacle - with no need for the chosen youths, or a figure such as Odysseus in the second book of the *Iliad*, to remonstrate them:

ἐπεὶ δ' ἀφῆκε πνεῦμα θανασίμῳ σφαγῆι,
οὐδείς τὸν αὐτὸν εἶχεν Ἀργείων πόνον,
ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν τὴν θανοῦσαν ἐκ χερῶν
φύλλοις ἔβαλλον, οἱ δὲ πληροῦσιν πυρὰν
κορμούς φέροντες πευκίνους, ὁ δ' οὐ φέρων
πρὸς τοῦ φέροντος τοιάδ' ἤκουεν κακά:
“ἔστηκας, ὦ κάκιστε, τῆι νεάνιδι
οὐτέπλον οὐδέ κόσμον ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων;”
But when she gave up her breath to the deadly slaughter,
None one of the Argives held the same task,
But some strewed her corpse with leaves from their hands,
Others assembled her pyre by bringing pine-logs,
And the one not carrying (anything) heard these sorts of curses
From the one carrying: Are you standing there, O wretch,
Not having a robe or some decoration-gift for the maiden in your
hands?³⁹⁸

Hecuba reacts to the narrative of her daughter's death by personifying the many troubles facing her, turning them into a crowd to match the crowd whose bloody entertainment has just been described:³⁹⁹

ὦ θυγάτερ, οὐκ οἶδ' εἰς ὅτι βλέψω κακῶν,
πολλῶν παρόντων. ἦν γὰρ ἄψωμαί τινος,
τόδ' οὐκ ἔαι με, παρακαλεῖ δ' ἐκεῖθεν αὖ
λύπη τις ἄλλη διάδοχος κακῶν κακοῖς.
O daughter, I don't know to which of my woes I should look,
Since so many of them are present. For when I grasp on to one,
Another won't let me, but some other grief taking its turn with
Woes upon woes calls me thither again.⁴⁰⁰

Shortly thereafter, she implores Talthybios to return to the Argive assembly and restrain the ὄχλος from any fresh outrages it might work:

οὐ δ' ἔλθε καὶ σήμερον Ἀργείοις τάδε,
μὴ θιγγάνειν μοι μηδέν' ἀλλ' εἴργειν ὄχλον

³⁹⁸ *Hecuba* 571-78

³⁹⁹ Arrowsmith picks up on this connection, translating these lines as “O my child,/ how shall I deal with this thronging crowd of blows./ these terrors, each with its petition, clamoring/ for attention? If I try to cope with one./ another shoulders in, and then a third/ comes on, distracting, each fresh wave/ breeding new successors as it breaks.”

⁴⁰⁰ *Hecuba* 585-88

τῆς παιδός. ἔν τοι μυρίωι στρατεύματι
 ἀκόλαστος ὄχλος ναυτική τ' ἀναρχία
 κρείσσων πυρός, κακὸς δ' ὀ μή τι δρῶν κακόν.
 But you go and declare this to the Argives:
 Not to let anyone touch my child, but keep the ὄχλος back.
 For in a countless army the ὄχλος is unchecked,
 And the sailors' anarchy is stronger than fire,
 And the man who does no wrong (is held) a coward.⁴⁰¹

Here a different kind of “peer pressure” is pictured operating between the members of the crowd. Where above Talthybios assured Hecuba that the soldiers encouraged in each other behavior respectful of her dead child, here Hecuba fears that the common soldiers acting as a mob will enforce an inverted system of values, condemning as cowards those who do not participate in the imagined desecration of her daughter's corpse. The talk of an anarchic mob of sailors has obvious resonance with contemporary Athenian society;⁴⁰² elite fear of the unruly masses is rarely as explicit in tragedy as in this passage.

In her dialogue with Agamemnon, Hecuba deploys a striking image:⁴⁰³

ένός μοι μῦθος ένδεῆς ἔτι.
 εἴ μοι γένοιτο φθόγγος έν βραχίουσιν
 καί χερσὶ καί κόμαισι καί ποδῶν βάσει
 ἢ Δαιδάλου τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν τινος,
 ὡς πάνθ' ἀμαρτῆι σῶν ἔχοιτο γουνάτων
 κλαίοντ' ἐπισκήπτοντα παντοίους λόγους.
 My speech yet lacks one thing.
 If only I could have a voice in my arms
 And my hands and my hair and the tread of my feet
 Through the arts of Daidalos or one of the gods,
 So that the all together might grasp your knees
 Clamoring and calling on you with all sorts of speeches.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ *Hecuba* 604-08

⁴⁰² Gregory comm. ad loc. notes that Hecuba is “[s]peaking as an aristocrat ... voic[ing] the disdain for the undisciplined mob that was associated with the oligarchic point of view in fifth-century Athens.” She references [Xen.] *Ath. Pol* 1.5 for the trope of unchecked and unlearned masses in contrast to sober and restrained elites. On revolution and counter-revolution in fifth-century Athens see generally Lintott 125ff. On the specific issue of *stasis* in Athens as represented at Thucydides III.82, see Price; Orwin; Edmunds (analyzing Thucydides's “ethics” as reflected in the passage, without commenting on political violence as a specifically *group* phenomenon).

⁴⁰³ Gregory comm. ad loc. cites parallels, e.g. (*Choephoroi* 195) that of Electra wishing Orestes's hair could speak; she observes “These literary parallels suggest that (*pace* Michelini ...) the audience would apprehend Hecuba's appeal as powerful rather than bizarre.” Michelini (152) calls the figure “bizarre” and “grotesque.” “The theme of physical decorum is raised also by the strange physicality of the image: to the conventions of moral, verbal, and physical behavior, *Hecuba* continually opposes a grotesqueness that is the appropriate expression of an inverted cultural tradition.” Neither commentator, however, remarks on the significance of the image in the context of Hecuba's criticism of Agamemnon as subservient to the will of the masses. Similarly, Mossman 129-30 considers whether the passage is “grotesque” (concluding that Hecuba is “praying not to be transformed into some strange beast, but that she might undergo a [] kind of liberation of energy”), but does not make the connection I identify here.

⁴⁰⁴ *Hecuba* 835-40

In other words, Hecuba wishes to become a one-woman assembly, with speakers and roaring crowd all embedded in her body.

Agamemnon replies to her pleas for assistance by saying that he would like to help her but fears the army as a body of opinion and a political mass:

εἴ πως φανείη γ' ὥστε σοί τ' ἔχειν καλῶς
στρατῶι τε μὴ δόξαιμι Κασσάνδρας χάριν
Θρηίκης ἀνακτι τόνδε βουλευῆσαι φόνον.
ἔστιν γὰρ ἦι παραγμὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ μοι.
τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον φίλιον ἠγεῖται στρατός,
τὸν κατθανόντα δ' ἐχθρόν. εἰ δὲ σοι φίλος
ὄδ' ἐστί, χωρὶς τοῦτο κοῦ κοινὸν στρατῶι.
πρὸς ταῦτα φρόντιζ'. ὡς θέλοντα μὲν μ' ἔχεις
σοὶ ξυμπονῆσαι καὶ ταχύν προσαρκέσαι,
βραδύν δ', Ἀχαιοῖς εἰ διαβληθήσομαι.

[I wish that] it somehow would come about that things go well for you,
But that I *not* seem to the army to have plotted murder against the lord of
Thrace for Cassandra's sake. For this is where disturbance falls on me.
The army considers that man as a rather good friend, and the dead (boy)
As an enemy. If the (boy) is dear to you, this is separate and not
In common with the army. Think on these things. Know that you have
Me willing to work on your behalf and quickly come to your defense,
But slowly, if I should be brought into discredit⁴⁰⁵ with the Achaians.⁴⁰⁶

Hecuba reads this not as a simple concern for reputation, but as an expression of fear of violence at the hands of the group. Her response is explicitly a rebuke of this “enslavement to the crowd”:

οὐκ ἔστι θντῶν ὅστις ἔστ' ἐλεύθερος.
ἢ χρημάτων γὰρ δοῦλός ἐστιν ἢ τύχης
ἢ πληθὸς αὐτὸν πόλεος ἢ νόμων γραφαὶ
εἴργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην τρόποις.
ἐπεὶ δὲ ταρβεῖς τῶι τ' ὄχλωι πλέον νέμεις,
ἐγὼ σε θήσω τοῦδ' ἐλεύθερον φόβου.
σύνισθι μὲν γάρ, ἦν τι βουλευῆσω κακὸν
τῶι τόνδ' ἀποκτείναντι, συνδράσης δὲ μή.
ἦν δ' ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν θόρυβος ἢ 'πικουρία
πάσχοντος ἀνδρὸς Θρηίκος οἷα πείσεται
φανῆι τις, εἴργε μὴ δοκῶν ἐμὴν χάριν.

There is no mortal who is free.
For (each one) is a slave either to goods or fortune
Or the mass or indictments under the law of the city
Constrain him to use ways not according to his judgment.
But since you fear the ὄχλος and revere it over-much,

⁴⁰⁵ LSJ s.v. διαβάλλω, citing this passage.

⁴⁰⁶ *Hecuba* 854-63

I will set you free of this fear. For share the knowledge if I plot
Some ill against the man who killed (my child), but do not
Share in the act. And if there arises a θόρυβος or drive to help
The man of Thrace as he is suffering, hold them off without seeming
(To do it for) my sake.⁴⁰⁷

After this discussion of the menace posed by the army-as-crowd, the discussion turns to the potentially violent group to which *Hecuba* belongs:

Αγ. τίς σοι ξυνέσται χεῖρ; πόθεν κτήσῃ φίλους;
Εκ. στέγαι κεκέυθασ' αἶδε Τρωιάδων ὄχλον. ...
Αγ. καὶ πῶς γυναιξὶν ἀρσένων ἔσται κράτος;
Εκ. δεινὸν τὸ πλῆθος σὺν δόλῳ τε δύσμαχον.
Αγ. δεινόν. τὸ μέντοι θῆλυ μέφομαι σθένος.
Αγ. What band will be there with you? Whence will you acquire friends?
Ηεκ. These tents conceal an ὄχλος of Trojan women.
Αγ. And how will women have power over men?
Ηεκ. A crowd's formidable, and, combined with deception, hard to fight.
Αγ. Formidable indeed. However, I scorn female strength.⁴⁰⁸

Fixated on the traditional code of heroic values, in which women are fundamentally passive and nonthreatening, Agamemnon cannot understand that a πλῆθος is dangerous whether composed of men or women. This failure to comprehend the threat is repeated by the victim of the plot, as he is drawn into the tents by the lure of further riches while disregarding the threat posed by the group of women that waits within:

Εκ. σκύλων ἐν ὄχλῳ ταῖσδε σώιζεται στέγαις.
Πο. ποῦ δ'; αἶδ' Ἀχαιῶν ναύλοχοι περιπτυχαί.
Εκ. ἴδια γυναικῶν αἰχμαλωτίδων στέγαι.
Πο. τάνδον δὲ πιστὰ κάρσένων ἐρημία;
Εκ. οὐδεὶς Ἀχαιῶν ἔνδον ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς μόναι.
Ηεκ. [The gifts are] kept safe in a "heap"⁴⁰⁹ of booty in these tents here.
Πο. *Where?* These are the enclosures of the Achaean naval force!
Ηεκ. The tents of the captive women are set apart.
Πο. And things inside are trustworthy, and bereft of males?
Ηεκ. None of the Achaeans are inside, but only we alone.⁴¹⁰

Note well Hecuba's rhetorical sleight-of-hand. No man is inside, she assures her unwitting victim, only ἡμεῖς μόναι: we-females-alone. But if you add one μόνη to

⁴⁰⁷ *Hecuba* 864-75

⁴⁰⁸ *Hecuba* 879-80, 883-85

⁴⁰⁹ From my survey of early Greek drama and epic I conclude that this use of ὄχλος to mean an accumulated mass or heap of *things* is quite unusual, if not unique. While it may be simple coincidence, I find the use of this word in this context another indication that the threat posed by groups, whether of armed men or even of unarmed women, is a central theme of this play.

For "heaps" as crowd symbols, see Canetti 87 ff.

⁴¹⁰ *Hecuba* 1014-18

another to another to another, soon you have a πλῆθος. By portraying the women as captives, victims, set apart and isolated, she conceals the fact that when gathered together even these seemingly helpless figures can be dangerous.

After his offstage blinding and the murder of his children, Polymestor staggers onstage to relate the horrors inflicted on him by the πλῆθος whose dangers he belatedly appreciates:

καίτ' ἐκ γαληνῶν πῶς δοκεῖς προσφθεγμάτων
 εὐθύς λαβοῦσαι φάσγαν' ἐκ πέπλων ποθὲν
 κεντοῦσι παῖδας, αἱ δὲ πολυπόδων δίκην
 ξυναρπάσασαι τὰς ἐμὰς εἶχον χέρας
 καὶ κῶλα. παισὶ δ' ἀρκέσαι χρήζων ἐμοῖς,
 εἰ μὲν πρόσωπον ἐξανισταίην ἐμὸν
 κόμης κατεῖχον, εἰ δὲ κινοίην χέρας
 πλήθει γυναικῶν οὐδὲν ἦνυτον τάλας.
 And then when things were calm - can you imagine? –
 Suddenly taking swords from somewhere in their robes
 They stabbed my children, and they in the manner of many-feet⁴¹¹
 Snatched up and held by hands and limbs. And wanting to come
 To my children's rescue, if I raised my face they pulled me down
 By my hair, if I moved my hands – because of the mass of women
 I was unable to accomplish anything, wretch that I am.⁴¹²

Earlier in the play, Talthybios described a crowd of men watching a woman⁴¹³ stand motionless before the threat of death. Now we are given a description of one man paralyzed by a crowd of women. *Hecuba* presents the offstage crowd at its two extremes of size: the entire army in assembly, and a pack of women in secret conspiracy.

Suppliants

In a sense this play is the most political of Euripides's works, with extensive discussion by characters of the relative merits of democratic and other forms of government. Yet the discussions are abstract. The people assemble offstage, but their deliberations are not described in detail as they are in, e.g., *Orestes* (discussed below). In this respect the crowd in Euripides's *Suppliants* is more like that in Aeschylus's play of

⁴¹¹ Gregory comm. ad loc. prefers Diggle's suggestion (from a conjecture by Verrall) to the codices' text πολεμίων δίκην, "in the manner of enemies": "[A] comparison of the Trojan women to "octopuses" is both bizarre in itself and inconsistent with Polymestor's straightforward reportage ... [T]he expression is consistent with other references in the text to the women's presumed harmlessness and unexpected ferocity." I disagree: the image of the women as octopi stresses that they are acting not as individuals but as a group organism or pack of attacking beasts. Octopi are "bizarre" precisely because they exceed the bounds of anthropocentric individuality, in that they are single beings with many times the extremities that humans (or indeed any creature their size) possess. As in the famous textual and sculptural figure of the death of Laocoon, the coordinated action of seemingly separate entities is fundamentally uncanny.

πολεμίων is the more conservative choice; I offer the above as a defense of reading πολυπόδων, but would argue even without the latter that the specifically *group* nature of the violent action described (especially in light of the gendered status of the group) is key to the horror of the scene.

⁴¹² *Hecabe* 1160-1167

⁴¹³ Thalmann (1993:146) declares this scene "frankly pornographic."

the same title than it is like those in some of Euripides's other works. The gatherings of people which are pressing concerns, evoked and constructed by the onstage characters' words, are for the most part not political but military - although the former are not totally absent from the text.

In his opening encounter with Theseus, Adrastus blames his decision to lead the disastrous expedition against Thebes on, quite literally, crowd noise:

Ad. νέων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος ἐξέπλησέ με.

Th. εὐψυχίαν ἔσπευσας ἀντ' εὐβουλίας.

Ad. For the θόρυβος of young men drove me out of my senses.

Th. You placed your zeal in strong spirit, rather than good counsel.⁴¹⁴

It is unclear whether we are to picture Adrastus as *intimidated* by the youths' noisy enthusiasm – as Agamemnon fears his own army's collective opinion and potential for mutiny in *Hecuba* and *IA* – or, as it were, *intoxicated* by it. Did he react as one conforming to the will of the many, or was he subsumed in and possessed by that will?

Later in their dialogue, Theseus accuses Adrastus of almost the opposite mistake:

ἐς δὲ στρατείαν πάντας Ἀργείους ἄγων ...

κέρδους οὐνεκ', οὐκ ἀποσκοπῶν

τὸ πλῆθος εἴ τι βλάπτεται πάσχον τάδε.

Leading all Argives into a military expedition ...

For the sake of profit, not looking out for the πλῆθος,

Whether it was suffering any damage from all this.⁴¹⁵

Was Adrastus's error to be heedless of the common good, or to be subservient to the common will? These are not logically exclusive alternatives – one can capitulate to the will of a momentary majority without considering whether that majority's desires are actually good for the bulk of the people – but they do run the relationship between the one and the many in opposing directions. Adrastus was either swayed by or neglected the wellbeing of the youthful crowd, but in either case his actions and motivations are cast in reference to those of the group.

Theseus, by contrast, has a clear sense of his position as a leader with respect to the group he leads:

δόξαι δὲ χρήζω καὶ πόλει πάσῃ τόδε,

δόξει δ' ἐμοῦ θέλοντος. ἀλλὰ τοῦ λογοῦ

προσδοῦς ἔχοιμ' ἂν δῆμον εὐμενέστερον.

καὶ γὰρ κατέστησ' αὐτὸν ἐς μοναρχίαν

ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ' ἰσόψηφον πόλιν.

λαβῶν δ' Ἄδραστον δεῖγμα τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων

ἐς πλῆθος ἀστῶν εἴμι. καὶ πείσας τάδε,

λεκτοὺς ἀθροίσας δεῦρ' Ἀθηναίων κόρους

ἦξω.

⁴¹⁴ *Suppliants* 160-61

⁴¹⁵ *Suppliants* 229, 236-37

I want this motion passed also by the city as a whole;
 It will pass with me behind it. But giving my people a speech
 I should have them in a favorable mindset.
 For I constituted them as a monarchy,
 Freeing the City of Equal Votes.
 And taking Adrastos as a visual aid to my speech
 I will go before the πλῆθος of citizens.
 And persuading (them) of these matters, I will gather
 Select Athenian youths and come here.⁴¹⁶

A character with Odyssean ἀξίωμα here expresses confidence in his ability to win over mass opinion. Adrastos is portrayed as swayed by the will of a group of young men, but heedless of the interests of the masses; Theseus will persuade the masses to do what he wants, which – happy coincidence! – will be good for them as well.⁴¹⁷ Where Agamemnon in *Hecuba* (and again in *IA*) is afraid to face the group, Theseus is confident that his past beneficence will win him a successful hearing before a mass audience.

Theseus's plans for what happens after his motion passes repeat a pattern we have already seen: an elite cadre (often of young men) will be selected for a special task. In the Argive assembly in the second book of the *Iliad*,⁴¹⁸ in preparation for the sacrifice of Polyxena in *Hecuba*,⁴¹⁹ even in Orestes's multi-stage plan for Neoptolemos's assassination in *Andromache*,⁴²⁰ smaller groups of carefully selected individuals are deployed in attempts to channel the otherwise potentially riotous larger crowd.

Returning from the assembly, Theseus reports that his expectations were met – but he describes his reception in brief and general terms:

καὶ μὴν ἐκοῦσα γ' ἀσμένη τ' ἐδέξατο
 πόλις πόνον τόνδ' ὡς θέλοντά μ' ἦισθετο.
 And indeed, the city received me willingly, even pleased,
 As it knew I was in favor of (accepting) this task.⁴²¹

The offstage political crowd is not a site of threat, or indeed of much importance, in this play as compared to others surveyed. Instead, the group whose offstage presence will drive much of the rest of the action is an army. The potential for military conflict is created immediately after the lines quoted above, as a Theban herald enters and engages Theseus in terms that continue the theme of political relations between the One and the Many:

⁴¹⁶ *Suppliants* 349-57

⁴¹⁷ Monarchy is here idealized, and adapted to Athenian democratic ideology, as the rule by an enlightened leader of a unified and orderly people. Cf. Thucydides 2.65 on Pericles's relationship with the people of Athens.

⁴¹⁸ II.75, discussed in Chapter Two.

⁴¹⁹ *Hecuba* 525, discussed above.

⁴²⁰ *Andromache* 1097-99, discussed above. That passage is difficult to construe (see Stevens comm. ad loc.), but definitely seems to involve a distribution of functions among multiple sets of selected participants.

⁴²¹ *Suppliants* 393-94

Κηρ. τίς γῆς τύραννος; πρὸς τίν' ἀγγεῖλαί με χρῆ ...

Θη. πρῶτον μὲν ἤρξω τοῦ λόγου ψευδῶς, ξένε,
ζητῶν τύραννον ἐνθαδ'. οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται
ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρα πόλις.
δῆμος δ' ἀνάσσει διαδοχαῖσιν ἐν μέρει
ἐνιαυσίαισιν ...

Κηρ. πόλις γὰρ ἦς ἐγὼ πάρειμ' ἄπο
ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ὄχλωι κρατύνεται.

Her. Who's tyrant of this land? Whom do I need to make my
Announcement to ...

Thes. First off you've started your speech falsely, stranger,
Seeking a tyrant here. For this city's not ruled by one man,
But is free. For the people rule in turn
With yearly successions (of office) ...

Her. For the city from which I am here is ruled
By one man, not by an ὄχλος.⁴²²

The Theban herald, in warning Theseus of the coming war, describes how a group voting in an assembly lacks the proper perspective and awareness of risk necessary to make correct decisions:

ἐλπίς γὰρ ἐστ' ἄπιστον, ἢ πολλὰς πόλεις
συνῆψ' ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολὰς.
ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος ἐς ψῆφον λεῶ,
οὐδεὶς ἔθ' αὐτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται,
τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ' ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει.

εἰ δ' ἦν παρ' ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψήφου φορᾷ,
οὐκ ἂν ποθ' Ἑλλὰς δοριμανῆς ἀπώλλυτο.

For Hope is untrustworthy, she who brings together (in conflict)
Many cities, leading their spirit into overconfidence.

For when war comes up for a vote of the people,
No one yet counts on his own death,
But attributes this ill fate to another.

For if death were in one's eye in the casting of the vote,
Then spear-mad Hellas would never perish.⁴²³

The play's characters thus offer two symmetrical accounts of the pathologies of individual-group dynamics that arise when mass bodies make decisions of life and death. Just as Theseus accused Adrastus of looking to his own profit rather than the common good, so the herald accuses individual voters in a democratic majority of assuming all benefit will flow to themselves while projecting all future harm onto "someone else."⁴²⁴

The messenger's speech relating the Athenian victory over the Theban army offers another model of interaction between one and many:

⁴²² *Suppliants* 399, 403-07, 410-11

⁴²³ *Suppliants* 479-85

⁴²⁴ In terms of American politics: "Don't tax you, don't tax me, tax that fellow behind the tree," attributed to Senator Russell Long.

βοή δὲ καὶ κωκυτὸς ἦν ἀνὰ πτόλιν
 νέων γερόντων ἱερά τ' ἐξεπίμπλασαν
 φόβωι. ...
 τοιόνδε τοι στρατηγὸν αἰρεῖσθαι χρεῶν,
 ὃς ἔν τε τοῖς δεινοῖσιν ἔστιν ἄλκιμος
 μισεῖ θ' ὑβριστὴν λαόν ...
 There was screaming and wailing of the young and old
 Throughout the town, and they filled up the temples in panic. ...
 [Theseus assures the Thebans he is not there to massacre them.]
 One must choose this sort of general, who is mighty in horrible times
 And who hates an insolent λαός ...⁴²⁵

Solicitous of the needs of his own δῆμος, and careful to position himself neither as their slave nor their master but as one who cares what they have to say and trusts that they will listen to and follow his advice, Theseus takes a different approach to another town's λαός. The people of Athens he calls to assembly and persuades with speeches, charisma and memories of his past good deeds; the people of Thebes he drives into a panic, causing them to gather together not as voting citizens but suppliant refugees.

Electra

The *Electra* is, in comparison to many of Euripides's other plays, relatively crowdless. Since its plot material and overall structure bear similarities to those of the *Orestes*, the contrast between these two works helps us appreciate when and how Euripides does, in other plays, heighten the salience of the threat from the offstage crowd. The one crowd scene described in the play, while superficially resembling other such descriptions, resolves itself quite differently and reinforces the distinction between this and other texts.

Orestes reflects on the irony that a poor farmer, typically an object of contempt to those of his own elite status, has been the one to preserve the royal family's honor:

οὔτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὔτ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας
 οὔτ' αὖ δοκῆσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος,
 ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὢν, ἄριστος ἠύρεθη.
 οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσεθ' οἱ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
 πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῆι δ' ὁμιλίαι βροτῶν
 κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἦθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς;
 For this man's not a great one among the Argives,
 Nor will he seem to bear the *gravitas* of breeding,
 But being among the many, he was found to be the best.
 Won't you who wander full of empty conceits stop being witless,
 And judge the well-born by company and character?⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ *Suppliants* 726-28

⁴²⁶ *Electra* 380-85

ὄμιλία here should be read as “company” in the social sense. Orestes is telling the (internal and external) audience to not judge people on dyadic contact with them, but rather to take part in a ὄμιλος that contains them – to engage in group *contact* with them as a way of testing their worth, rather than looking at their group membership *status* alone. The farmer who has married his sister is, to Orestes, just one member of the masses, “one among the many.” This is the dialectic of One and Many in a different sense than we have seen it before: the farmer remains One *of* Many, instead of standing as One *against* Many, as heroes do – but Orestes urges the audience to consider whether *any* given member of the Many may be the right one for some particular task.

When interrogating the old townsman about Aigisthos’s movements and defenses, Orestes wants to know whether his enemy has gathered the right sort of pack around him:

Ορ. πόσων μετ’ ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμῶων μέτα;

Πρ. οὐδεις παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χεῖρ.

Or. With how many men? Or alone with house-slaves?

Pr. No Argive was present, but a household band.⁴²⁷

Satisfied that Aigisthos has no “men” with him, only slaves – a troop to be sure, but a troop comprised of negligible members – Orestes sets his plot in motion. The messenger later relates the confrontation of the “household band” with the heroes Orestes and Pylades:

δμῶες δ’ ἰδόντες εὐθύς ἦξιαν ἐς δόρυ,
πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ’. ἀνδρείας δ’ ὕπο
ἔστησαν ἀντίπρωρα σείοντες βέλη
Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ’. ...

οἱ δ’, ἐπεὶ λόγων

ἤκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας. ἐγνώσθη δ’ ὑπὸ

γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.

στέφουσι δ’ εὐθύς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα

χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες.

Seeing them, the servants straightaway ran for their spears,

Many to fight against two. And Orestes and Pylades, they made their

Stand with manliness, brandishing their weapons in front of them ...

But they (the servants), when they heard (O&P’s) words, held back their

Spears, but (Orestes) was recognized by some old man who had been

In the palace long ago. And straightaway they crown your brother’s head,

Rejoicing, ululating.⁴²⁸

What in *Andromache* – and even in *IT*, though without fatal result - was a scene of mob triumph, here becomes a joyous reception and a restoration of a dynasty’s dominance

⁴²⁷ *Electra* 628-29

⁴²⁸ *Electra* 844-47, 851-55

over its subjects.⁴²⁹ Orestes and Pylades are themselves plural, or more precisely *dual*, giving them just enough “safety in numbers” to ward off the larger but weaker group they confront. Prompted by the one among its number who perceives the true identity of their elite victims, the group subordinates itself to those elite characters. The “lynching” scenario of Many against One, of the sort familiar from the *Andromache*, is here avoided in two ways: the doubling of that One into Two, and the presence in the otherwise hostile band of one “good” servant.

Herakles

As we have seen before – e.g. in Aeschylus’s *Suppliants* and in the *Cyclops* – characters often announce that they see a group, either as that group enters or as they themselves enter to confront the group already on stage. Herakles does this in words loaded with social meaning:

ἔα. τί χρῆμα; τέκν’ ὀρώ πρὸ δωμαίων
στολμοῖσι νεκρῶν κρᾶτας ἐξεστεμμένα
ὄχλωι τ’ ἐν ἀνδρῶν τὴν ἐμὴν ξυνάορον
πατέρα τε δακρῦοντα συμφορᾶς τίνας;
Hey! What’s the deal? Do I see my children before my house
With ribbons on their head in the get-up of corpses
And my wife in an ὄχλος of men
And my father bewailing some disastrous events?⁴³⁰

At *Herakleidae* 44, among other moments, we have seen that upper-class ideology demands that women be isolated indoors, specifically to be shielded from the eyes (or, as at *Acharnians* 257, discussed in Chapter Four, from the thieving hands) of the ὄχλος. In Herakles’s absence, his family has been completely exposed to just such a social threat. His entrance and reaction to seeing his family out of doors and his wife in an “ὄχλος of men”⁴³¹ confirm the salience of the crowd and its connection to entrances and exits.

πολλοὺς πένητας, ὀλβίους δὲ τῶι λόγῳ
δοκοῦντας εἶναι συμμάχους ἄναξ ἔχει,
οἳ στάσιν ἔθηκαν καὶ διώλεσαν πόλιν
ἐφ’ ἀρπαγαῖσι τῶν πέλας ...
ὦφθης <δ’> ἐσελθῶν πόλιν. ἐπεὶ δ’ ὦφθης, ὄρα
ἐχθροὺς ἀθροίσας μὴ παρὰ γνώμην πέσης.
The king has many paupers – who seem to be rich by their speech –
As allies, who made στάσις and destroyed the city
For the sake of snatching from those nearby ...
You were seen coming into the city, and since you were seen

⁴²⁹ Compare Hippolytos’s wish (1079-80) for a double self to witness his grief. What was there a desire to populate an *audience* to a *rhetorical* encounter is here fantasized as two elite fighters resisting a *crowd* in *violent* conflict.

⁴³⁰ *Herakles* 525-28

⁴³¹ Specifying that a crowd is composed of men is unusual. The reverse is more common (e.g. *Phoenissae* 197 ὄχλος γυναικῶν; *Bacchae* 1058 θῆλυν ὄχλον). That Herakles draws attention to the gender of the crowd highlights the taboo violated here.

Beware lest, gathering your enemies together,
You fall, contrary to (your) intention.⁴³²

Herakles here is warned of the possibility that he might meet essentially the same reception as does Neoptolemos in Delphi at the end of *Andromache*. By arriving in town he may have caused his enemies to accumulate (ἀθροίσας).⁴³³ Once again, crowds (the “many” lackeys of the king) gather at,⁴³⁴ and reputational information radiates from, the liminal point of entry to the *polis*.

After his recovery from madness Herakles bitterly reflects:

φέρ' ἄλλ' ἐς ἄλλην δὴ τιν' ὀρμήσω πόλιν;
κᾶπειθ' ὑποβλεπώμεθ' ὡς ἐγνωσμένοι,
γλώσσης πικροῖς κέντροισι *κλιδουχούμενοι.*
But come now, should I head off to some other city?
And then I would fall under suspicion as I am recognized,
“Kept in check”⁴³⁵ with sharp pricks.⁴³⁶

The text appears to be corrupt, and the precise meaning is obscure, but one thing is clear: Herakles dreads moving to another community and falling under the suspicious and envious eyes of another group. As in the warning given to him earlier in the play, so now he himself expresses the fear that the zone of social interaction at the threshold of and inside a new city will be a hostile field.

Trojan Women

Hecuba mourns her fallen circumstances, remembering her large brood of children who, while numerous enough to form a crowd in their own right, were no common folk but rather of the highest social order:

ἦ μὲν τύραννος κὰς τύρανν' ἐγημάμην,
κάνταῦθ' ἀριστεύοντ' ἐγεινάμην τέκνα,
οὐκ ἀριθμὸν ἄλλως ἄλλ' ὑπερτάτους Φρυγῶν.
I am a royal, and married into royalty,
And thereupon I bore children most excellent,
Not solely for (sheer) number, but the most elite of Phrygians.⁴³⁷

⁴³² *Herakles* 588-91, 593-94

⁴³³ This participle appears elsewhere in this survey: at *Helen* 51, *Phoen.* 78 and *Andromache* 606 of a general assembling and leading an army; at (E.) *Suppliants* 356 of selecting a cadre of youths to implement the people's vote; at *Ion* 664 of gathering friends to attend a feast. This is the only instance discussed in this chapter in which the heroic figure's act of “gathering” a crowd is unintentional and indeed (potentially) self-destructive.

⁴³⁴ It is not explicitly stated that these “many” have actually themselves seen Herakles approach. They may be an intermediate step in the transmission of this information, as with the *συστάσεις* in *Andromache* which gather between Orestes's slander and the eventual formation of the lynch mob.

⁴³⁵ LSJ s.v. κλειδουχέω (Att. κληδ-), citing this passage.

⁴³⁶ *Herakles* 1286-88

⁴³⁷ *Troïades* 474-76

The chorus assigns blame for the downfall of Troy not to its leaders, but to the *λεώς* entire, the “race as a whole” (*πᾶσα δὲ γέννα*), giving in to the joy of its own collective singing, as each member of each age-group joins in:

ἀνὰ δ' ἐβόασεν *λεώς*
Τρωιάδος ἀπὸ πέτρας σταθείς. ...
τίς οὐκ ἔβα νεανίδων,
τίς οὐ γεραιὸς ἐκ δόμων;
κεχαρμένοι δ' αἰοδαῖς
δόλιον ἔσχον ἄταν.
πᾶσα δὲ γέννα Φρυγῶν
πρὸς πύλας ὠρμάθη ...
The Trojan *λεώς* raised a cry
Standing around the Trojan rock ...
Who of the girls didn't shout,
Which old man didn't come out of his house?
Enticed by hymns
They brought about deceptive destruction.
The whole Phrygian race
Rushed for the gates.⁴³⁸

Menelaos enters with an entourage of attendants. He refuses to name his wife, so angered is he still by her betrayal, and notes with what appears to be grim satisfaction that she is now merely one among the large number of captive women held by the Greeks. He dispatches his pack of servants to bring her out of the tents by force:

ἦκω δὲ τὴν Λάκαιναν ...
ἄξων. δόμοις γὰρ τοῖσδ' ἐν αἰχμαλωτικοῖς
κατηρίθμηται Τρωιάδων ἄλλων μέτα. ...
ἀλλ' εἶα χωρεῖτ' ἐς δόμους, ὀπάονες,
κομίζετ' αὐτὴν τῆς μαιφονωτάτης
κόμης ἐπισπάσαντες.
I come to get the Laconian woman ...
For she's numbered in these captive women's quarters
With the other Trojanesses. But hey – go into the quarters,
Servants, bring her out dragging her by her most foul hair.⁴³⁹

Helen's first question on reunion with her original husband is a political and group-conscious one:

Ελ. γνῶμαι⁴⁴⁰ τίνες
Ἐλλησι καὶ σοὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι;
Με. οὐκ εἰς ἀκριβὲς ἦλθεν ἀλλ' ἅπας στρατὸς

⁴³⁸ *Troiades* 522-23, 527-32

⁴³⁹ *Troiades* 869, 871-72, 880-82

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. *IA* 26, discussed below, where Agamemnon says that the *pollai gnomai* of the group can wear down an (elite) man's life.

κτανειν ἐμόι σ' ἔδωκεν, ὄνπερ ἠδίκηις.

Hel. What thoughts do you and the Greeks have about my life?

Men. It hasn't come to a point, but the whole army gave you to me to kill
– The army, which you've done wrong.⁴⁴¹

Menelaos attempts to shift some portion of responsibility for this decision to the group, just as Odysseus on his entrance in *Hecuba* spoke not of his own wishes but of the army's choice – even though we know these to coincide, and indeed that the latter was a result of the manipulative pursuit of the former.

Menelaos threatens Helen with the wrath of the offstage crowd – execution by stoning is quintessentially an act of *group* violence⁴⁴² – thus explicitly wishing on her the death of Neoptolemos in *Andromache*: βαῖνε λευστήρων πέλας (“Hie thee to a stoning!”).⁴⁴³ We know from the rest of the epic tradition that no such fate awaits her, but this still stands as the most direct invocation by one onstage character against another of the collective offstage threat.

The chorus, cheated in their and Hecuba's desire for Helen's death, enumerate their woes: conquered city, dead husbands, and a crowd of crying children being led away one by one:

τέκνων δὲ πλῆθος ἐν πύλαις

δάκρυσι *κατάορα στένει* βοᾷ βοᾷ:

“μᾶτερ, ὦμοι, μόναν δὴ μ' Ἀχαιοὶ κομίζουσι σέθεν ἀπ' ὀμμάτων ...

A πλῆθος of kids at the gates cries with tears, * hanging on their mothers'

Necks *⁴⁴⁴ it shouts, shouts, “Mother, ah! me, the Achaeans are carrying

Me alone away from your eyes ...”⁴⁴⁵

We have ὄχλοι, and other crowd-words, of women and men. Here we see the ultimate image of captive suffering: a group of children, the one group on whom aggregation confers no advantage of strength. The *Hecuba* demonstrates that a sufficient number of women (ἡμεῖς μόναι, 1018) acting together can be every bit the offstage threat as an angry assembly or squad of assassins. Yet in this play, as they stand *onstage*, the captive women can only helplessly mimic their children's cries as they are taken away.

One of those children received as his lot not separation and slavery, but death. As the last ship prepares to depart, Hecuba receives from Talthybius the body of the infant Astyanax (unnamed in the play). She accuses the Greeks of cowardice, insisting that this last murder was completely unnecessary, since:

⁴⁴¹ *Troïades* 899-902

⁴⁴² Rosivach surveys the sources and concludes that stoning was “far from ... common” at Athens; indeed, there are only two verified instances in the fifth century. He notes (234) the tragic allusions to stoning, concluding: “An incidental threat such as this which comes to naught is almost certainly the playwright's own invention, conditioned by his contemporary environment and meant to serve a particular dramatic purpose, not an inheritance from the epic tradition.”

⁴⁴³ *Troïades* 1039

⁴⁴⁴ LSJ s.v. κατήορος. Diggle app. ad loc.: “κατάρρυτα exspectes.”

⁴⁴⁵ *Troïades* 1089-92

ὄθ' Ἑκτορος μὲν εὐτυχοῦντος ἐς δόρυ
διωλλύμεσθα μυρίας τ' ἄλλης χερὸς ...
When Hektor had good luck with the spear,
And the rest of the myriad band, we were (still) dying ...⁴⁴⁶

Sometimes even a leader and countless followers flourishing in battle are not enough. Hekuba's brood of children, each a lord among men; all the land's fighters; their glorious leader – all are gone now. Only mourning remains.

Iphigenia among the Taurians

IT is unique in providing us an account of a “lynch mob” – of the type described as almost forming in *Ajax*, and successfully forming in *Andromache* – from the perspective of one of the mob's members. That perspective is one that fully appreciates “strength in numbers”:

πρὸς εὐτραφεῖς γὰρ καὶ νεανίας ξένους
φαύλους μάχεσθαι βουκόλους ἡγούμεθα.
πολλοὶ δ' ἐπληρώθημεν οὐ μακρῶι χρόνῳι.
We thought shepherds poor for fighting
Against well-raised and youthful strangers.
But in no long time we came to our full number.⁴⁴⁷

As in *Electra*,⁴⁴⁸ characters of low social status (there slaves, here peasants) hardly count as opponents for elite figures. But when their contingent has swelled to become “many,” they are ready to attack – suggesting the dawning of self-consciousness on the part of an individually weak but collectively powerful majority.

πίπτει δὲ μανίας πίτυλον ὁ ξένος μεθεῖς ...
ἔμφρων δ' ἀνάιξας ὁ ξένος πεσήματος
ἔγνω κλύδωνα πολεμίων προσκείμενον
καὶ τὴν παροῦσαν συμφορὰν αὐτοῖν πέλας
ῶιμωξέ θ'. ἡμεῖς δ' οὐκ ἀνίεμεν πέτροις
βάλλοντες, ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν προσκείμενοι. ...
ἀλλ' εἰ φύγοι τις, ἄτεροι προσκείμενοι
ἔβαλλον αὐτούς. εἰ δὲ τούσδ' ὠσαῖατο,
αὖθις τὸ νῦν ὑπεῖκον ἤρασσεν πέτροις.
And the stranger fell, giving up to the pulse⁴⁴⁹ of madness ...
But coming to his senses, the stranger leapt up from his swoon.
He became aware of the wave of enemies bearing down on him
And the present disaster near the two of them, and moaned.

⁴⁴⁶ *Troïades* 1162-63

⁴⁴⁷ *IT* 304-06

⁴⁴⁸ *Electra* 628-29, discussed above.

⁴⁴⁹ Platnauer comm. ad loc.: “Another nautical metaphor, πίτυλος being used particularly for the rhythmic beat of oars,” referencing *Heracles* 816 and 1189. Cropp translates as “[t]he stranger fell, throwing off the assaults of madness.”

But we didn't let up pelting him with rocks, another setting on him from Another place⁴⁵⁰ ... But if one guy should flee, the others would lay into Them and throw. If one should push himself away, quickly the one now Yielding would strike with (more) rocks.⁴⁵¹

Numbers confer strength in two ways: the ability to attack simultaneously from multiple points, and the ability to trade off attacks and to fall back under cover from one's allies. The members of this crowd are only differentiated to the slightest degree – and yet this is a departure from other descriptions of mob violence, e.g. that in *Andromache*, where the crowd surges and falls all of a piece. Here, perhaps because the scene is related by one of the members of the group, we see that *inside* a mob there can be specialization of function and distribution of responsibility, if only in an improptou and haphazard way.

ἀλλ' ἦν ἄπιστον. μυρίων γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν
οὐδεις τὰ τῆς θεοῦ θύματ' εὐτύχει βαλὼν.
μόλις δέ νιν τόλμηι μὲν οὐ χειρούμεθα,
κύκλωι δὲ περιβαλόντες ἐξεκόψαμεν
πέτροισι χειρῶν φάσαν', ἐς δὲ γῆν γόνυ
καμάτῳ καθεῖσαν.

But it was unbelievable! – For out of those countless hands
No one hit the target, casting at the god's victims.
With toil and difficulty we still didn't overpower him,
But throwing from all around them we struck
Their swords with stones from out (their) hands,
And they sank to their knees on the ground in fatigue.⁴⁵²

The herdsmen finally defeat their noble prey by attrition. A volley of stones striking loose a brandished sword is a fitting figure for the triumph of an untrained and unarmed mob against an elite and well-armed fighter. Just as accumulated drops of water can wear through a huge rock, so can repeated blows from individually trifling missiles take a huge cumulative toll.

Ion

As she enters, Ion addresses his mother – though neither of them yet knows their true relationship – in confusion over her departure from the normal behavior of those visiting the precinct of Apollo:

οὔ πάντες ἄλλοι γύαλα λείσσουντες θεοῦ
χαίρουσιν, ἐνταῦθ' ὄμμα σὸν δακρυρροεῖ;
Where all others rejoice seeing the hollows of the god,
There your eye flows with tears?⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. discussion of ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν as describing crowd behavior at *Iliad* II.75 in Chapter Two above.

⁴⁵¹ *IT* 307, 315-19, 325-27. A difficult passage. Cropp translates these last two lines as “Still, as each fled, the others pressed forward and bombarded them; and as they repelled these, in turn who had been retreating would pound them with stones.” Cropp 91.

⁴⁵² *IT* 328-33

The ἄλλοι here are not aggregated at the same time, but are the serial accumulation over time of all others Ion has encountered in the course of his duties. Still, Creusa’s reaction is marked as an individual aberration from the group norm. Crying when others do not – or even, as in the scene in the *Trachiniae* discussed above, having one’s crying singled out for notice while others’ reactions are left unspecified – is an especially stark instance of the isolation of One against the Many.

After their mutual recognition, Xouthos instructs his son to prepare for departure by calling together a type of crowd new to our survey: the crowd as *party*. Here the community, or some notionally representative section of it, will come together not in political deliberation or military exertion, but for food, drink and fun:⁴⁵⁴

ἀλλὰ τῶν φίλων
 πλήρωμ’ ἀθροίσας βουθύτῳ σὺν ἡδονῇ
 πρόσσειπε, μέλλων Δελφιδ’ ἐκλιπεῖν πόλιν.
 But gathering a πλήρωμα of your friends
 With ox-sacrificing pleasure make an announcement,
 Intending as you are to leave the Delphic city.⁴⁵⁵

As discussed above in relation to *Herakles* 594, this is language (πλήρωμ’ ἀθροίσας) that tragedies more often deploy in a military or (as in *Herakles*) political-violence context. Here we see that Euripides’s “lighter” plays⁴⁵⁶ can use the same constructions to evoke gatherings offstage with a very different emotional valence. Descriptions of crowds and groupings, this suggests, are not area-specific accretions to tragedy, frequent only to the extent that war and political violence are independently motivated objects of representation, but are, rather, expected and integral features of the tragic world in whichever cross-section a given play reveals.

Of the Good Crowd of revelry – of which this feast to be thrown is a more restrained version, but which it resembles in being a gathering without menace – a variant is seen at *Frogs* 218 ff, discussed in Chapter Four. There, an ὄχλος – under that name – is uniquely portrayed as not threatening, even with noticeable affection. In the instant scene, πλήρωμα is already a neutral word as crowd-terms go, so the oddness of an aggregation of people being described without any sense of threat is less striking.

κῆρυξ ἀνεῖπε τὸν θέλοντ’ ἐγχωρίων
 ἐς δαῖτα χωρεῖν. ὡς δ’ ἐπληρώθη στέγη,
 στεφάνοισι κοσμηθέντες εὐόχθου βορᾶς
 ψυχὴν ἐπλήρουν. ὡς δ’ ἀνεῖσαν ἡδονὴν
 < > παρελθὼν πρέσβυς ἐς μέσον πέδον
 ἔστη, γέλων δ’ ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολὺν

⁴⁵³ *Ion* 245-46

⁴⁵⁴ For feasts as events for the whole community, as opposed to the private symposium, see Schmitt-Pantel. See generally Slater 1991; for the symposium, see Murray.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ion* 663-65

⁴⁵⁶ In its “happy ending” and (relatively, but not entirely) nonviolent plot, although certainly not in its length or difficulty!

πρόθυμα πράσσω.

The herald announced that (every) man of the inhabitants who wanted to (Could) come to the feast. And when the tent was filled, Decked out with wreaths, they took their soul's fill Of well-heaped provender. And when they slackened their pleasure < > an old man came over to the middle of the ground and stood, And caused the diners great laughter, performing such earnest (tricks).⁴⁵⁷

The tent fills with people; the people fill themselves with food;⁴⁵⁸ they then relax and laugh at the antics of a clown. Here they exhibit the same pattern of error as that of the people of Troy at *Troïades* 531-32. A group lulled by pleasure (there the rejoicing song; here the food and wine) admits a seemingly harmless vehicle of concealed death into their midst.

To my positing the diners as a “good crowd,” not posing a threat to the onstage elite characters as I have argued is the tragic norm, it might be objected that the group which gathers for the feast will threaten Creusa when her murder plot is discovered. However, the description of what ensues from that discovery in fact takes steps to mediate the reaction of those surrounding her through the system of formal justice. The diners’ reaction in any case is only given as a passive one of surprise, and this comes at the earliest evidence of the plot, before it is necessarily clear what is happening:

ἐθάμβησεν δὲ πᾶς
θοινατόρων ὄμιλος ὄρνιθος πόνους.
And the whole ὄμιλος of feasters was amazed
At the struggles of the bird [poisoned by the drugged wine].⁴⁵⁹

Ion takes the guests with him to the nobles (κοιράνοισι, 1219), who *vote* for Creusa to be executed – with no description given of the voting process. At the end of the servant-messenger’s speech, he says

πᾶσα δὲ ζητεῖ πόλις
τὴν ἀθλίως σπεύσασαν ἀθλίαν ὁδόν.
The entire city looks for her,
Wretchedly hurrying on this wretched path.⁴⁶⁰

But this is a mere figure. Creusa is not exposed to the gaze of the crowd in a direct and truly threatening way. Mediated through first a celebratory gathering, then a formal deliberative process, her crisis can eventually result in a happy ending through onstage discovery rather than offstage violence.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ion* 1167-73

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. *Bacchae* 281: Dionysus frees mortals from grief ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ῥοῆς, “when they are filled with the flow of the vine.” Here the flowing is within an individual (cf. Theweleit *passim*), not between individuals as in the “flowing” of noise and opinion in an assembly.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ion* 1205-06

⁴⁶⁰ *Ion* 1225-26

Helen

Helen's opening speech gives an aitiology for the Trojan War which places blame on the excessive crowdedness of the earth:

πόλεμον γὰρ εἰσήνεγκεν Ἑλλήνων χθονὶ
καὶ Φρυγίῃ δυστήνοισιν, ὡς ὄχλου βροτῶν
πλήθους τε κουφίσειε μητέρα χθόνα
γνωτὸν τε θεῖη τὸν κράτιστον Ἑλλάδος. ...
For he brought war to the land of the Hellenes
And to the wretched Phrygians, that he might
Lighten mother earth of the ὄχλος and πλῆθος of mortals
And make famous the strongest man of Hellas ...⁴⁶¹

It is not just that great numbers have perished from the earth; those left standing have been scattered and reconcentrated in the wrong places. Helen bemoans all this: the many gone, and the many who are left too far (she thinks) from her.

κάγῳ μὲν ἐνθάδ' εἶμ', ὁ δ' ἄθλιος πόσις
στράτευμ' ἀθροίσας τὰς ἐμὰς ἀναρπαγὰς
θηρᾷ πορευθεὶς Ἰλίου πυργώματα.
ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις
ροαῖσιν ἔθανον.
And I'm here, but my suffering husband
Gathering an army, hunts after my kidnappings
Having crossed over to the towers of Ilium.
And many souls died by the Scamandrian banks
On my account.⁴⁶²

In his entrance-speech, Menelaos expresses the sort of fear of the crowd that we have seen elsewhere being projected onto females by male characters. This reinforces the connection, already seen in *Andromakhe* and *Herakles*, between arriving in a place and encountering a crowd.

ὄνομα δὲ χώρας ἤτις ἦδε καὶ λεῶ
οὐκ οἶδ'. ὄχλον γὰρ ἔσπεσεῖν ἠσυχνόμην,
κρύπτων ὑπ' αἰδοῦς τὰς τύχας.
But I don't know the name of this land here, or its people.
For I am disgraced to fall in with an ὄχλος, hiding my circumstances
From shame.⁴⁶³

Towards the end of the play, the servant describes a group escape by boat. Sitting closely together, the Egyptian sailors churn up the sea's flow:

⁴⁶¹ *Helen* 38-41

⁴⁶² *Helen* 49-53

⁴⁶³ *Helen* 414-15

ἄλλοι δὲ τοίχους δεξιούς λαιούς τ' ἴσοι
 ἀνὴρ παρ' ἀνδρ' ἔζονθ', ὑφ' εἵμασι ξίφη
 λαθραῖ' ἔχοντες, ῥόθιά τ' ἐξεπίπλατο
 βοῆς, κελευστοῦ φθέγματ' ὡς ἠκούσαμεν.
 The other folk sat man by man on the left and right walls,
 Keeping swords hidden under their clothes,
 And the waves were filled with a roar,
 As we heeded the orders of the commander.⁴⁶⁴

Castor, the *deus ex machina* of the play, ends his speech with one final reference to masses of men – here as a social comment with an epic flavoring, naming the common people as “without number”:

τοὺς εὐγενεῖς γὰρ οὐ στυγοῦσι δαίμονες,
 τῶν δ' ἀναριθμήτων μᾶλλον *εἰσιν οἱ πόνοι.*
 Spirits don't hate the well-born;
 Rather, toils are the province of the countless.⁴⁶⁵

Phoenician Women

Iokaste speaks of her son Polyneikes as offstage, but coming towards the city at the head of a large force:

ὁ δ' Ἄργος ἐλθὼν, κῆδος Ἀδράστου λαβῶν,
 πολλὴν ἀθροίσας ἀσπίδ' Ἀργείων ἄγει.⁴⁶⁶
 And he, going to Argos, and obtaining a marriage-relation
 With Adrastos, gathered a great force of Argives and leads it.

The servant then engages in a *teichoskopia* with Antigone, drawing her attention to the size of the approaching army:

σκόπει δὲ πεδία καὶ παρ' Ἰσμηνοῦ ῥοὰς
 Δίρκης τε νᾶμα πολεμίων στρατευμ' ὄσον⁴⁶⁷.
 Look at the plains and by the banks of the Ismenos
 And the current of Dirce – how great an armed force of enemies!⁴⁶⁸

She asks about a particular enemy officer, whose importance she infers from the group following him:

τίς δ' οὗτος ... ὄμμασι γοργὸς
 εἰσιδεῖν νεανίας,
 λοχαγός, ὡς ὄχλος νιν ὑστέρωι ποδὶ
 πάνοπλος ἀμφέπει;

⁴⁶⁴ *Helen* 1573-76

⁴⁶⁵ *Helen* 1678-79

⁴⁶⁶ *Phoenissae* 77-78

⁴⁶⁷ Cf. *IA* 1258

⁴⁶⁸ *Phoenissae* 101-12

But who's this youth ... terrible to see with the eyes,
A troop-leader, as (evidenced by) the fully-armed ὄχλος
Which attends him with following foot?⁴⁶⁹

After this *teichoskopia*, the servant urges Antigone to go back inside. This attempt to confine an elite woman indoors is highlighted by a reference to its ultimate violation: a group of women together, moving through important civic space.

ὄχλος γάρ, ὡς ταραγμὸς⁴⁷⁰ εἰσῆλθεν πόλιν,
χωρεῖ γυναικῶν πρὸς δόμους τυραννικούς.
For an ὄχλος of women moves towards the tyrant's palace
As a disturbance goes throughout the city.⁴⁷¹

Polyneikes's description of his own foray into civic/mass space as an elite/solitary figure shows an awareness of the risks of ambush:

οὕτω δὲ * τάρβους * ἐς φόβον τ' ἀφικόμην
μή τις δόλος με πρὸς κασιγνήτου κτάνηι,
ὥστε ξιφήρη χεῖρ' ἔχων δι' ἄστεως
κυκλῶν πρόσσωπον ἦλθον.
I came with such a fearful dread lest some traitor on my brother's
Behalf kill me, that I went through the town with sword-bearing hands
Turning my face in a circle.⁴⁷²

He later explains why he must come and fight despite these fears. In the *Suppliants* Adrastus attributed his foolish invasion – once its folly was, after the fact, evident – to his having yielded to or been intoxicated by the shouting of “young men.” Here, Polyneikes alludes to his companions on the current adventure as in some sense *forcing* him to prosecute this war:

πολλοὶ ... πάρεισι ... ἀναγκαίαν δέ μοι διδόντες.
Many ... are here ... and placing compulsion on me.⁴⁷³

At *IA* 511, Agamemnon similarly speaks of the entire army as placing “compulsion” on him and his brother to sacrifice Iphigenia.

⁴⁶⁹ *Phoenissae* 145-49

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. line 1406, where the brothers are surrounded by the *taragmos* of (shields clashing in) battle. Both passages describe a sound caused by a larger group – of frightened townswomen or of fighting soldiers – by reference to royal characters (either to their homes, in an *Odyssean* note, or to their heroic single combat, as in the *Iliad*). The emphasis on the reception of crowd activity by elite characters is in keeping with the Euripidean increased focus on the relations between the two.

⁴⁷¹ *Phoenissae* 196-97

⁴⁷² *Phoenissae* 361-64. Note that he attempts to replicate (in a defensive posture) the “circle,” which has already been noted as the characteristic form of group attack, and which has obvious resonances with choral staging.

⁴⁷³ *Phoenissae* 430-32

Iokasta demands that Polyneikes consider how many lives are to be lost, and what his reception in his adopted community will be on his return after such a loss:

πῶς Ἄργος ἤξεις μυρίους λιπῶν νεκρούς;
ἔρεϊ δὲ δὴ τις: “ὦ κακὰ μνηστεύματα
Ἄδραστε προσθεῖς, διὰ μιᾶς νύμφης γάμον
ἀπωλόμεσθα.

How will you come (back) to Argos, leaving countless corpses?
Indeed, someone will say: “O Adrastus, having made a bad wedding-
Match, you were destroyed for the sake of one bride.”⁴⁷⁴

This reverses the relationship between intimate life and group behavior seen in *Alcestis*. There, an elite marriage is disrupted, and the consequences are cast as a loss of Admetus’s ability to socialize. Here, we see it from the other side – an elite marriage (which would have been celebrated in some group setting) resulted in a concentration of the fighting-age males, and eventually the loss of a great number of them.

Ετ. καῖτα σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἦλθες πρὸς τὸν οὐδὲν ἐς μάχην;
Πο. ἀσφαλῆς γὰρ ἐστ’ ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατηλάτης.

Et. And then you came with many men against one no (good) in a fight?

Po. For a cautious general is better than a bold one.⁴⁷⁵

Eteokles sarcastically weighs the size of his brother’s army against his own supposed weakness. This is a male variation on a common tragic trope⁴⁷⁶: weighing thousands of lives lost against the sole figure of Helen. Polyneikes justifies the size of his force as prudence. Where Iokasta read the size of the army as a sign that countless members of it would die, Polyneikes seems to be justifying its scale from a concern to *insure* its individual members’s safety and its collective chances of victory.

Κρ. μικρὸν τὸ πλῆθος τῆσδε γῆς, οἱ δ’ ἄφθονοι.

Ετ. ἐγὼῖδα κείνους τοῖς λόγοις ὄντας θρασεῖς.

Κρ. ἔχει τιν’ ὄγκον τᾶργος Ἑλλήνων πάρα.

Ετ. θάρσει. τάχ’ αὐτῶν πεδίον ἐμπλήσω φόνου.

Κρ. θέλοιμ’ ἄν. ἀλλὰ τοῦθ’ ὀρῶ πολλοῦ πόνου.

Ετ. ὡς οὐ καθέξω τειχέων ἔσω στρατόν.

Cr. The πλῆθος of this land is small, while they are countless.

Et. I know the type that’s bold – in words.

Kr. Argos too has some reputation⁴⁷⁷ among the Greeks.

Et. Be bold! Soon I’ll fill their plain with slaughter.

Cr. I’d be willing; but I see that’ll require a lot of work.

Et. (Know that) I won’t keep my army inside its walls.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ *Phoenissae* 579-82

⁴⁷⁵ *Phoenissae* 598-99

⁴⁷⁶ E.g. *Andromache* 605-06 (discussed above).

⁴⁷⁷ Mastronarde comm. ad loc.: “Reputation for proud standing <in warfare>.”

⁴⁷⁸ *Phoenissae* 715-20

The contest of taunts between the two rulers threatens to spill over into a general rout, “fill[ing] the plain with blood.” At the end of the passage just quoted, Etekoles speaks of the army he commands as if it is a pack of dogs or herd of cattle over which he has complete control.⁴⁷⁹ Tiresias will warn where this illusion of control leads:

πολλοὶ δὲ νεκροὶ περὶ νεκροῖς πεπτωκότες
 Ἀργεῖα καὶ Καδμεῖα μείξαντες μέλη
 πικροὺς γόους δώσουσι Θηβαίαι χθονί.
 And many corpses falling beside corpses
 Argive and Kadmean mixing their limbs
 Will give bitter lamentations to the Theban land.⁴⁸⁰

The larger the force an unsuccessful invader brings, the more corpses he will leave behind him when defeated.⁴⁸¹

Orestes

In a by-now familiar pattern, the opening speech establishes the “presence” of an offstage gathering of people:

κυρία δ’ ἦδ’ ἡμέρα
 ἐν ἧι διοίσει ψῆφον Ἀργείων πόλις,
 εἰ χρή θανεῖν νῶ λευσίμωι πετρώματι ...
 This day is designated (as the one) in which
 The city of Argives will cast a vote,
 Whether we two should die by stony execution ...⁴⁸²

We have seen assemblies act like mobs, and actual mobs stone characters to or near death; here Electra’s fear is that the former will lead to the latter.

Or. κύκλωι γὰρ εἰλισσόμεθα παγχάλκοις ὄπλοις.
Me. ἰδίαι πρὸς ἐχθρῶν ἢ πρὸς Ἀργείας χερός;
Or. πάντων πρὸς ἀστῶν, ὡς θάνω. βραχύς λόγος.
Or. We are cooped in on all sides (“in a circle”) by bronze arms.
Men. By enemies (acting on) private (motivations), or by an Argive band?
Or. By all the townsmen, that I (should) die – a short speech.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. *IT* 1437, where Athena commands Thoas to παῦσαι διώκων ρεῦμά τ’ ἐξορμῶν στρατοῦ (“stop chasing [them] and sending out the ‘flood of (your) army’”). Platnauer notes that the phrase “flood of (an) army” is “a common and, to a Greek, a natural metaphor,” and that the exact same phrase is found at *Persians* 412. Flowing is indeed a “natural” metaphor for crowd movement (see Canetti), as it is for the circulation of signs of approval within that crowd; cf. discussion of ῥεθ/ροθ above.

⁴⁸⁰ *Phoenissae* 881-83

⁴⁸¹ Cf. Canetti, as discussed in Chapter One: a *heap* of corpses is the ultimate end of the logic of the “double crowd” (violent confrontation between *groups*).

⁴⁸² *Orestes* 48-50

⁴⁸³ *Orestes* 444-46

Menelaos, as is typical of the Atreidae in tragedy,⁴⁸⁴ is a political being who fears the wrath of the people *en masse*. He asks if Orestes faces an armed group of private rivals, or a guard duly established by the people's vote.⁴⁸⁵ Eventually he will explain to Orestes that he cannot help because the group at his command is simply not large enough:

τοῦ δ' αὖ δύνασθαι πρὸς θεῶν χρήζω τυχεῖν.
 ἦκω γὰρ ἀνδρῶν συμμάχων κενὸν δόρυ
 ἔχων, πόνοισι μυρίοις ἀλώμενος,
 σμικρᾷ σὺν ἀλκῇ τῶν λελειμμένων φίλων.⁴⁸⁶
 I pray to the gods that I might happen on a way to accomplish it.
 For I come having an spear(-force) empty of allies,
 Caught up in countless toils,
 With a small force of my friends who have been spared.⁴⁸⁷

His parting advice to Orestes is to go with the flow of popular opinion, no matter how fickle and foolish. This is the crowd seen from the perspective of the out-of-power politician with *contempt* for it, not affection and respect as exhibited by Theseus in the *Suppliants*.

ὅταν γὰρ ἡβᾷ δῆμος εἰς ὀργὴν πεσῶν,
 ὅμοιον ὥστε πῦρ κατασβέσαι λάβρον.⁴⁸⁸
 εἰ δ' ἡσύχως τις αὐτὸν ἐντέινοντι μὲν
 χαλῶν ὑπέικοι καιρὸν εὐλαβούμενος,
 ἴσως ἂν ἐκπνεύσειεν. ἦν δ' ἀνῆι πνοάς,
 τύχοις ἂν αὐτοῦ ραιδίως ὅσον θέλεις.
 [ἔνεστι δ' οἶκτος, ἐνὶ δὲ καὶ θυμὸς μέγας,
 καραδοκοῦντι κτήμα τιμιώτατον.]
 For when the δῆμος exhibits youthly vigor, falling into a rage,
 It's just like fire,⁴⁸⁹ furious (and hard) to extinguish.
 But if someone calmly yields to it as it insists upon him,
 Hanging loose and staying ready for the right time,
 It'll probably blow over. And if it lets up its gusts,
 You'll easily meet with however much you want from it.
 [For there is a certain (capacity for) pity in it, and a great spirit,
 A possession most valuable for the one who keeps a lookout].⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁴ Odysseus is characterized, somewhat similarly, as being extremely attentive to the crowd, but without the element of *fear*.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. *Andromache* 1098, where different groups of people guard Neoptolemos, some *ἰδίαι*, some in a public capacity.

⁴⁸⁶ *Orestes* 688-91

⁴⁸⁷ This phrase creates a sense of a much larger group left offstage – here, because they are dead. Cf. introductory note to this Chapter on the allusive construction of offstage crowd in the *Agamemnon*; cf. also the dialectic of One and Many, in the survivor mode, discussed in the *Odyssey* survey.

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 2.87 ὁ λάβρος στρατός.

⁴⁸⁹ On fire as “crowd symbol,” Canetti 75-80.

⁴⁹⁰ *Orestes* 696-703

To the “politician,” the crowd presents two faces: the threatening one of rage, and the manipulable one of pity and θυμός. To Orestes, the elite individual who has violated fundamental taboos and wants only to be left alone, there is no possibility of waiting until the crowd’s wrath “blows over.” The mass may be like a child in its irrationality and lack of self-control, but it is not *powerless* like a child; quite the contrary.

Pylades enters, giving this play’s first eyewitness account of the crowd as it forms offstage:

θᾶσσον ἢ μ’ ἐχρῆν προβαίνων ἰκόμην δι’ ἄστεως,
 σύλλογον πόλεως ἀκούσας ὄντ’, ἰδὼν δ’ αὐτὸς σαφῶς ...
 τί τάδε; πῶς ἔχεις; τί πράσσεις, φίλταθ’ ἠλίκων ἐμοὶ
 καὶ φίλων καὶ συγγενείας; πάντα γὰρ τάδ’ εἶ σύ μοι.
 It was necessary that I make by way forward and come quickly
 Through the town, hearing that there was an assembly of the city,
 And seeing (so) clearly myself ...
 What’s this? How are you holding up? What are you doing, dearest
 To me of my agemates and friends and relation(s)?
 For you are all these things to me.⁴⁹¹

After reporting his sighting of the σύλλογον,⁴⁹² Pylades affirms his ties with Orestes along multiple lines of elite connection, as if to ward off the specter of the commons in assembly. When Pylades suggests flight to avoid punishment at the hands of the many, Orestes reminds him that the threat is not just a political/legal one of institutions and processes, but is already manifest as a physical group surrounding them:

Ορ. οὐχ ὄραϊς; φυλασσόμεσθα φρουρίοισι πανταχῆι.
Πυ. εἶδον ἄστεως ἀγυιάς τεύχεσιν πεφαργμένας.
Ορ. ὡσπερὶ πόλις πρὸς ἐχθρῶν σῶμα πυργηρούμεθα.
Ορ. Don’t you see? We are guarded by watchmen on all sides.
Py. (Yes,) I saw the streets of the town all fenced round with arms.
Ορ. Just like as it were a city, we are fenced round our bod(ies) with
 Towers by our enemies.⁴⁹³

The streets are where an unauthorized mob gathers; they are also where barricades and checkpoints are put up by an established government to control movement. Presumably the faction that desires Orestes’s and Electra’s deaths could send those now guarding them to kill them, without bothering to hold a vote. Still, there is something special – and especially threatening to the elite characters, who would rather welcome direct combat

⁴⁹¹ *Orestes* 729-30, 732-33

⁴⁹² This word is used most often of a large gathering of military forces, e.g. *IA* 514, 825, 1545. However, at *Alcestis* 951, Admetos uses it in the plural (ξύλλογοι γυναικοπληθεῖς) to describe the social gatherings among his friends and agemates which his wife’s death has caused him to dread.

⁴⁹³ *Orestes* 760-62. The word may not apply to only one particular type of crowd, therefore, but seems negative/threatening in most or all of its occurrences.

for the chance to win military glory – about doing it “by the book” and through the formal processes of popular sovereignty.⁴⁹⁴

In the passage of stichomythia leading to Orestes’s decision to speak before the assembly, he and Pylades express a view of the crowd’s potential for both good and bad actions which seems to contradict blanket condemnations of groups offered elsewhere in this and other plays.

Ορ. δεινὸν οἱ πολλοί, κακούργους ὅταν ἔχωσι προστάτας.

Πυ. ἀλλ’ ὅταν χρηστοὺς λάβωσι, χρηστὰ βουλευούσ’ αἰεί.

Ορ. εἶέν. ἐς κοινὸν λέγειν χρή.

Or. The many are a dreadful thing, when they have scoundrels for leaders.

Py. But when they get worthy ones, they always deliberate worthily.

Or. Well then! I must speak to the commons.⁴⁹⁵

Does the crowd’s capacity to do harm, paired with its inability to deliberate properly, always and everywhere lead it to do the wrong thing? For Pylades, at least at this moment, the answer is no. The many will be led towards bad actions by bad leaders and good actions by good leaders. Obviously the ideal course of action would be for Orestes to present himself to them as a potential leader, but Orestes is no Theseus, and a fusion of interests between leader and people is not an option here.

Even within this immediate passage, however, the tone of the references to the mass slips back into a more decidedly negative register. Pylades proclaims his devotion, and intention to stand by his friend in this crisis, in terms that explicitly denigrate the hostile community as a “mob.” ὄχλος in this instance bears the full weight of elite condemnation, and evokes from Orestes a reaffirmation of the value of elite comradeship:

ὡς ἐγὼ δι’ ἄστεώς σε, σμικρὰ φροντίζων ὄχλου,

οὐδὲν αἰσχυνθεὶς ὀχλήσω. ...

τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖνο. κτᾶσθ’ ἐταίρους, μὴ τὸ συγγενὲς μόνον.

ὡς ἀνὴρ ὅστις τρόποισι συντακῆι, θυραῖος ὢν,

μυρίων κρείσσων ὁμαίμων ἀνδρὶ κεκτῆσθαι φίλος.

Py. I will carry you through the town, thinking little of the ὄχλος ...

Or. This is the thing: get you friends, not just relative(s).

As a man wastes away from events, when he’s far from home –

A friend is better to possess for (that) man than a thousand blood-

Relatives.⁴⁹⁶

The chorus-leader tells Electra that her brother πρὸς δ’ Ἀργεῖον οἴχεται λεών (“is going before the Argive λεώς”).⁴⁹⁷ Immediately thereafter, a messenger arrives to narrate the proceedings:⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁴ Canetti (188-89) understands parliamentary voting as sublimated group combat. The demonstration of one side’s superior numbers is meant to indicate that they could have triumphed in combat, had it come to that.

⁴⁹⁵ *Orestes* 772-74

⁴⁹⁶ *Orestes* 801-02, 803-05

⁴⁹⁷ *Orestes* 846

ὄρῳ δ' ὄχλον στείχοντα καὶ θάσσοντ' ἄκραν,
 οὔ φασι πρῶτον Δαναὸν Αἰγύπτῳ δίκας
 διδόντ' ἀθροῖσαι λαὸν ἐς κοινὰς ἔδρας.
 ἀστῶν δὲ δὴ τιν' ἠρόμην ἄθροισμ' ἰδὼν ...
 ὁ δ' εἶπ': "Ὀρέστην κείνον οὐχ ὄραϊς πέλας
 στείχοντ', ἀγῶνα θανάσιμον δραμούμενον;" ...
 ἐπεὶ δὲ πλήρης ἐγένετ' Ἀργείων ὄχλος,
 κῆρυξ ἀναστὰς εἶπε: "Τίς χρήζει λέγειν ..."
 I see an ὄχλος on the march and sitting on the hilltop,
 Where they say Danaos, giving justice to Aegyptos,
 First gathered the λαός into common seats.
 And I asked one of the townsmen what gathering this was I saw ...
 And he said: "Don't you see that Orestes draw near,
 Coming to run a deadly contest?" ...
 And when the ὄχλος of the Argives got full,
 The herald stood up and said: "Who wishes to speak? ..."499

The ὄχλος moves and sits as one. It is packed together – first in aitiological verb, and then as present-day noun. The messenger speaks to some τις - the singular personification of the community as "everyman,"⁵⁰⁰ whereas the ὄχλος is notionally the community as *all* men.

Talthybios speaks first; he is critical of the matricides, but the narrative does not specify which penalty he proposes, exile or death. Diomedes follows, arguing for banishment, and dividing the crowd's response:⁵⁰¹

ἐπερρόθησαν δ' οἱ μὲν ὡς καλῶς λέγοι,
 οἱ δ' οὐκ ἐπήνουν. κάπτι τῶιδ' ἀνίσταται
 ἀνὴρ τις ἀθυρόγλωσσος, ἰσχύων θράσει.
 [Ἀργεῖος οὐκ Ἀργεῖος, ἠναγκασμένος,
 θορύβῳ τε πίσυνος κάμαθεῖ παρρησίαι,
 πιθανὸς ἔτ' αὐτοὺς περιβαλεῖν κακῶι τι.
 ὅταν γὰρ ἡδύς τις λόγοις φρονῶν κακῶς
 πείθῃ τὸ πλῆθος, τῆι πόλει κακὸν μέγα ...]
 And some raised a shout that he spoke nobly,
 But some did not agree. And on his heels stood up

⁴⁹⁸ This is the lengthiest description of a political assembly in tragedy, indeed in drama. The closest comic analogue is that in the *Knights*, discussed in Chapter Four – though that description is significantly different, in that it is delivered by one of the participants (and the ultimate victor) in a back-and-forth contest of demagoguery. Here, the scene is narrated by an uninvolved observer, there is no back-and-forth debate but rather a series of speakers, and the outcome is disastrous for the protagonist.

Willink 231 cautions against the traditional reading of this scene as a satire specifically directed at Cleophon: "The satire (such as it is) is general rather than specific." If the critique of the assembly is in fact a more general one, less directed at contemporary Athenian figures than at the volatility of the mass itself, that makes the scene all the more important for this survey.

⁴⁹⁹ *Orestes* 871-74, 877-78, 884-85

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. the anonymous *tis* who rallies the lynch mob in *Andromache*, discussed above.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. *Hekbae* 116-19, discussed above.

Some guy with no check on his tongue, strong in boldness.
 [An un-Argive Argive,
 Trusting in θόρυβος and unlearned free speech,
 Yet persuasive (enough) to get them involved in some evil.
 For when someone sweet in speech (but) plotting evil
 Persuades the πλῆθος, it's a great evil for the city ...]⁵⁰²

Here the interpolation⁵⁰³ makes the implicit critique of crowd psychology explicit, reinforcing the theory of the crowd articulated by Pylades earlier: crowds do nothing good or bad, but leaders (whether elite individuals or otherwise anonymous rabble-rousers) make it so.

Opposed to this “un-Argive” speaker is another anonymous citizen whose turn comes next:

ἄλλος δ' ἀναστὰς ἔλεγε τῶιδ' ἐναντία,
 μορφῆι μὲν οὐκ εὐωπός, ἀνδρεῖος δ' ἀνὴρ,
 ὀλιγάκις ἄστου κάγορᾶς χραίνων κύκλον,
 αὐτουργός, οἴπερ καὶ μόνοι σῶιζουσι γῆν,
 ξυνετός δέ χωρεῖν ὁμόσε τοῖς λόγοις θέλων ...
 And another stood up and spoke things opposing that one,
 Not good to look at in form, but a man's man,
 “keeping aloof from”⁵⁰⁴ the circle of the *agora*,
 A smallholder, the only kind who save the land,
 Willing and able to walk it like he talks it ...⁵⁰⁵

As one who shuns crowd-sites, it is not surprising that this speaker's words lack mass appeal (his speech seems good only τοῖς γε χρηστοῖς, 930). Orestes then speaks on his own behalf, unsuccessfully.

ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔπειθ' ὄμιλον, εὖ δοκῶν λέγειν.
 νικᾷ δ' ἐκεῖνος ὁ κακὸς ἐν πλήθει χερῶν,
 ὃς ἠγόρευσε σύγγονον σέ τε κτανεῖν ...
 But he didn't persuade the ὄμιλος, (although) seeming to speak well,
 But that one won – the scoundrel – in a πλῆθος of hands⁵⁰⁶,

⁵⁰² *Orestes* 901-08

⁵⁰³ For my purposes, the distinction between “authentic” and “interpolated” text is irrelevant, provided that the interpolation was added within a sufficiently short time span from the original composition as to provide evidence of the same thought system. See Mastronarde (39-49) for problems of interpolation generally and in the *Phoenissae*.

⁵⁰⁴ LSJ s.v. χραίνω, citing this passage; cf. Chapter Four for *agora* as a site of crowding and social contamination, especially *Acharnians* 843. For κύκλος designating a zone of crowd formation, cf. discussion above of *Ajax* 749. Sharing *en mesoi* is a common trope of democratic or “middling” ideology; a Canettian perspective may suggest a primeval root for this sort of talk (individually less powerful people gather together in a hunting-pack, to bring down an animal or a fellow human before sharing the spoils in a feeding-pack).

⁵⁰⁵ *Orestes* 917-21

⁵⁰⁶ Schwartzberg 448: “Acclamation took the form of shouts or murmurs or ... the estimation of waved hands: what is salient is that these votes were heard or observed *qua* unified whole, rather than counted.”

Who proposed killing your brother and you ...⁵⁰⁷

Defeated on the field of mass deliberation and with only a day's reprieve left, Orestes leaves as part of a pitiful, powerless group. Gatherings of aristocratic φίλοι, in a city ruled by the δῆμος, can neither persuade the masses nor fight against them honorably.⁵⁰⁸ As at the end of *Troïades*, all that is left is to mourn:

πορεύει δ' αὐτὸν ἐκκλήτων ἄπο
Πυλάδης δακρύων, σὺν δ' ὀμαρτοῦσιν φίλοι
κλαίοντες, οἰκτίροντες. ἔρχεται δέ σοι
πικρὸν θέαμα καὶ πρόσσοψις ἀθλία.
Pylades, crying, led him from the "committee,"⁵⁰⁹
And friends went with them crying, expressing pity.
And he's coming to you – a bitter spectacle and grievous sight.⁵¹⁰

Reinhardt explores the social dynamics of this assembly and its aftermath:

The people's assembly took its typical course. Some of it reminds one of the trial which is best known to us from this period: the people's trial of Socrates,⁵¹¹ nine years after the performance of *Orestes* ... Out of personal rancour ancient aristocracy [in the person of Tyndareus] joins forces with the most extreme radicalism [represented by the unnamed demagogue]. ... So, now, there they stand, driven victims, surrounded by an inescapability which leaves nothing to be desired ... Internally they are plagued by guilty consciences; externally, they suffer inhumanity, failure on the part of kinsfolk, opportunism, vengefulness, incitement of the mob, alienation, hostility of all around them ... [this ellipsis in original] This is not the inescapability of destiny ... In this inescapable situation, not the work of

See also Lendon, who observes that a "voice vote" allows for measurement of *enthusiasm*, not simply a proposal's numerical popularity. Any form of mass voting – whether by show of hands only, or allowing for expressive shouting – is a perfect example of a crowd phenomenon.

⁵⁰⁷ *Orestes* 943-45

⁵⁰⁸ The final option left to them is deceit and terrorism, leading to *stasis* that is only resolved by the *deus ex machina*. For the historical reality of aristocratic "clubs" and related phenomena, see generally Jones.

⁵⁰⁹ LSJ s.v. ἔκκλητος, citing this passage. Now that the verdict is rendered, the group that has voted is described as a select group; still, the frequent earlier references to it as an ὄχλος and λαός, among other words, confirm its synechdochic representation of the community as a whole. Cf. Haubold on this scene (181):

First the participants in the legal case are simply called a 'crowd' (*ochlos*). But when the speaker wants to express the aetiological significance of their action [at 873], he switches to *laos*. The change is telling. The force of the formulae discussed in this section rests precisely on transforming a situation without meaning and historical depth into that significant moment between past and present at which institutional progress takes place. This is the moment of *leos* ritual.

One thinks of the formation of the army through various modes of crowd in the first books of the *Iliad*, as discussed in Chapter Two.

⁵¹⁰ *Orestes* 949-52

⁵¹¹ See Raditsa for a discussion of this trial in its historical context.

the gods, but of man alone, what does the nobly born aristocrat do? [H]e ... take[s] his destiny heroically upon himself ... he does not lose his dignified bearing.⁵¹²

Finally, the play's last description of group behavior strikes an oddly comic note, as Helen's foreign slave describes the rout of his compatriot servants at the hands of the conspirators:

ἀνὰ δὲ δρόμαδες ἔθορον ἔθορον
ἀμφίπολοι Φρύγες. ...
And the Phrygian house-slaves ran ran runnings ...⁵¹³

While the elite are helpless before a city's aroused ὄχλος, compensatory fantasies of triumph over a group of foreign inferiors may still be available.

Bacchae

The political and military assembly-crowds of such plays as *IA* and *Orestes*; the squad of assassins in *Andromache*; even the murderous group of women in *Hecuba* – all are groups which could form in the real world. The *Bacchae* constructs groups that obey none of the limitations of natural and social reality, blurring lines between male and female, Greek and foreign, human and animal, and finally living and non-living. An encounter with the crowd in its most blended and plural form destroys the unity of the privileged male subject's psyche, before resulting in actual physical dismemberment. Just as Freud appropriated the figure of Oedipus as a lens through which to examine the intimate psychology of the family, Pentheus might stand as a symbol for two problems of mass psychology – the status of groups-as-a-whole, and the effects of group contact on the individuals who constitute and encounter them.⁵¹⁴

Dionysos opens the play by proclaiming his heritage, followed by his itinerary:

Μήδων ἐπελθὼν Ἀραβίαν τ' εὐδαίμονα
Ἀσίαν τε πᾶσαν ἢ παρ' ἄλμυρὰν ἄλλα
κεῖται μιγάσιν Ἑλλησι βαρβάροις θ' ὁμοῦ
πλήρεις ἔχουσα καλλιπυργώτους πόλεις,

⁵¹² Reinhardt 37

⁵¹³ *Orestes* 1416-17

⁵¹⁴ This is, at best, a slightly new angle on an old problem: the nature of the Dionysiac experience. Nietzsche's work is the unavoidable starting point, the literature on which has become voluminous in its own right (see, e.g., Silk & Stern; Porter). In the past generation of scholarship, Seaford (1994, especially Chs. 7-8) analyzes the Dionysiac as a *democratic* phenomenon with a deep ritual past; but see Segal 1997:382 for problematization of this as it applies to tragedy generally and the *Bacchae* specifically ("The model seeks to polarize institutions [e.g., the household/the *polis*] that the Greeks generally view as complementary rather than antithetical[.]" Seaford 2006:6-12 provides a useful overview of scholarship on the Dionysiac from Nietzsche to the present day; see also Henrichs 1984. Henrichs 1994 returns the focus to the representation of Dionysus and the Dionysiac cult in tragedy, as distinct from the larger issue of the cult itself in Greek religion and society.

I wish only to suggest that a reading of the Dionysiac, both in actual cult and literary representation, may be enriched by attention to the specifically *group* behavior of its participants, with reference to modern sociological and psychological theories of the crowd.

ἐς τήνδε πρώτην ἦλθον Ἑλλήνων πόλιν ...
 Coming through Media and prosperous Arabia
 And all Asia which lies by the salty sea
 Having full fair-towered cities with Greeks
 And barbarians mixed together,
 I came to this city of Greeks first ...⁵¹⁵

The cities where he has been are home to *mixed* populations of Greeks and non-Greeks. Recall from Chapter One that a common refrain of elite criticism of the crowd is that it mixes disparate social elements: men and women, citizens and foreigners. Dionysos's visit to Thebes will cause all these types of mixing and more.

καὶ πᾶν τὸ θῆλυ σπέρμα Καδμείων, ὅσαι
 γυναιῖκες ἦσαν, ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων.
 ὁμοῦ δὲ Κάδμου παισὶν ἀναμειγμέναι
 χλωραῖς ὑπ' ἐλάταις ἀνορόφους ἦνται πέτρας.
 And the whole female seed of the Kadmeians, however many
 Are (married) women, I have driven out of their houses in a frenzy.
 And mixed together with the daughters of Kadmos they go among the
 Roofless rocks under the green pines.⁵¹⁶

As they romp in the mountains, the women of Thebes mingle together with no regard for their social position. The entire female “seed” of the town frolics cheek-to-jowl with princesses.

The chorus of worshippers enters, summoning all devotees of the god to come to the streets. At *Orestes* 761 Pylades spoke of the streets as being filled with armed men; here the specter of streets filled with an unarmed but frenzied throng of women provides an alternative vision of the mob. *Orestes* portrays aristocrats caught in a sort of internal siege (ὥσπερ εἰ πόλις πρὸς ἐχθρῶν σῶμα πυργηρούμεθα, 762); *Bacchae* translates the threat of organized violence into a phantasy of women run amok.⁵¹⁷

ἴτε Βάκχαι, ἴτε Βάκχαι,
 Βρόμιον παῖδα θεὸν θεοῦ
 Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι
 Φρυγίων ἐξ ὀρέων Ἑλλάδος εἰς εὐρυχόρους ἀγυίας, τὸν Βρόμιον.
 Come Bacchae, come Bacchae,
 Bringing Bromios, the son of God,
 Dionysus down from the Phrygian mountains into the streets
 That are wide for dancing, Bromios.⁵¹⁸

αὐτίκα γὰρ πᾶσα χορεύσει,

⁵¹⁵ *Bacchae* 16-20

⁵¹⁶ *Bacchae* 35-38

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Theweleit I:63 ff. on “Woman as Aggressor,” II:27-35 on “Women to the Fore ...”, a trope of the fascist imagination in which revolutionary mobs are often (inaccurately) depicted as including, even as being led by, women.

⁵¹⁸ *Bacchae* 83-87

Βρόμιος εὔτ' ἄν ἄγηι θιάσους
 εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος, ἔνθα μένει
 θηλυγενῆς ὄχλος
 ἀφ' ἰστῶν παρὰ κερκίδων τ'
 οἰστρηθεῖς Διονύσῳ.
 Presently the whole earth will dance
 When Bromios leads his *thiasoi*
 To the mountain! To the mountain! Where dwells
 The female-sexed ὄχλος
 Stung away from their looms and shuttles by Dionysus.⁵¹⁹

Unlike the ὄχλος of the commons in political assembly (framed positively in both *Suppliants*, and negatively in the *Orestes*), or the ὄχλος of a victorious and potentially rioting army (*Ajax*, *Hecuba*), the female-gendered ὄχλος does not run wild due to some inherent wild energy or at the behest of a human demagogue. Instead, Dionysos “stings”⁵²⁰ (οἰστρηθεῖς) the women to move them out of their “proper” domestic sphere, beyond the bounds of the polis, out into nature. This move to the mountains dissolves barriers of class, gender and ethnicity; it goes further than that, to blur the boundaries between animate and inanimate, as the rocks and the trees and the very earth itself join in the song and the dance.

Tiresias attempts to persuade Pentheus to permit Dionysos-worship by analogizing the gods’ love of cult to Pentheus’s own vain pride in public recognition of his greatness and authority:

οὐ χαίρεις, ὅταν ἐφεστῶσιν πύλαις
 πολλοί, τὸ Πενθέως δ' ὄνομα μεγαλύνη πόλις.
 You are happy when many folk sit by your gates,
 And the city makes great the name of Pentheus.⁵²¹

This is yet another variant of the dialectic of One and Many. Those with “great names” are singular, with characteristics and lineages allowing for lengthy description and praise; those who flock to adore and beseech them are “extras,” with nothing to offer their leader besides his joy in their numbers. One asserts itself against Many, if need be, by fighting against or evading its grasp, as do Orestes and Ajax; still, how much better to have Many come to One and seek guidance of their own accord!⁵²²

Pentheus rebuffs Kadmos’s subsequent attempt at persuasion, shrinking from his very touch:

οὐ μὴ προσοίσεις χεῖρα, βακχεύσεις δ' ἰών,

⁵¹⁹ *Bacchae* 114-19

⁵²⁰ Canetti 58, 303 ff. develops a theory of the “sting,” by which commands given by social superiors implant a “sting” within those obliged to carry them out. These “stings” accumulate until in a revolutionary moment the vector of force is reversed, and all the past “stings” erupt in violence from below. If we can transfer this theoretical model from class to gender hierarchy, female Bacchizing may be understood as a revolt against the accumulation of the “stings” of seclusion and subordination.

⁵²¹ *Bacchae* 319-20

⁵²² Cf. the second line of *OT*, where Oedipus asks why the populace θοάζετε in supplication.

μηδ' ἐξομόρξει μωρίαν τὴν σὴν ἐμοί;
Will you please not put your hand (on me), but go on reveling;
You're not going to wipe⁵²³ your foolishness off on me, are you?⁵²⁴

The first messenger describes in more detail what Dionysos and the chorus have hinted at: the bacchantes are mingled together in an indecorous heap:

ὄρῳ δὲ θιάσους τρεῖς γυναικείων χορῶν ...
ἠΰδον δὲ πᾶσαι σώμασιν παρειμέναι ...
ἢ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσαις
σταθεῖσα βᾶκχαις ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας ...
I see three *thiasoi* of female dancers ...
They all slept with their bodies splayed out ...
Your mother ululated standing in the middle of the Bacchai
To move their bodies out of sleep ...⁵²⁵

Agave stands among the group and rouses it to action. Their bodies, which have been strewn in savage slumber, rise at her command to resume their crazed pursuits.

Ξυνήλομεν δὲ βουκόλοι καὶ ποιμένες
κοινῶν λόγων δώσοντες ἀλλήλοις ἔριν
[ὡς δεινὰ δρῶσι θαυμάτων τ' ἐπάξια.]
καὶ τις πλάνης κατ' ἄστῳ καὶ τρίβων λόγων
ἔλεξεν εἰς ἅπαντας ... εὔδ' ἡμῖν λέγειν
ἔδοξε, θάμνων δ' ἐλλοχίζομεν φόβαις
κρύψαντες αὐτούς. αἱ δὲ τὴν τεταγμένην
ῶραν ἐκίνουν θύρσον ἐς βακχεύματα,
Ἰακχον ἀθρόωι στόματι τὸν Διὸς γόνον
Βρόμιον καλοῦσαι. πᾶν δὲ συνεβάκχευ' ὄρος
καὶ θῆρες, οὐδὲν δ' ἦν ἀκίνητον δρόμωι. ...
We cowherds and shepherds came together
To engage each other in a contest of civic speech
[About how they were doing things dreadful and wonder-worthy.]
And some bum about town and waster of speeches
Spoke before us all ... And he seemed to speak well to us,
And hiding ourselves in the leaves of bushes we lay in wait.
At the arranged hour, they shook the *thyrsus* (and went) into their revels,
They called on Bromius offspring of God with a collective mouth,
And the whole mountain reveled with them and the beasts,
And nothing was motionless in their running ...⁵²⁶

The shepherds hold a mini-assembly, but this attempt to replicate a traditional political community order is no match for the divinely crazed mob; the force of the collective

⁵²³ Cf. *Acharnians* 843 on contamination being “wiped” onto one through physical contact.

⁵²⁴ *Bacchae* 343-44

⁵²⁵ *Bacchae* 680, 683, 689-90

⁵²⁶ *Bacchae* 714-18, 721-27

organism trumps deliberation by multiple individuals.⁵²⁷ The bacchantes invoke their god ἄθρόωι στόματι, “with a gathered [collective]” mouth,⁵²⁸ and all human and other animals begin swift and uncontrolled movement.

ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν φεύγοντες ἐξηλύξαμεν
 βακχῶν σπαραγμόν ...
 So we fled, escaping a rending by the Bacchae ...⁵²⁹

Here the offstage crowd is a threat not only to onstage elites, but to the shepherd-messenger as well. The threat posed by the Bacchizing crowd expands past all categories to dominate onstage/offstage relations throughout the play.

Dionysos initiates Pentheus’s downfall by exploiting his desire to see the Bacchantes in their illicit unity:

βούλησι σφ’ ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένας ἰδεῖν;
 Do you want to see them seated together in the mountains?⁵³⁰

The god assures the human ruler that no one will see him travelling in women’s clothes, assuring him that the streets, the potential field for the formation of a hostile or mocking crowd, will be empty:

Πε. καὶ πῶς δι’ ἄστεως εἶμι Καδμείους λαθῶν;
Δι. ὁδοὺς ἐρήμους ἴμεν. ἐγὼ δ’ ἡγήσομαι.
Πε. πᾶν κρεῖσσον ὥστε μὴ ἴγγελαν βάρκχας ἐμοί.
Pen. And how will I go through town escaping the Cadmeians’ notice?
Dion. We go through empty roads. I will lead the way.
Pen. Entirely better than that – the Bacchae *won’t* laugh at me!⁵³¹

The final messenger relates Pentheus’s inability to *see* the ὄχλος, which will destroy him on arrival at its camp:

Πενθεὺς δ’ ὁ τλήμων θῆλυν οὐχ ὀρῶν ὄχλον
 ἔλεξε τοιάδ’ : “ ὦ ξέν’, οὗ μὲν ἔσταμεν
 οὐξ ἐξικνοῦμαι μανιάδων ὄσσοις νόσων.⁵³²
 ὄχθων δ’ ἐπ’ ἀμβὰς ἐς ἐλάτην ὑψαύχενα

⁵²⁷ The “bum about town” is a miniature of the failed leadership demonstrated by Pentheus throughout. Dodds comm. ad loc. notes that “this is a type which Eur[ipides] elsewhere portrays with little sympathy ... [the] town-bred demagogue,” citing *Orestes* 902 ff., quoted and discussed above.

⁵²⁸ Cf. *Knights* 670, discussed in Chapter Four, where the council speaks ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος in their final and conclusive expression of approval and loyalty to their new demagogic champion. *Hecuba* 836 ff. offers the inverse image: instead of a group of people speaking with one collective mouth, there one woman wishes she had voices all over her body, to become a one-woman crowd.

⁵²⁹ *Bacchae* 734-35

⁵³⁰ *Bacchae* 811

⁵³¹ *Bacchae* 840-42. Dodds (comm. ad loc) calls the last line “[a]n illogical but natural blend” of two constructions, with an abrupt change of syntax in the middle of the thought.

⁵³² codices: νόθων, which Dodds (comm. ad loc.) “see(s) no reason to doubt.” νόσων suggested by Jackson, *CQ* 35 (1941).

ἴδοιμ' ἄν ὀρθῶς μαινάδων αἰσχουργίαν.
 Not seeing the female ὄχλος, daring Pentheus said these words:
 O stranger, from where we're standing I can't reach the maenads
 With my eyes – (I must be) sick.
 I would see straight the dirty doing of the maenads.⁵³³

His wish is not fulfilled. Rather, in accordance with the dialectic of One and Many, the vector switches⁵³⁴ from One spying on Many to that same One falling under the Many's hostile collective gaze:

ὥφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας
 But he was seen by, more than he caught sight of, the maenads ...⁵³⁵

In classic “pack” tactics, seen in other descriptions of group attacks against one or two individuals,⁵³⁶ the bacchantes stand κύκλωι around Pentheus, and apply an innumerable collective “hand” to flush him out of his post:

ἐπεὶ δὲ μόχθων τέρματ' οὐκ ἐξήνυτον,
 ἔλεξ' Ἀγαυή: “φέρε, περιστᾶσαι κύκλωι ...”
 αἱ δὲ μυρίαν χέρα
 προσέθεσαν ἐλάτηι κάξανέστασαν χθονός.
 Since they had not reached the goal of their toils
 Agave said: “Come, stand around in a circle ...”
 And they reached out their myriad hand to the fir tree
 And ripped it out of the earth.⁵³⁷

At the moment of Pentheus's final agony, the ὄχλος serves as a chorus in the modern understanding of that word: a group providing background accompaniment to the central action. As leveling and unifying as the Bacchic madness is, the daughters of Kadmos still have “feature” roles in the event:

Ἰνώ δὲ τὰπὶ θάτερ' ἐξηργάζετο
 ῥηγνῦσα σάρκας, Αὐτονοή τ' ὄχλος τε πᾶς
 ἐπεῖχε βακχῶν. ἦν δὲ πᾶς ὁμοῦ βοή,
 ὁ μὲν στενάζων ὅσον ἐτύγχαν' ἐμπνέων,
 αἱ δ' ὠλόλυζον.

⁵³³ *Bacchae* 1058-62

⁵³⁴ This dynamic (the sudden shift in position from being one of a crowd of spectators to becoming the object of that crowd's gaze) is, I would argue, fundamental to the ancient experience of crowds. In a performance culture, as in a regime of participatory democracy, one is used to watching performances as part of a crowd. The anonymous safety of crowd membership is fragile, though; if one loses bodily control or otherwise acts inappropriately, one risks becoming the object of the plural gaze. This risk may have been especially threatening for elite individuals; see below for the question of elite crying.

⁵³⁵ *Bacchae* 1075

⁵³⁶ One clear difference is that this attacking group has a leader, Agave, while the mobs in *Andromache, IT*, etc., do not. Orestes begins the process that leads to Neoptolemos's death, but is not portrayed as leading the actual attack.

⁵³⁷ *Bacchae* 1105-06, 1109-10

And Ino, ripping his flesh,
And Autonoe and all the ὄχλος
Kept on Bacchizing. And all everywhere was shouting,
He groaning so long as he was still breathing,
They ululating.⁵³⁸

Faced with the awful realization of what she and her sisters have done, Agave asks how they came to be in the space outside the city. Her father explains that the experience was not hers or her sisters' alone, but a leveling moment shared with the entire community:

Ag. ἡμεῖς δ' ἐκεῖσε τίνι τρόπῳ κατήραμεν;
Ka. ἐμάνητε, πᾶσά τ' ἐξεβακχεύθη πόλις.
Ag. But in what way did we end up there?
Ka. You went crazy, and the entire city was Bacchusized.⁵³⁹

In the play's final moments, Kadmos announces his fate, in an echo of the play's opening lines:

βαρβάρους ἀφίξομαι
γέρων μέτοικος, ἔτι δέ μουστί θέσφατον
ἐς Ἑλλάδ' ἀγαγεῖν μιγάδα βαρβάρων στρατόν.
I will go to the barbarians an old-man immigrant,
But it is yet prophesied for me
To bring a mixed army of barbarians into Greece.⁵⁴⁰

Dionysus has brought his mixed group from the east to unify the community of Thebes in ecstatic frenzy. Kadmos will now make a reverse journey before returning at the head of his own mixed horde.

Iphigenia at Aulis

Of all Euripides's plays, this is the one in which the offstage crowd most dominates the onstage action.⁵⁴¹ From the opening moments, Agamemnon's every move is checked by the force of popular opinion. In his dialogue with the old man at the play's beginning, he equates the influence of the divine on human lives with the influence wielded by public opinion – the γνῶμαι πολλαὶ possessed by οἱ πολλοί.

τοτὲ μὲν τὰ θεῶν οὐκ ὀρθωθέντ'
ἀνέτριψε βίον, τοτὲ δ' ἀνθρώπων
γνῶμαι πολλαὶ
καὶ δυσάρεστοι διέκναισαν.

⁵³⁸ *Bacchae* 1129-33

⁵³⁹ *Bacchae* 1294-95

⁵⁴⁰ *Bacchae* 1354-56

⁵⁴¹ Carter 82: "The plurality of city-states in *Iphigenia at Aulis* gives us a plurality of generals; as a result we can observe a range of elite reactions to a single, influential mass of people."

At one time divine matters, not going aright,
Wear down a man's life; at another, the opinions
Of men, many and implacable, scrape it to bits.⁵⁴²

In his first extended speech, Agamemnon describes the coming together of the Greek forces. With the army now all in the same place, there they sit, an excessive accumulation of men with no place to go.

τούντεῦθεν οὖν Ἕλληνες αἰξαντες δορί,
τεύχη λαβόντες στενόπορ' Αὐλίδος βάθρα
ἤκουσι τῆσδε, ναυσὶν ἀσπίσιν θ' ὁμοῦ
ἵπποις τε πολλοῖς ἄρμασὶν τ' ἠσκημένοι ...
ἠθροισμένου δὲ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος στρατοῦ
ἡμεσθ' ἀπλοῖαι χρώμενοι κατ' Αὐλίδα.
And thereupon the Greeks sprang to the spear,
Taking arms they come to the narrow-portaled edge
Of Aulis here, equipped with ships and shields together
And many horses and chariots,
And with the army gathered and convened,
We sit here, not sailing, suffering in Aulis.⁵⁴³

The chorus enters, expressing its desire to see the assembled host of soldiers, weapons and horses. This violates the norm of female confinement and isolation from the crowd; if they see the army, the host army may see them – and worse. Anxiety regarding this possibility, and the desire to keep women away from the crowd, is expressed in both comedy⁵⁴⁴ and tragedy.⁵⁴⁵

πολύθυτον δὲ δι' ἄλσος Ἀρτέμιδος ἤλυθον ὀρομένα,
φοινίσσουσα παρῆιδ' ἐμὰν
αἰσχύναι νεοθαλεῖ,
ἀσπίδος ἔρυμα καὶ κλισίας
ὄπλοφόρους Δαναῶν θέλουσ'
ἵππων τ' ὄχλον ιδέσθαι.
I stirred myself and came through the grove of Artemis, home of much
Sacrifice, reddening my cheek with fresh-blooming shame,
Desiring to see the bulwark of the shield and the arms-bearing barracks
Of the Danaans, and the ὄχλος of horses.⁵⁴⁶

As Menelaos struggles with the old man, Agamemnon comes out of his quarters and asks:

τίς ποτ' ἐν πύλαισι θόρυβος καὶ λόγων ἀκοσμία;
Whatever is this θόρυβος and disorderliness of speech at my doors?⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴² *IA* 24-27

⁵⁴³ *IA* 80-83, 87-88

⁵⁴⁴ *Acharnians* 257

⁵⁴⁵ E.g. *Herakleidae* 44, discussed above.

⁵⁴⁶ *IA* 185-91

We have not yet seen a disturbance between only two people called a θόρυβος. Agamemnon is perhaps excessively crowd-shy, anticipating the wrath of the masses to come when his subterfuge is discovered.

A messenger runs in to tell Agamemnon of his daughter's arrival and the interest shown in it by the crowd:

ἐγὼ δὲ πρόδρομος σῆς παρασκευῆς χάριν
ἦκω. πέπυσται γὰρ στρατός – ταχεῖα γὰρ
διῆιξε φήμη – παῖδα σὴν ἀφιγμένην.
πᾶς δ' ἐς θέαν ὄμιλος ἔρχεται δρόμῳ,
σὴν παῖδ' ὅπως ἴδωσιν. οἱ δ' εὐδαίμονες
ἐν πᾶσι κλεινοὶ καὶ περίβλεπτοι βροτοῖς.
I come running ahead for the sake of your preparation.
For the army has learned – for rumor goes through (it) quickly –
That your daughter is arrived. And the whole ὄμιλος comes to this sight
At a run, that they might see your daughter. For the fortunate are famous
Among all people, and to-be-looked-at by mortals.⁵⁴⁸

This is a clear statement of the social version of the dialectic of One and Many. One woman's arrival brings the whole ὄμιλος, for the fortunate – expressed in gender-neutral terms – are objects that attract sight. The anxiety over female exposure to the crowd is here confirmed: crowds are indeed greedy for the sight of noble young women.

ἡ δυσγένεια δ' ὡς ἔχει τι χρήσιμον.
καὶ γὰρ δακρῦσαι ραιδίως αὐτοῖς ἔχει
ἅπαντά τ' εἰπεῖν. τῷ δὲ γενναίῳ φύσιν
ἄνολβα πάντα. προστάτην δὲ τοῦ βιοῦ
τὸν ὄγκον ἔχομεν τῷ τ' ὄχλῳ δουλεύομεν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκβαλεῖν μὲν αἰδοῦμαι δάκρυ,
τὸ μὴ δακρῦσαι δ' αὖθις αἰδοῦμαι τάλας,
ἐς τὰς μεγίστας συμφορὰς ἀφιγμένος.
Ill-birth does hold some value.
For they can easily cry, and say everything.
But for the one noble by nature, life is unhappy.
We have a commander's pomp in life –
And we are enslaved to the ὄχλος.
For I am ashamed to shed a tear,
But again, I'm ashamed to not cry, wretched me,
Coming into the greatest difficulties.⁵⁴⁹

Crowds do not feast on the sight of women alone. Elite individuals of both genders are subject to the gaze of those who constitute the ὄχλος. Crying is a luxury afforded only to

⁵⁴⁷ *IA* 317. Cf. 605; *Rhesos* 45.

⁵⁴⁸ *IA* 424-29

⁵⁴⁹ *IA* 446-53

those who blend in to the larger crowd, whose emotional volatility is accepted and not ascribed to any individual. Elite characters have anxiety about how their actions and reactions will be evaluated by normal people – especially when those people are gathered together in a crowd.

The weight of this monitoring and judgment by the many wears on Agamemnon, who now explicitly names them as the force constraining his actions:

Αγ. ἀλλ' ἤκομεν γὰρ εἰς ἀναγκαίας τύχας,
θυγατρὸς αἵματηρὸν ἐκπρᾶξαι φόνον.

Με. πῶς; τίς δ' ἀναγκάσει σε τήν γε σὴν κτανεῖν;

Αγ. ἅπας Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος στρατεύματος.

Με. οὐκ, ἦν νιν εἰς Ἄργος <γ> ἀποστείλῃς πάλιν.

Αγ. λάθοιμι τοῦτ' ἄν, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖν' οὐ λήσομεν.

Με. τὸ ποῖον; οὔτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον.

Αγ. But see, we have come to compelling circumstances,
(That will force me) to perform the bloody slaughter of my daughter.

Μεν. How? Who will compel you to kill your girl?

Αγ. The entire gathering of the armed force of Achaeans!

Μεν. Not if you dispatch her back to Argos.

Αγ. I might do that unseen – but I won't escape *the army's* notice.

Μεν. What's this? One should not fear the ὄχλος over-much.⁵⁵⁰

The Greek σύλλογος στρατεύματος (the convocation of the army) compels his actions just as the Furies do Aeschylus's Orestes's – by looming as an offstage threat at least as importantly as by their onstage appearance.

Odysseus, whose mastery of and strong association with the soldiers in assembly was stressed in *Hecuba*, here is identified as able to sway the masses due to close personal association with them:

Με. οὐκ ἔστ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ὅτι σὲ κάμει πημανεῖ.

Αγ. ποικίλος ἀεὶ πέφυκε τοῦ τ' ὄχλου μέτα ...
οὔκουν δοκεῖς νιν στάντ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις
λέξειν ἃ Κάλχας θέσφατ' ἐξηγήσατο ...

Μεν. There's no way that Odysseus can cause trouble for you and me.

Αγ. He's always been clever, and (sided) with the ὄχλος ...

Can't you see him standing among the Achives

To proclaim those prophecies which Kalchas interpreted ...⁵⁵¹

The chorus welcomes Iphigenia:

μὴ ταρβήσῃ νεωστί μοι μολὸν
κλεινὸν τέκνον Ἀγαμέμνονος,
μηδὲ θόρυβον μηδ' ἐκπληξιν
ταῖς Ἀργείαις

⁵⁵⁰ IA 511-17

⁵⁵¹ IA 525-26, 528-29

ξεῖναι ξείναις παρέχωμεν.
Fear not, famous child of Agamemnon newly arrived –
Let us *xenai* present neither θόρυβος nor confusion to Argive *xenai*.⁵⁵²

Agamemnon attempts to get his wife to go home, problematizing her relation towards the ὄχλος:

οὐ καλὸν ἐν ὄχλωι σ' ἐξομιλεῖσθαι στρατοῦ.
It's not fitting for you to be in/out⁵⁵³ of company in the army's ὄχλος.⁵⁵⁴

Achilles soon greets her with words reinforcing the norm under which women stay far away from great aggregations of men:

τίς δ' εἶ; τί δ' ἦλθες Δαναίδων ἐς σύλλογον,
γυνή πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀσπίσιν πεφαργμένους;
Who are you? Why have you come to the gathering of the Greeks,
A woman come before men fenced round with shields?⁵⁵⁵

Clytemnestra begs Achilles to help her, since she cannot hope to have a positive encounter with the mob of sailors and other non-heroic hangers-on:

ἀφῖγμαι δ', ὥσπερ εἰσορᾶις, γυνή
ναυτικὸν στράτευμ' ἄναρχον κάπῃ τοῖς κακοῖς θρασύ,
χρήσιμον δ', ὅταν θέλωσιν.
I come, as you see, a woman, to the naval force (that's) unruled
And bold to do evil – but (also do do) things of use, when they wish.⁵⁵⁶

Achilles in turn warns her not to bring Iphigenia out for him to see her, for fear that the army gathered too close together will be prone to slanderous talk⁵⁵⁷:

οὐ μήτε σὴν παῖδ' ἔξαγ' ὄψιν εἰς ἐμήν
μήτ' εἰς ὄνειδος ἀμαθῆς ἔλθωμεν, γύναι.
στρατὸς γὰρ ἀθρόος, ἀργὸς ὦν τῶν οἴκοθεν,
λέσχας πονηρὰς καὶ κακοστόμους φιλεῖ.
Don't you bring your daughter out into my sight⁵⁵⁸
Nor let us come upon ignorant slander, woman.
For the army is gathered, being unoccupied and away from home,⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵² *IA* 602-06

⁵⁵³ *IA* 735. LSJ s.v. ἐξομιλέω reads this instance of the verb as meaning “to be away from one’s friends, be alone in the crowd.” The question is whether the ὄμιλος is the military one that Agamemnon wants to keep her from, or the household one to which he urges her to return. The ambiguity of meaning is telling: one is always part of one *homilia* or other, and the goal of the elite is to identify and stick to the proper one.

⁵⁵⁴ *IA* 735

⁵⁵⁵ *IA* 825-26

⁵⁵⁶ *IA* 912-13

⁵⁵⁷ Cf. Chapter Four for the effects of crowding on civic discourse, and vice versa, as portrayed in comedy.

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. 1357, *Andromache* 480, *Orestes* 772.

⁵⁵⁹ Walker trans. “Crowded, idle, and away from home.”

And it loves wicked and foulmouthed gossip.⁵⁶⁰

The sight of Iphigenia convenes crowds and fuels the reputational economy of gossip and slander. Achilles fears this, but at this stage Agamemnon's fear is more directly of group *violence*. Achilles will not learn how serious this threat is until these two worlds have fused later in the play.

Clytemnestra condemns Agamemnon for excessive caution and paying too much attention to the desires of and potential attacks from the crowd:

κακός τις ἐστι καὶ λίαν ταρβεῖ στρατόν.
He's some coward, and he fears the army too much.⁵⁶¹

Agreeing to try to persuade the masses to spare Iphigenia's life, Achilles warns her not to come looking for him

μή τις σ' ἴδῃ στείχουσιν ἐπτοημένην
Δαναῶν δι' ὄχλου.
Lest someone see you striding distraught through the Danaans' ὄχλος.⁵⁶²

Agamemnon explains to Iphigenia that the army is under some sort of group frenzy:

μέμνηε δ' Ἀφροδίτη τις Ἑλλήνων στρατῶι
πλεῖν ὡς τάχιστα βαρβάρων ἐπὶ χθόνα
παῦσαι τε λέκτρων ἀρπαγὰς Ἑλληνικῶν. ...
ἀλλ' Ἑλλάς, ἦι δεῖ, κἂν θέλω κἂν μὴ θέλω,
θῦσαι σε. τούτου δ' ἥσσοιες καθέσταμεν.
Some Aphrodite has raged in the army of Hellenes
To sail ASAP to the land of barbarians
And stop their seizing of Hellenic marriages. ...
(It is) *Greece*⁵⁶³ for whom it's necessary, whether
I want to or not, to sacrifice you. And we are constituted
Weaker than it (the army).⁵⁶⁴

Again Agamemnon blames the Many for his failures of leadership as One.

Iphigenia announces the return to the stage of Achilles with the first example in this play of the now-familiar tragic trope of announcing that one sees an approaching group. This appears to be some sub-set of the greater army, which stays offstage but whose shouts the characters can hear (see below):

ὦ τεκοῦσα μητερ, ἀνδρῶν ὄχλον εἰσορῶ πέλας. ...
Ἀχιλλέα τόνδ' ἰδεῖν αἰσχύνομαι ...
O mother who bore (me), I see an ὄχλος of men⁵⁶⁵ nearby ...

⁵⁶⁰ IA 998-1001

⁵⁶¹ IA 1012

⁵⁶² IA 1029-30

⁵⁶³ As opposed to Menelaos (mentioned in the omitted lines).

⁵⁶⁴ IA 1264-66, 1272-73

I'm ashamed to see this man Achilles ...⁵⁶⁶

Achilles faces a check from “all Greeks” in a different sense than that expressed by Agamemnon near the beginning of the play. Agamemnon fears them as a political community first and foremost, Achilles more as a lynch mob. Here we find our most extensive discussion between two elite onstage characters concerning the threat of an offstage mob. If Achilles were only “weaker than marriage,” he would be better off. Instead he, like Agamemnon, is weaker than the assembled army as an entity with its own desires and prejudices – it’s just taken him longer to realize it.

Αχ. δέιν' ἐν Ἀργείοις βοᾶται ... **Κλ.** τίς βοή; σήμαινέ μοι.

Αχ. ἀμφὶ σῆς παιδός...

ὡς χρεῶν σφάξαι νιν. **Κλ.** *κούδεις ἐναντία λέγει;*⁵⁶⁷

Αχ. ἐς θόρυβον ἐγὼ τιν' αὐτὸς ἤλυθον ... **Κλ.** τίν', ὦ ξένε;

Αχ. σῶμα λευσθῆναι πέτροισι. **Κλ.** μῶν κόρην σώζων ἐμήν;

Αχ. αὐτὸ τοῦτο. **Κλ.** τίς δ' ἂν ἔτλη σώματος τοῦ σοῦ θιγεῖν;

Αχ. πάντες Ἑλληνας. **Κλ.** στρατὸς δὲ Μυρμιδῶν οὐ σοι παρῆν;

Αχ. πρῶτος ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἐχθρός. **Κλ.** δι' ἄρ' ὀλώλαμεν, τέκνον.

Αχ. οἶ με τὸν γάμων ἀπεκάλουν ἤσσον. **Κλ.** ἀπεκρίνω δὲ τί;

Αχ. ἀλλ' ἐνικώμημν κεκραγοῦ. **Κλ.** τὸ πολὺ γὰρ δεινὸν κακόν.

Αχ. ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀρήξομέν σοι. **Κλ.** καὶ μαχῆι πολλοῖσιν εἶς;

Ach. A dreadful shout is about among the Argives.

Kl. What shout? Tell me. **Ach.** It's about your daughter ... that it's necessary to kill her. * **Kl.** And no one is speaking against (this)? *

Ach. I myself came into some θόρυβος ... **Kl.** What (did you encounter),

O xenos? **Ach.** (I almost) got my body stoned with rocks. **Kl.** What,

trying to save my girl? **Ach.** That's it. **Kl.** Who would dare to touch

your body? **Ach.** All the Hellenes. **Kl.** Wasn't the troop of Myrmidons

at your side? **Ach.** Yeah – it was my first enemy! **Kl.** Ah, we are lost,

child. **Ach.** They called me out as subordinate to this marriage.

Kl. And what answer did you make? **Ach.** (None,) but I was conquered

by the clamor. **Kl.** A great (gathering of men) is a formidable evil.

Ach. But none the less, I will defend you. **Kl.** And will you, one, fight

with many?⁵⁶⁸

Clytemnestra's last line in the exchange quoted is a skeptical expression framed in the dialectic of One and Many. Achilles may be the individually best of the fighters, but she doubts his ability to stand against a large number of his fellow-soldiers.

Κλ. ἦξει δ' ὅστις ἄψεται κόρης;

Αχ. μυριοί γ', ἄξει δ' Ὀδυσσεύς. **Κλ.** ἄρ' ὁ Σισύφου γόνος;

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. *Phoenissae* 197

⁵⁶⁶ *IA* 1338, 1341

⁵⁶⁷ Diggle's apparatus transmits Vitelli's conjecture: οὐδεις <δ' οὐδ'> ἐν ἀντίον; Achilles's response seems to follow more naturally from this prompt (which suggests someone positioned *spatially* in confrontation with the mob) than from an inquiry about mere *rhetorical* opposition.

⁵⁶⁸ *IA* 1346-47, 1349-58

Αχ. αὐτὸς οὔτος. **Κλ.** ἴδια πράσσων ἢ στρατοῦ ταχθεὶς ὑπο;
Αχ. αἰρεθεὶς ἐκῶν.
Κλ. Who is coming, who will take hold of my daughter?
Ach. Many (will *come*), but Odysseus will lead her away.
Κλ. What, the seed of Sisyphos? **Ach.** That's the one.
Κλ. Acting on his own accord or dispatched by the army?
Ach. Selected (for the task, but plenty) willing.⁵⁶⁹

Still hung up on his individual honor, Achilles wants to fight on against all odds. Iphigenia, however, has realized – as has Agamemnon in his own way – that true agency and exceptionalism do not always call for resisting the crowd. Sometimes one must simply surrender to it. Odysseus is best suited of all to deal with the crowd, for his yielding to it, indeed his merging with it, ensures him mastery over it.

Rhesos

This play is unique in the Euripidean (and pseudo-Euripidean) corpus in that its crowds are entirely military, with their actions occurring in the middle of war rather than before or after it. It is the only surviving play set in the *spatial* midst of an actual war, in the “no man’s land” between opposing camps. As such, its descriptions of groups are of little interest for this survey except insofar as they confirm impressions and echo usages discussed above. There is very little of the dynamic of offstage threat against onstage individuals, since threat is ambient in this type of military setting, rather than concentrated in one assembly or other crowd.

E.g.:

πολλῆι γὰρ ἤχῃι Θρήκιος ῥέων στρατὸς
ἐστείχε. θάμβει δ' ἐκπλαγέντες ἴμεν ...
The Thracian army flowed on with a great roar.
But we ran, struck with fear ...⁵⁷⁰

στρατοῦ δὲ πλῆθος οὐδ' ἂν ἐν ψήφου λόγῳ
θέσθαι δύναί' ἂν, ὡς ἄπλατον ἦν ἰδεῖν ...
You would not be able to peg the size of the army with the reckoning of a
Pebble (by abacus or with counting-tokens), so endless was it to see ...⁵⁷¹

ὄδ' ἐγγὺς ἦσται κού συνήθροισται στρατῶι⁵⁷² ...
The army rests nearby, and it's not drawn up together ...

The play ends on a fittingly martial note of group action, as the chorus leader drills his fellows:

πείθου βασιλεῖ. στείχωμεν ὄπλοις

⁵⁶⁹ *IA* 1361-64

⁵⁷⁰ *Rhesos* 290-91

⁵⁷¹ *Rhesos* 310-11

⁵⁷² *Rhesos* 613

κοσμησάμενοι καὶ ξυμμαχίαι
τάδε φράζωμεν.

Heed the king. Let us march arrayed in armor
And make these things known to our alliance.⁵⁷³

*

We have seen that tragedy speaks of crowds in much more explicit terms than those available to Homer. Euripides in particular shows intense concern, especially in his later plays, with what might be termed the “political crowd,” and the dynamic of an offstage crowd threatening onstage elite characters is well established in his work. Turning now to comedy, I hope to show that Aristophanes’s plays express an even more pronounced concern with crowds and their effect on Athenian society.

⁵⁷³ *Rhesos* 994-97

CHAPTER FOUR ARISTOPHANIC CROWD

The tragic crowd may threaten individual elite characters, but it does not alter the broader social context in which these characters act. The comic crowd, by contrast - especially in its political manifestations – is a constant vehicle for critique of Athenian politics and society, through which class and gender conflict, mob violence and revolution are prismatically figured. The importance of the offstage crowd reaches its apex in *Ecclesiazusae*, where it transforms the Athenian government into a gynocracy by a sort of parliamentary coup. Onstage, comedy is freer than tragedy to feature actors representing the crowd directly.⁵⁷⁴

Empty Pnyx and Full Market

By happy coincidence, Aristophanes’s surviving oeuvre opens with a description of crowd behavior. As the play opens, Dikaiopolis enters the otherwise empty stage and lists his life’s major woes and joys, before explicitly framing the action to come in terms of the dialectic of One and Many.⁵⁷⁵ After enumerating pleasurable and miserable political and artistic performances he has witnessed in the past, he directly addresses the emptiness of the stage:

ἄλλ’ οὐδεπώποτ’ ἐξ ὄτου ἔγω γύπτομαι
οὕτως ἐδήχθην ὑπὸ κονίας τὰς ὀφρῦς
ὡς νῦν, ὁπότ’ οὔσης κυρίας ἐκκλησίας
ἔωθινης ἔρημος ἡ πνυξ αὐτή,
οἱ δ’ ἐν ἀγοραῖ λαλοῦσι κἄνω καὶ κάτω
τὸ σχοινίον φεύγουσι τὸ μεμιλωμένον.
οὐδ’ οἱ πρυτάνεις ἤκουσιν, ἀλλ’ ἄωρίαν
ἤκοντες, εἴτα δ’ ὡστιοῦνται πῶς δοκεῖς
ἐλθόντες ἀλλήλοισι περὶ πρώτου ξύλου,
ἄθροοι καταρρέοντες. εἰρήνη δ’ ὅπως
ἔσται προτιμῶσ’ οὐδέν. ὦ πόλις πόλις.
ἐγὼ δ’ αἰεὶ πρώτιστος εἰς ἐκκλησίαν
νοστῶν κάθημαι. καίτ’ ἐπειδὴν ὦ μόνος,
στένω, κέχνηνα, σκορδινῶμαι, πέρδομαι ...
νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ἤκω παρεσκευασμένος
βοᾶν, ὑποκρούειν, λοιδορεῖν τὸν ῥήτορα,
ἐὰν τις ἄλλο πλὴν περὶ εἰρήνης λέγη.
ἀλλ’ οἱ πρυτάνεις γὰρ οὐτοῖ μεσημβρινοί.
οὐκ ἠγόρευον; τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖν’ οὐγὼ ἔλεγον.
εἰς τὴν προεδρίαν πᾶς ἀνὴρ ὡστίζεται.
But never since I first began to wash
Have I been bit beneath the brows as now,

⁵⁷⁴ Carter (58) notes, for instance, that only comedy can “allegorise” an assembly meeting onstage.

⁵⁷⁵ Carter (57-58) notes that the staging emphasizes the size of the crowd to come and aids in the illusion of a relative few representing many: “The assembly scene in the prologue of *Acharnians* works, I think, because it begins with Dicaeopolis sitting alone: any addition to this will seem by comparison more busy.” On questions of Aristophanic performance generally, see Revermann.

When, with regular assembly on for dawn,
 The Pnyx here's empty; in the *agora*
 They gossip up and down, flee the red rope.
 The prytaneis have not come – late they'll come,
 Then howdja think they'll shove each other round
 the first bench, flowing down all packed together.
 But as to how peace shall be no one cares.
 O city city!
 I always come and sit first in assembly.
 And when I'm alone, I saw, I yawn, I stretch, I fart ...
 But now I come prepared without reserve
 To shout, to interrupt, to mock the speakers
 If any speak on subjects past the peace.
 But here are these noonday prytaneis!
 Wasn't I saying? This is what I was talking about;
 Each man shoves his way to the front row.⁵⁷⁶

Dikaiopolis identifies two problems with the collective behavior of his fellow-citizens: at first, they are not gathered in the proper place; when they do arrive, they behave in a chaotic and tumultuous fashion. Their physical improprieties (jostling and shoving for pride of place) are echoed in – and, if we credit Aristophanes with an implicit theory of crowd psychology, may actually contribute to – their disregard of the proper subject for debate.

The others *should* be present from the start; it is time to assemble, and there are important matters to discuss. Instead they λαλοῦσι κᾶνω καὶ κάτω, undisciplined in both motion and speech; only Dikaiopolis is where a citizen should be and prepared to act as a citizen should act. He predicts – a prediction instantly confirmed – that the prytaneis will enter ἄθροοι καταρρέοντες, “flowing down crammed together.” This fluid imagery anticipates some of the modern anti-crowd discourse discussed in the first Chapter. Combined with the double occurrence of ὦστι- root verbs, it established that crowds – or at least, this particular crowd – are, for Aristophanes's hero, violent and disordered things.

As we examine descriptions of group behavior in characters' words throughout the Aristophanic corpus, we will find them at the heart of his critique of contemporary politics and society. But for now, the contrast posed by Dikaiopolis's opening soliloquy establishes the basic problem: the crowd is not where it should be. Here it is empty, there (“offstage,” as in tragedy) it is full – but full in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons.

The crowdedness of public space, and the fear of violence or social contamination therefrom, is a theme that runs throughout Aristophanes's plays. Later in the *Acharnians*, Dikaiopolis warns his daughter as she takes part in his private staging of the Rural Dionysia:

Πρόβαινε, κᾶν τῶχλωι φυλάττεσθαι σφόδρα
 μή τις λαθῶν σου περιτράγηι τὰ χρυσία.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁶ *Ach.* 17-30, 36-42

March on! And be very wary of the crowd,
Lest someone unbeknownst to you “nibble” your gold (jewelry).

Here the ὄχλος appears, for the first time in our survey, in its full social sense: as a crowd composed of all types of people - including, apparently, thieves. Dikaiopolis’s initial list of complaints does not explicitly cite the increased crowdedness of Athens under the Spartan siege, but the contrast he establishes between city and country does frame the difference between the two in terms of the presence or absence of a monetary economy. Buying takes place in the agora, which is the site of the offstage crowding he has just decried:

στυγῶν μὲν ἄστῳ, τὸν δ’ ἐμὸν δῆμον ποθῶν,
ὃς οὐδέπω πὸτ’ εἶπεν ἄνθρακας πρίω’ ...
ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἔφερε πάντα χῶ πρίων ἀπῆν.
(I sit here) hating the city, longing for my deme,
Which never yet said “buy coal!” ...
But on its own brought forth all things – and the buyer went off.⁵⁷⁸

οἱ δ’ ἐν ἀγορᾷ λαλοῦσι (line 21), while lacking a verb or noun of crowding *per se*, conveys a sense of an offstage crowd, strengthened by resonance with other textual moments: the crowd behavior of the selfsame οἱ upon their imminent arrival, and passages elsewhere in Aristophanes which confirm the link between the agora and the crowd implicit in the opening speech.⁵⁷⁹ Dikaiopolis’s private market is touted by the chorus (recently converted from opposition to support of him) precisely as a place where one will be free from the unpleasant experience of being in a crowd:

οὐδ’ ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ὑποψωνῶν σε πημανεῖ τι,
οὐδ’ ἐναπομόρξεται Πρέπις τὴν εὐρυπρωκτίαν σοι,
οὐδ’ ὥστιεῖ Κλεωνύμωι.
χλαῖναν δ’ ἔχων φανῆν δίει
κού ξυντυχῶν σ’ Ὑπέρβολος
δικῶν ἀναπλήσει.

No other man will bug you, shopping sneakily,⁵⁸⁰
Nor will Prepis rub his wide-ass-ness on you,
Nor will you bump up against Kleonymus.
But clad in a bright cloak you’ll pass through
And Hyperbolos won’t run into you
And infect you with lawsuits.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ *Ach.* 257-58

⁵⁷⁸ *Ach.* 33-34, 36

⁵⁷⁹ *E.g. Peace* 1000, *Wealth* 787.

⁵⁸⁰ Olson comm. ad loc.: “[T]he prefix presumably suggests stealthy action ... i.e. buying up everything good before other people have a chance ...” Henderson (3:163) translates the participle ὑποψωνῶν as “cutting into the queue.” Whatever the precise meaning of this *hapax legomenon*, it clearly is an annoyance perpetrated by another person – of whom, the chorus leader assures the audience, this new fantasy market will contain none.

⁵⁸¹ *Ach.* 842-47

In addition to theft, then, other disasters can befall an individual trapped in a crowd: social/sexual contamination, even the threat of prosecution. As we will see later in this Chapter, particularly in the discussion of the *Wasps*, the δίκαι that threaten the patrons of wartime Athens's crowded market are themselves home to dangerous crowds of a different type. Note the repetition of the root ὤστι-, which strengthens the association of market-crowd and assembly-crowd: the action of bumping into each other exhibited by the prytaneis on their entering the stage at the beginning of the play is the same action which we are here assured does not occur in the play's fantasy of a "private market."

Bowie compares the pre- and post-private-peace cities to Hesiod's Just and Unjust cities in *Works and Days*:

Athens before Dicaeopolis' treaty is a city in which violence is regular, just treatment hard to come by, visitors like the Megarian starving, sexuality disordered and political management in the hands of two classes opposed to the mature citizens presumed to be the natural masters – the young and the foreign. In Dicaeopolis' private world, there is peace and plenty; visitors are, if not exactly given 'straight judgments', at least welcomed and to some extent fed, family life is untroubled and sexuality appears more 'normal.'⁵⁸²

We have seen all of these contrasts expressed in the play in terms that suggest or explicitly make a connection with crowds. The zones of economic and political interaction are both too crowded and internally disordered. Interpersonal violence, contamination by contact with sexually and otherwise "disordered" persons, commodification and commercialization, and political institutions dominated by careless mobs are all characteristics of the over-crowded comic city.

The market is the most obvious site of crowding in the Aristophanic city, but characters describe similar scenes elsewhere, for example in *Lysistrata*:

ἀλλὰ φοβοῦμαι τόδε. μῶν ὑστερόπους βοηθῶ;
νῦν δὴ γὰρ ἐμπλησαμένη τὴν ὑδρίαν κνεφαία
μόλις ἀπὸ κρήνης ὑπ' ὄχλου καὶ θορύβου
καὶ πατάγου χυτρείου,
δούλαισιν ὥστιζομένη
στιγματίαις [τε] ...

But I'm scared of this (the fire set by the old men in hopes of flushing the women out of the Acropolis). Have I come to help too late?

For just now, (while it was still) dark,⁵⁸³ I was filling my jar from the well with difficulty, under the ὄχλος and θορύβος and rattling of jars, Shoved by servant-girls and tattooed slaves ...⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² Bowie 19

⁵⁸³ The adjective κνεφαία must refer to the speaker, odd as this seems in literal translation.

⁵⁸⁴ *Lys.* 326-32

Again we see an ὥστι- verb used to describe the physical experience of being part of a crowd. It is found here in close conjunction with two of our key crowd words: ὄχλος and θορύβος. These words, then, are not limited to descriptions of the political or even the “public” (i.e., male) crowd, but can describe any agitated aggregation of bodies. Here the mixing of social strata which modern theorists take to be an essential feature of “the” crowd is present in an extreme form: the chorus of free women speaks of coming into forced contact with slaves.

Another description in Aristophanes of a busy market is less condemnatory, while stressing more explicitly the association of the agora with crowds. Having returned to earth, Trygaeus in the *Peace* beseeches the goddess Peace to reveal herself and save the Greeks from war and want:

καὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἡμῖν ἀγαθῶν
 ἐμπλησθῆναι ...
 καὶ περὶ ταύτας ἡμᾶς ἀθρόους
 ὀψωνοῦντας τυρβάζεσθαι
 Μορύχῳ, Τελέαι, Γλαυκέτῃ, ἄλλοις
 τένθαις πολλοῖς ...
 And fill our market with all good things ...
 And amid them may we all packed together,
 Buying our groceries, be crowded up against
 Morychus, Teleas, Glaucetes, many other gluttons ...⁵⁸⁵

Here the speaker positively *yearns* to experience crowding, even contact with disreputable objects of mockery – the exact scenario contrasted by the chorus of *Acharnians* to the emptiness Dikaiopolis’s fantasy market. But in this case, the stress is on all the good things that the postwar market will offer its patrons. The packing-in of customers is a second-order effect of the plenty that Peace will bring, whereas during wartime it is caused by the crowdedness of the besieged city itself. Those undesirables whom market-going brings one into contact with are here not sexual deviants and demagogues, but gluttons – in the context of wartime deprivation and peacetime glut, a more forgivable failing. Even in this more positive portrayal, the market is still presented as a place of crowded bodies and unpleasant encounters.

The Good Old Days and the Bad New Ways of Group Behavior

It is more than just the war and the siege, however, that have caused the improper distribution and collective behavior of people in civic space that Dikaiopolis laments. Throughout Aristophanes’s plays, complaints are made that people are gathering together in the wrong places and in the wrong manner, and the war is not always to blame.

In the central *agon* of the *Clouds*, the “Better Argument” begins his brief for the superiority of the older generation⁵⁸⁶ by stressing their proper comportment in group settings:

λέξω τοίνυν τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν ὡς διέκειτο,

⁵⁸⁵ *Peace* 999-1000, 1005-09

⁵⁸⁶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους, line 959.

ὄτ' ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἦνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνη 'νενόμιστο.
 πρῶτον μὲν ἔδει παιδὸς φωνὴν γρύξαντος μηδὲν' ἀκοῦσαι.
 εἶτα βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς εὐτάκτως εἰς κιθαριστοῦ
 τοὺς κωμῆτας γυμνοὺς ἄθρόους, κεῖ κριμνώδη κατανεῖφοι.
 εἶτ' αὖ προμαθεῖν ἄισμ' ἐδίδασκεν τῷ μηρῷ μὴ συνέχοντας,
 ἢ 'Παλλάδα περσέπολιν δεινάν' ἢ 'τηλέπορόν τι βόαμα',
 ἐνταιναμένους τὴν ἄρμονίαν ἦν οἱ πατέρες παρέδωκαν. ...
 ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ καθίζοντας τὸν μηρὸν ἔδει προβαλέσθαι
 τοὺς παῖδας, ὅπως τοῖς ἔξωθεν μηδὲν δείξειαν ἀπηνές.
 So I'll relate the old-time education as it was laid down,
 When I prospered by speaking the truth, and prudence was customary.
 First, one would never hear the voice of a child as he muttered.
 Then, (it was necessary) to go through the streets to the lyre-trainer's place
 In good order, village boys crowded together naked, even if it was
 snowing like barley grain.
 Then he'd teach them a song to learn, not keeping their thighs together,
 Like "Pallas dread city-sacker" or "What's that far-off shout?",
 Sticking to the harmony which our fathers handed down. ...
 (And it was mandatory for) kids at the trainer's to put their thigh in front
 when sitting down,
 So as to show no cruel⁵⁸⁷ bit to those outside.⁵⁸⁸

These processions of boys in training, the Better Argument insists, featured bodies packed close together (ἄθρόους) while still maintaining proper order (εὐτάκτως). In descriptions of bad, "modern" crowds, such as Dikaiopolis's, these terms would be mutually exclusive. Later, the Better Argument describes how his teachings can help restore proper behavior:

θαρρῶν ἐμὲ τὸν κρείττω λόγον αἰροῦ.
 κάπιστήσει μισεῖν ἀγορὰν καὶ βαλανείων ἀπεχεσθαι,
 καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς αἰσχύνεσθαι κἂν σκώπτῃ τίς σε φλέγεσθαι ...
 ἀλλ' οὖν λιπαρός γε καὶ εὐανθῆς ἐν γυμνασίοις διατρίψεις,

⁵⁸⁷ Dover comm. ad loc. notes the "surprising" use of ἀπηνές to describe the boys' genitals. "The point is that the sight ... 'torments' his lovers." Cf. *Wasps* 578, where Philokleon cites the opportunity to see boys' genitals as a perk of participation in mass government: παίδων τοίνυν δοκιμαζομένων αἰδοῖα πάρεστι θεᾶσθαι ("Indeed, it's possible to see the naughty bits of boys who are being examined" [for deme registration, Henderson trans.]). In the context of *group* vision, especially when read together with this line from *Wasps*, I must disagree with Dover – the point is not (only) the psychological experience of the "lover," but the vulnerability to the erotic gaze experienced by the boys in formation. "Those outside" (οἱ ἔξωθεν) could certainly be imagined as the boys' "lovers," but in the context of public display in the streets these onlookers have something of the crowd about them. Cf. *Wasps* 1286-87 (discussed further in the main text below): οἱ 'κτὸς ἐγέλων μέγα κεκραγότα θεώμενοι, / οὐδὲν ἄρ' ἐμοῦ μέλον ... ("Those watching outside laughed greatly at [Cleon] shouting – and they cared nothing for me ..."). Here the chorus leader (speaking in parabasis as the voice of the author) uses οἱ 'κτὸς, a phrase similar to τοῖς ἔξωθεν, to describe what is clearly a crowd, and to characterize it negatively as voyeuristic and callous. In particular the *Wasps* passage describes the feeling of being laughed at by a crowd, calling to mind the vulnerability to crowd-gaze discussed in the previous Chapter (fn. 532 & accompanying text).

⁵⁸⁸ *Clouds* 962-68, 973-74

οὐ στωμύλλων κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν τριβολεκτράπελ', οἷάπερ οἱ νῦν,
οὐδ' ἑλκόμενος περὶ πραγματίου γλισχραντιλογεξεπιτρίπτου,
ἀλλ' εἰς Ἀκαδήμειαν κατιῶν ὑπὸ ταῖς μορίαις ἀποθρέξει
στεφανωσάμενος καλάμῳ λευκῷ μετὰ σῶφρονος ἡλικιώτου ...
Have the courage to pick me, the better argument.
And you will learn to hate the agora and keep away from the baths,
And to feel shame at shameful things, and to be inflamed if someone
mocks you ...
But you'll spend your time shiny and flourishing in the gyms,
Not babbling three-obol jokes through the agora, those of today,
Nor dragged (to court) over some bit of hair-splitting-pettifogging-
bareface-knavish⁵⁸⁹ business,
But running off to the Academy, under the sacred olive trees,
Crowned with white reed, (as second) after a wise agemate ...⁵⁹⁰

The properly instructed youth will shun the agora – which we have already established as a place for negatively-characterized crowds – and the bath houses. These establishments are also the scene of improper groupings in these degenerate latter days, as the Better Argument will complain not much later in the agon:

ταῦτ' ἐστί, ταῦτ', ἐκεῖνα
ἃ τῶν νεανίσκων ἀεὶ δι' ἡμέρας λαλούντων
πλήρες τὸ βαλανεῖον ποιεῖ, κενὰς δὲ τὰς παλαίστρας.
That's it – that! – these are the things which make our bathhouse full
Of youths talking idly, but the wrestling-houses empty.⁵⁹¹

Dikaiopolis, introduced as a would-be participant in politics, complains in the *Acharnians* that the crowd is in the agora, not the assembly. Here the Better Argument complains that his Worse counterpart's sophistries have filled the baths at the expense of the wrestling schools – that the crowds of young men have traded decent manly exercise of times past for luxury (and perhaps sexual dalliance?).

Note too that these young men are λαλούντων- “chattering”⁵⁹² or “gossiping” – precisely the same verb⁵⁹³ which Dikaiopolis applies to the offstage crowd he describes at *Acharnians* line 21 (οἱ δ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ λαλοῦσι κἄνω καὶ κάτω). In the *Frogs*, Aeschylus accuses Euripides with language directly echoing that of the Better Argument in the *Clouds*:

Αἰ. εἴτ' αὖ λαλιὰν ἐπιτηδεῦσαι καὶ στωμυλίαν ἐδίδαξας,
ἢ ἔξεκένωσεν τὰς τε παλαίστρας καὶ τὰς πυγὰς ἐνέτριψεν
τῶν μεираκίων στωμθλομένων, καὶ τοὺς Παράλους ἀνέπεισεν
ἀνταγορευεῖν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν. καίτοι τότε γ', ἡνίκ' ἐγὼ ἔζων,

⁵⁸⁹ LSJ s.v. γλισχραντιλογεξεπίτριπτος.

⁵⁹⁰ *Clouds* 990-92, 1002-06

⁵⁹¹ *Clouds* 1052-54

⁵⁹² LSJ s.v.

⁵⁹³ A synonym, στωμύλλων, is used at line 1003 to describe agora-talk.

οὐκ ἠπίσταντ' ἄλλ' ἢ μᾶζαν καλέσαι καὶ ῥυππαπαῖ' εἰπεῖν.
Δι. νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, καὶ προσπαρδεῖν γ' εἰς τὸ στόμα τῶι θαλάμακι,
καὶ μινθῶσαι τὸν ξύσσιτον κάκβας τινα λωποδυτῆσαι.
νῦν δ' ἀντιλέγει κούκέτ' ἐλαύνει. πλεῖ δευρὶ καῦθις ἐκεῖσε.

Aeschylus. Then you taught them to look after chatter and babble,
Which has emptied out the wrestling schools and worn off the asses
Of babbling young men, and convinced the crew of the *Paralos*
To talk back to their leaders. And yet then at least, when I was alive,
They knew nothing but to call for their bread and say “heave ho!”

Dionysos. Yes, by Apollo, and to fart into the mouth of the bottom-
bencher,
And rub shit on their messmate, and, disembarking, steal someone’s cloak.
But now he (= the crewman) talks back and rows no more. And they sail
hither and yon.⁵⁹⁴

Again, new ways of talking and thinking, constituting a new value system, have emptied the erstwhile sites of proper training. Here the negatively coded crowd is not in the agora or bathhouse, but is rather the crew of a ship. Crowd talk here moves beyond gossip into “backtalk,” which in the naval context borders on mutiny.

The crowdedness of a ship’s crew is stressed by Dionysos’s talk of farting and shitting on one’s neighboring crewman. The threat of bodily contamination at close quarters has been raised earlier (at *Acharnians* 843, discussed above) where a crowded market contains people who might “wipe (their) wide-assedness off on you.” The special case of the rowers as a “mob” that poses a political threat is hinted at here in “talking back to the leaders.” The physical result of the ship’s crew engaging in improper collective behavior results in their craft sailing “back and forth” (δευρὶ καῦθις ἐκεῖσε), just as Dikaiopolis spoke of those in the agora “chattering up and down” (κᾶνω καὶ κάτω). An aggregation of bodies combined with a decline in social values results in disordered and aimless motion.

The political crowd as passive audience and object of manipulation

Aristophanes’s characters, then, are prone to complaining that the wrong public places are empty and full, and that the people who gather in the full places are acting improperly. In the democratic polis, political and dikastic assemblies were crowd events especially central to civic life. Several plays contain extensive descriptions of these crowds. The former (deliberative assemblies) tend to be described as passive audience-like crowds, similar to the assemblies in Homer. The latter (dikastic assemblies or mass juries) are portrayed as more active, and additionally as malicious – but this second set of portrayals plays down or allegorizes away the *multiplicity* of its object.

In the *Knights*, the Sausage Seller returns triumphantly from the meeting of the *boule* to narrate his successful manipulation of that mass deliberative body,

⁵⁹⁴ *Frogs* 1069-1077. For more on the idle gossip of the youth cf. 1491-99: (trans. Henderson): “So what’s stylish is not to sit/beside Socrates and chatter (λαλεῖν),/casting the arts aside/and ignoring the best/of the tragedian’s craft./To hang around killing time/in pretentious conversation/and hairsplitting twaddle/is the mark of a man who’s lost his mind.”

in a first-person account of the one exerting control over the many. On entering the chamber, the Sausage Seller relates:

ἡ βουλή δ' ἅπασ' ἀκροωμένη
ἐγένεθ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ψευδατραφάξυος πλέα,
κ' ἄβλεψε νᾶπυ καὶ τὰ μέτωπ' ἀνέσπασεν.
κ' ἄγωγ' ὅτε δὴ ἔγνω ἐνδεχομένην τοὺς λόγους
καὶ τοῖς φενακισμοῖσιν ἐξαπατωμένην. ...
The entire council listening became full of "false orach"⁵⁹⁵
At his hands, and it glared mustard and scrunched up its faces.⁵⁹⁶
And when I saw (the council) was taking in his words,
And being deceived by his tricks ...⁵⁹⁷

Elsewhere Aristophanes describes crowds as susceptible to flattery;⁵⁹⁸ here they are initially moved by the Paphlagonian not praising them, but rather slandering others: ἤρειδε κατὰ τῶν ἰππέων ... καὶ ξυνωμότας λέγων ... ("He attacked the knights ... and called them conspirators ..."). It is the mark of a simple and easily manipulated mind – here, a "group mind" – to respond eagerly to praise of it and blame of others.

The Sausage Seller then describes his interruption of the Paphlagonian's denunciatory speech:

ἀνέκραγον: ὦ βουλή, λόγους ἀγαθοὺς φέρων
εὐαγγελίσασθαι πρῶτος ὑμῖν βούλομαι.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ πόλεμος κατερράγη,
οὐπώποτ' ἀφύας εἶδον ἀξιωτέρας.
ἡ [sc. Βουλή] δ' εὐθέως τὰ πρόσωπα διεγαλήνισεν.
εἶτ' ἔστεφάνουν μ' εὐαγγέλια.
I shouted: "O council, bearing good tidings,
I wish to give you the good news first.
For from the time the war first broke out,
I've never seen cheaper sardines!"
And (the council) straightaway calmed its faces.
Then they proposed a crown for me, for my good news.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁵ LSJ s.v. ψευδατραφάξυς. Rogers comm. ad loc.: "[A]n emblem of rapid growth ... of lies;" Neil agrees. Merry: "herb used in seasoning sausage ... biting and pungent."

⁵⁹⁶ N.B. the slippage between singular and plural here. While ascribable to the demands of meter, this variation (along with the explicit ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος later) suggests that crowds were conceptually neither securely singular nor plural in the author's mind – an ambivalence central to modern theories of the crowd, as discussed in Chapter One.

⁵⁹⁷ *Knights* 629-33

⁵⁹⁸ E.g.: *Acharnians* 371 (where the rural origin of the crowds' members, here the Acharnians themselves, is cited as a mark of exceptional manipulability); 637-38 (where the chorus leader in the parabasis credits the author with "stopping you from being excessively deceived by foreigners' words" [παύσας ὑμᾶς ξενικοῖσι λόγοις μὴ λίαν ἐξαπατᾶσθαι] which "set you on the top of your asses" [ἐπ' ἄκρων τῶν πυγιδίων ἐκάθησθε]).

⁵⁹⁹ *Knights* 642-43, 646-47

In response to the Paphlagonian's appeal to the crowd's suspicion of others, the Sausage Seller redirects their attention to a higher concern: their own appetites. Their faces, drawn and glaring as the Paphlagonian spoke, are now smoothed over. It is implied that the speakers take cues as to how to address the audience by monitoring their facial expression and other physical reactions. Continuing to speak, the Sausage Seller reduces them to a state of gaping eagerness with his suggestion that they seize others' property to accumulate even more food (thus fusing the greediness of the belly with the acquisitive power of a state decree):

κάγω ὄφρασα
αὐτοῖς ἀπόρρητον ποιησάμενος, ταχύ,
ἵνα τὰς ἀφύας ὠνοῖντο πολλὰς τοῦ βολοῦ,
τῶν δημιουργῶν ξυλλαβεῖν τὰ τρύβλια.
οἱ δ' ἀνεκρότησαν καὶ πρὸς ἔμ' ἐκεχήνεσαν.
And I suggested to them, making it "unspeakable" (classified),
That in order to buy many sardines for an obol,
That they gather together all the workmen's bowls.
And they clapped and gaped at me.⁶⁰⁰

Now that the crowd's extreme response to appeals to its appetite has been established, the Paphlagonian tries to top the Sausage Seller's food announcement by proposing a mega-sacrifice (and subsequent feast):

ὁ δ' ὑπονοήσας, ὁ Παφλαγῶν, εἰδὼς ἄρα
οἷς ἦδεθ' ἡ βουλή μάλιστα ῥήμασιν
γνώμην ἔλεξεν ...
ἐπένευσεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ἡ βουλή πάλιν.
κάγω γ' ὅτε δὴ ἔγνω τῶν βολίτοις ἠττώμενος,
διηκοσίησι βουσὶν ὑπερηκόντισα ...
ἐκαραδόκησεν εἰς ἔμ' ἡ βουλή πάλιν.
But suspecting, the Paphlagonian, knowing well the words by which the
council is most pleased, made a motion [to sacrifice 100 cows] ...
And the council "nodded" (switched their approval) back to him.
And when I realized I was being defeated by cow patties,
I upped the stakes to *two* hundred cows ...
And the council looked back at me.⁶⁰¹

The crowd's fickle allegiance is exaggerated to the point of absurdity. The refrain ἡ βουλή πάλιν ("the council [looked] back") suggests an image like that of spectators at a tennis game, tracking a ball back and forth with movements of their head and eyes. "Two hundred cows" is the final round of bribe and counter-bribe; the Sausage Seller has won and the crowd is about to turn on the Paphlagonian.

ὁ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀκούσας ἐκπλαγεῖς ἐφληνάφα.

⁶⁰⁰ *Knights* 647-51

⁶⁰¹ *Knights* 652-54, 657-59, 663

καὶθ' εἶλκον αὐτὸν οἱ πρυτάνεις χοὶ τοξόται,
 οἱ δ' ἐθορύβουν περὶ τῶν ἀφύων ἐστηκότες.
 ὁ δ' ἠντεβόλει γ' αὐτοὺς ὀλίγον μεῖναι χρόνον ...
 οἱ δ' ἐξ ἐνὸς στόματος ἅπαντες ἀνέκραγον ...
 ἐεκεκράγεσάν τε τοὺς πρυτάνεις ἀφιέναι.
 εἶθ' ὑπερεπήδων τοὺς δρυφάκτους πανταχῆι.
 And struck out of his wits from hearing these things, he babbled.
 And the prytaneis and the archers dragged him away,
 And they (the council) had stood and were making a θορύβος
 About the sardines. And he begged them to stay a little while ...
 But they all shouted from one mouth ...
 And they shouted for the prytaneis to depart.
 And then they leapt over the court railings in all directions.⁶⁰²

The paradoxical unity and multiplicity of crowd is revealed in these last lines, as the council speaks “from one mouth” shortly before scattering “in all directions.” Before dispersing, the crowd raises a θόρυβος over that which first caught their attention away from their former favorite demagogue: the promise of something good to eat.

Crowd as political faction and the parliamentary *coup*

The plot of the *Assemblywomen* hinges on a particular crowd tactic: planting a dense cluster of conspirators within a large but diffused assembly to throw a vote. Before executing the plan, Praxagora warns her followers not to reveal their true nature:

Πρ. ἰδοὺ γέ σε ξαίνουσαν, ἦν τοῦ σώματος
 οὐδὲν παραφῆναι τοῖς καθημένοις ἔδει.
 οὐκοῦν καλὰ γ' ἂν πάθοιμεν, εἰ πλήρης τύχοι
 ὁ δῆμος ὧν κᾶπειθ' ὑπερβαίνουσά τις
 ἀναβαλλομένη δείξειε τὸν Φορμίσιον.
 ἦν δ' ἐγαθεζώμεσθα πρότεροι, λήσομεν
 ξυστειλάμεναι θαιμάτια. ...

Γυ. καὶ πῶς γυναικῶν θηλύφρων ξυνουσία
 δημηγορήσει; ...

Πρ. οὐκουν ἐπίτηδες ξυνελέγημεν ἐνθάδε,
 ὅπως προμελετήσωμεν ἀκεῖ δεῖ λέγειν;
 οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις τὸ γένειον ἂν περιδουμένη
 ἄλλαι θ' ὅσαι λαλεῖν μεμελετήκασί που.

Γυ. τίς δ', ὦ μέλ', ἡμῶν οὐ λαλεῖν ἐπίσταται;

Praxagora. Look at you: knitting! You who ought not reveal any part of your body to those seated. For we wouldn't experience good things, if the demos happened to be full(ly present that day) and some woman stepping up and hitching up her cloak should show her Phormisios.⁶⁰³
 But if we take our seats first, we will go unnoticed, wrapped up in cloaks

...

⁶⁰² *Knights* 664-67, 670, 674-75

⁶⁰³ Henderson comm. ad *Frogs* 965: “A politician whose beard resembled female genitalia.”

Woman. And how can a female-minded company of women speak in public?

Praxagora. Isn't that why we've gathered here,
So that we can work out what we need to say there?
Don't jump the gun putting on your beard –
And (I say the same to) all others who have worked out how to λαλεῖν.

Woman. Who among us *doesn't* know how to λαλεῖν?⁶⁰⁴

Praxagora has gathered her conspirators *here* (ξυνελέγημεν ἐνθάδε) to plan their coup *there*. The staging here is the inverse of that at the beginning of the *Acharnians*, where the Pnyx *here* is empty (ἔρημος ἡ πνυξ αὐτή, *Acharnians* 20) because the prytaneis (and presumably the rest of the council) are goofing off over *there* (οἱ δ' ἐν ἀγοραῖ λαλοῦσι κᾶνω καὶ κάτω, 21). In both cases, the group is “chattering” – the prytaneis λαλοῦσι, while the women learn to λαλεῖν. These multiple points of connection or echoes between the two passages confirm that crowds and groups are important in Aristophanes's plays, that the crowds are closely connected to political assemblies, site of crowds *par excellence*, and that these crowds behave improperly in both word (λαλ-) and deed (ὡστι-, discussed above).

The chorus's first exit outlines the planned parliamentary coup, and critiques urban assembly-goers in terms oddly similar to Dikaiopolis's:

χωρῶμεν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὦνδρες. ...
ὅπως δὲ τὸ σύμβολον λαβόντες ἔπειτα πλησίοι καθεδούμεθ' ὡς ἂν
χειροτονῶμεν

ἅπανθ' ὅπως ἂν δέηι τὰς ἡμετέρας φίλας ...
ὄρα δ' ὅπως ὠθήσομεν τοῦσδε τοὺς ἐξ ἄστεως
ἦκοντας, ὅσοι πρὸ τοῦ μέν, ἡνίκ' ἔδει λαβεῖν ἐλθόντ' ὀβολὸν μόνον,
καθῆντο λαλοῦντες

ἐν τοῖς στεφανώμασιν, νυνὶ δ' ἐνοχλοῦσ' ἄγαν.

Let's move to the assembly, men! ...

And when we've got our ticket, let's sit down close by that we may vote
For everything our girlfriends (propose) ...

See that we shove those coming from the city, they who before, when the
rule was he who came got only one obol, sat chattering in the wreath
(shop)s – but now they ἐνοχλοῦσι somethin' fierce.⁶⁰⁵

By now the cluster of concepts is familiar: the civic space is empty, or too crowded, or occupied too late, but at any rate there is a problem of groups or their absence; when groups are not where they should be, they talk inappropriately (λαλοῦσι). Indeed, a perversion of speech as part of general cultural degeneration can be blamed for causing this problem of crowds-in-space (cf. discussion above of *Clouds* 990-91, *Frogs* 1069).

The assembly – as with the council in the *Knights*, and deliberative and other crowds throughout tragedy – meets offstage.⁶⁰⁶ Returning from it, Chremes explains to

⁶⁰⁴ *Eccl.* 93-99, 110-11, 116-19

⁶⁰⁵ *Eccl.* 290, 296-303

Blepyrus why he has come back without his obols, describing the execution of Praxagora's plan:

Χρ. πλεῖστος ἀνθρώπων ὄχλος,
ὅσος οὐδεπώποτ', ἦλθ' ἀθρόος ἐς τὴν πύκνα.
καὶ δῆτα πάντας σκυτοτόμοις ἠικάζομεν
ὀρῶντες αὐτούς. οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ὑπερφυῶς
ὡς λευκοπληθῆς ἦν ἰδεῖν ἠκκλησία.
ὥστ' οὐκ ἔλαβον οὐτ' αὐτὸς οὐτ' ἄλλοι συχνοί. ...
Βλ. ἀτὰρ τί τὸ πρᾶγμ' ἦν, ὅτι τοσοῦτον χρῆμ' ὄχλου⁶⁰⁷
οὕτως ἐν ὦραι ξυνελέγηι;
Χρ. τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ
ἔδοξε τοῖς πρυτάνεσι σωτηρίας
γνώμας καθεῖναι τῆς πόλεως; καίτ' εὐθέως
πρῶτος Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων παρείρπυσεν.
κάπειθ' ὁ δῆμος ἀναβοᾷ πόσον δοκεῖς ...
μετὰ τοῦτον Εὐαίων ὁ δεξιώτατος
παρῆλθε γυμνός, ὡς ἐδόκει τοῖς πλείοσιν.
αὐτὸς γε μέντοῦφασκεν ἱμάτιον ἔχειν.
κάπειτ' ἔλεξε δημοτιξωτάτους λόγους. ...
μετὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν εὐπρεπῆς νεανίας
λευκός τις ἀνεπήδησ' ὅμοιος Νικίαι
δημηγορήσων, κάπεχείρησεν λέγειν
ὡς χρή παραδοῦναι ταῖς γυναιξὶ τὴν πόλιν.
εἴτ' ἔθορύβησαν κἀνέκραγον ὡς εὖ λέγοι,
τὸ σκυτοτομικὸν πλῆθος, οἱ δ' ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν
ἀνεβορβόρουξαν.
Βλ. νοῦν γὰρ εἶχον, νῆ Δία.
Χρ. ἀλλ' ἦσαν ἥττους. ὁ δὲ κατεῖχε τῆι βοῆι,
τὰς μὲν γυναικας πόλλ' ἀγαθὰ λέγων, σὲ δὲ πολλὰ κακά.
Chr. The hugest ὄχλος, so big as never before, came ἀθρόος to the Pnyx.
And yeah - when we saw them we made them all for shoemakers
(lit. "leathercutters"),
Well, no, but the assembly was damned full-pale to look at.
So I got nothing – not me, not a lot of other guys. ...
Bl. But what was the deal, that got together so great a thing of an ὄχλος?
Chr. What else but that the prytaneis proposed debate about the city's
salvation? And then first Neocleides straightaway shuffled up.
How much d'you think the δῆμος shouted then? ...

⁶⁰⁶ Although (Carter 58) "the report is the more vivid since we have already seen the women rehearsing for the meeting."

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. *Thesmo.* 280-1, where the throng of celebrants entering the sanctuary is described solely by periphrasis, without any crowd-noun: καομένων τῶν λαμπάδων/ ὅσον τὸ χρῆμ' ἀνέρχεθ' ὑπὸ τῆς λιγνύος ("Burning lamps/ How great a thing of a ___ goes up (to the sanctuary) through the smoke"). The speaker there is Euripides's kinsman, right as he begins his infiltration of the festival in the guise of a woman. In that case, the absence of a noun describing the group may be for lack of one appropriate to describe a non-political, non-disruptive group – but see the discussion of the *Frogs* below for evidence that ὄχλος in the context of cult can have a positive, or at least neutral, valence.

After that, Euaion the cleverest came forward “naked”
 (Henderson: “wearing only a shirt”), as it seemed to most.
 However, he announced he had a cloak.
 And then he spoke the most δημοσical speech. ...
 OK, then after that a seemly youth
 Sprang up, some pale guy like Nikias,
 To speak before the people (δημηγορήσων)
 And he essayed to say that it was time to hand the city to the women.
 And they made a θορύβος and shouted that he spoke well,
 The shoemaking πλῆθος,
 But those from the fields “made deep rumbles” (Henderson.)
Bl. For they had sense, by God!
Chr. But they were fewer. And he (the “seemly youth”) suppressed them
 with a shout, saying many good things about women – and many bad
 about you.⁶⁰⁸

Praxagora’s group is referred to at the beginning of this passage as an ὄχλος, and at the end as a πλῆθος. In between the two descriptions of the smaller, denser, conspiratorial cadre, however, the speakers’ addresses are all framed by reference to the δῆμος. It boos down the first; the second speaks words most adapted to it. The third speaker who comes forth δημηγορήσων carries the day with a pre-arranged θόρυβος.

Being denser (ἄθρόος), a crowd reaction started by Praxagora’s ὄχλος/πλῆθος would be more likely to spread, on a model of local reactions to rhetoric spreading in a communicative or mimetic network. The rural delegation produces its own noise, but is overwhelmed, as the speaker checks them τῆι βοῆι. Plato’s nightmare vision of democratic crowds as a contest of mindless noise (as quoted in the Postscript) is already implicit in Aristophanic descriptions of the political process.

πλῆθος elsewhere in Aristophanes can carry two shades of meaning: “the people” as general audience and political entity, and “the masses” contrasted to some opposing faction. Under a majority-rule regime, these concepts are difficult to distinguish, but a particular occurrence may have more or less of the sense of one or the other. At *Acharnians* 317-18, Dikaiopolis pitches it in a way close to balanced between these two senses:

κᾶν γε μὴ λέγω δίκαια μηδὲ τῶι πλήθει δοκῶ,
 ὑπὲρ ἐπιξήνου ἠελήσω τὴν κεφαλὴν ἔχων λέγειν.
 And if I don’t seem to the πλῆθος to speak justice,
 I’ll be willing to speak with my head on the chopping-block!

Olson comments: “τῶι πλήθει: ‘the majority’ or ‘the mass’, i.e. the Athenian people generally.” And here these two senses are indeed fused: he is speaking to a group aroused by patriotic ire, to excuse himself from charges of disloyalty to the city itself.

But this is an “i.e.” which doesn’t always operate. On a matter of national sentiment such as war, literally life and death, it may be easier to elide the potential gap

⁶⁰⁸ *Eccl.* 383-88, 394-99, 408-11, 427-35

between *everyone* and *the majority*, but other mass deliberative contexts – for instance, a lawsuit with regional or class loyalties polarized on either side – can generate a more acute awareness of the gap between, on the one hand, the *πλῆθος* gathered together at any given moment (let alone the sub-*πλῆθος* of a majority on a given motion or verdict), and, on the other, the *whole* body of citizens or community members.⁶⁰⁹ I would say the *δῆμος*,⁶¹⁰ but the passage above shows that this word can mean a momentary gathering or faction too.

When Dikaiopolis calls the group to which he'll plead his case the *πλῆθος*, that word can indeed be read as denoting the polity as a whole, with one man, having outraged it, now forced to appeal to it as a collective. In his speech, he will observe that an insult to national pride can cause crowd behavior to spread from the assembly and occupy the entire city:

ἦν δ' ἄν ἡ πόλις πλέα θορύβου στρατιωτῶν ...
 (If a Spartan had impounded goods from a minor Athenian ally),
 The city would be full of a *θορύβος* of soldiers ...⁶¹¹

A city at war is the ultimate scene of a crowd,⁶¹² and the ultimate affront to the polity is for one man to oppose the city united. Indeed, when Dikaiopolis is about to begin his *apologia* after his visit to Euripides, the Chorus explicitly and reductively frames the scene in the dialectic of One and Many:

τί δράσεις; τί φήσεις; <εὔ> ἴσθι νυν
 ἀναίσχυντος ὦν σιδηροῦς τ' ἀνήρ,
 ὅστις παρασχῶν τῇ πόλει τὸν αὐχένα
 ἅπασι μέλλεις εἰς λέγειν τάναντία.
 What will you do? What will you say? Now know well,
 You are shameless and a man of steel,
 Who, sticking your neck out to the city,
 Intend to say the opposite of what *all* say – (you who are) *one*.⁶¹³

In a paratragic, surreal cross between a capital treason trial and a lynch mob, a *πλῆθος* can stand in for all the people in perfect synecdoche; one man can stand against

⁶⁰⁹ This is to say that Carter's "collective fallacy" applies to more than just *poetic* representation.

⁶¹⁰ At *Wealth* 570 the two words are directly linked: (οἱ ῥήτορες) ... ἐπιβουλεύουσί τε τῶι πλήθει καὶ τῶι δήμῳ πολέμοισιν ("(The political speakers) plot against the *πλῆθος* and make war on the *δῆμος*"). Here, Poverty blames the ῥήτορες' ability to accumulate wealth through public service for their becoming enemies of the "mass" and the "people;" this populist rallying cry comes shortly after Chremylus's likening the poor "rabble" to a swarm of flies (at 535 ff., discussed below).

⁶¹¹ *Ach.* 545-46

⁶¹² Garland (100) describes the lines that immediately follow (550-52: as portraying "the corporate bustle of the Piraeus." Garland's book takes as its epigram a quote from Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*, reading in part: "A city is stones and a city is people; but it is not a heap of stones, and it is not just a jostle of people." It certainly is not *just* a jostle of people, but any city – especially in its markets and ports, *especially* during wartime displacements and siege conditions – definitely *is*, on one level, a "jostle of people."

⁶¹³ *Ach.* 490-94

all. But any time a vote is taken, there will be a losing side. The myth of total participation and consent will be called upon to bridge the gap between formal and actual unity, and the contest will be shown as one between two or more groups of people.

Democratic majorities are repeatedly disparaged by Aristophanic characters, either through attacks on their competence or by problematizing the fiction that a majority vote at a particular meeting is a reliable expression of what “the people” think. “(The losing side of a vote) had good sense!” says Blepyrus. “But they were fewer,” rebuts Chremes – and numbers trump reason. “I was elected!” insists Lamachus. “(Yes – by) three cuckoos!” retorts Dikaiopolis.⁶¹⁴ Just because a temporary majority at an ill-attended, ill-informed gathering does something doesn’t make that thing wise or just.

The use of πλῆθος to describe a socio-political faction in a *positive* sense is clearest in examples of demagogic flattery. In his explanation of the joys of jurying, Philokleon tells of how politicians, specifically the historical (if obscure) prosecutor⁶¹⁵ Euathlos and the pun-caricature Kolakonymos (“Flatter-name,” one of Aristophanes’s many jabs at the popular politician Cleonymos, “Fame-name”), address the jurors and

οὐχὶ προδώσειν ἡμᾶς φασιν, περὶ τοῦ πλῆθους δὲ μαχεῖσθαι
Insist that they won’t betray us, but will fight on behalf of the πλῆθος.⁶¹⁶

Bdelykleon soon throws this language back at his father, blaming the loss of nine-tenths of the imperial revenue on

τούτους τοὺς “οὐχὶ προδώσω τὸν Ἀθηναίων κολοσυρτόν,
ἀλλὰ μαχοῦμαι περὶ τοῦ πλῆθους ἀεὶ.”
Those ones (who say) “I’ll never betray the Athenian rabble,
But I’ll always fight on behalf of the πλῆθος.”⁶¹⁷

In a domestic political context, if one fights on behalf of X, one must be fighting for them *against* Y. Politics is exposed as a struggle between groups rather than the actions taken by an organic whole.

Bdelykleon’s repurposing of Philokleon’s quoted political catchphrase shows that a πλῆθος can be an ὄχλος – the word meaning, on its face, simply “mass” or “majority” can be easily linked to or equated with the “rabble” (κολοσυρτός).⁶¹⁸ At *Wealth* 536, the same word is used by Chremylos as he blames Poverty for producing figurative and literal crowds of wretchedness:

⁶¹⁴ *Ach.* 598: Λαμ. ἐχειροτόνησαν γὰρ με./ Δικ. κόκκυγές γε τρεῖς. Lamachus desperately repeats “They elected me!” a few lines later; Dikaiopolis ignores this the second time and appeals directly to the class and status resentments of the chorus.

⁶¹⁵ MacDowell comm. ad loc and at 482.

⁶¹⁶ *Wasps* 593

⁶¹⁷ *Wasps* 666-67

⁶¹⁸ At *Lysistrata* 170 the Spartan Lampito speaks of “your Athenian rabble” (Henderson), as contrasted with Spartan men who will be easily persuaded, using the word ῥυάχeton, from a root meaning “flowing.” Cf. the unruly assembly crowd at the beginning of *Acharnians* that enters ἀθρόοι καταρρέοντες: the disorder of Athenian deliberative bodies renders the entire polity fluid and unstable.

οὐ γὰρ ἄν πορίσαι τί δύναι' ἀγαθὸν πλὴν φώιδων ἐκ βαλανείου
 καὶ παιδαρίων ὑποπεινῶντων καὶ γπαιδίων κολοσυρτόν;
 φθειρῶν τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ κωνώπων καὶ ψυλλῶν οὐδὲ λέγω σοι
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους, αἱ βομβοῦσαι περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ανιῶσιν,
 ἐπεγείρουσαι καὶ φράζουσαι: “πεινήσεις. ἀλλ' ἐπανίστω.”
 What good can you supply except a κολοσυρτὸς of bathhouse blisters
 And starving kids and old women? And the host of lice, mosquitoes and
 Fleas, which I can't list to you on account of the πλήθος
 (Henderson: “too numerous to enumerate”),
 Which bug us, buzzing around our head,
 And waking us up say: “You'll go hungry! GET UP!”⁶¹⁹

Crowds of the wretched poor are the product of Poverty personified – as are the crowds of pests that infest the houses of the poor. The effect of listing these together is to dehumanize the former and personify the latter: the insects βομβοῦσαι, just as the titular gang of jurors in the *Wasps* will shout down those who come before them.

Plurality in comic anti-democratic language is linked both with deprivation and with bodily vulnerability. In the *Assemblywomen*, dictatrix-elect Praxagora promises a bright future for the city:

μὴ λωποδυτῆσαι, μὴ φθονεῖν τοῖς πλησίον,
 μὴ γυμνὸν εἶναι μὴ πένητα μηδένα,
 μὴ λοιδορεῖσθαι ...
 No more clothes-stealing, no envying those near you,
 No “being naked,”⁶²⁰
 No verbal abuse ...⁶²¹

This is the eliminationist vision of social and economic harmony: no one will be exposed to public eyes or hostile hands, envy will not arise from a perceived inferiority to those around one; *difference* will be eliminated, and with it the unsightly poor by ones and in their crowded numbers.

Returning to *Assemblywomen* 432, we find πλήθος used in a *third* sense. Here it is not the myth of the people as a whole, nor the majority (neither in the sense of the “masses” nor, at least not explicitly, as a majority of a particular assembled crowd), but rather the *decisively-acting group in a situation of mass deliberation*. The passage does not explicitly say that Praxagora's group *by themselves* outnumber the rest of the assembly – just that they constitute an unprecedented ὄχλος which moves and sits together ἀθρόος.

⁶¹⁹ *Wealth* 535-39

⁶²⁰ Cf. Henderson's rendering of γυμνός at 409 as “wearing only a shirt,” cited above. Cf. also *Peace* 685: ἀπορῶν ὁ δῆμος ἐπιτρόπου καὶ γυμνὸς ὢν (“The people, at a loss for a guardian and being naked ...”). Euaion the demagogue finds it to his advantage to appear “naked;” “nudity” is a socio-economic disadvantage that Praxagora promises to eliminate. Appearing (nearly) naked before a group of spectators is an apt figure for the vulnerability of the individual or minority against an angry group or majority.

⁶²¹ *Eccl.* 565-67

Mass political meetings can be criticized for two kinds of crowd-based flaw. Not only are they rowdy and fickle as a whole (δῆμος; πλῆθος in the inclusive sense), but they are subject to coordinated manipulation by “packs” at the sub-crowd level (ὄχλος; πλῆθος in the local sense).⁶²² Groups form elsewhere in the city, engage in talk at best idle and at worse treasonous, and then flow into the assembly with their own biases and agenda. The pathologies of group behavior pervade the Aristophanic representation of democracy.⁶²³

τὸ σκυτοτομικὸν πλῆθος successfully manipulates the assembly into establishing a gynocracy. Similar combinations of occupational and other demographic terms with group-nouns appear throughout Aristophanes’s plays, identifying other “packs” of political actors. In *Peace*, Hermes blames the continuation of war on a manipulable working-class group entering politics:

κάνθάδ’ ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ξυνῆλθεν οὐργάτης λεῶς ...
And here, when a laboring λεῶς came together from out of the fields ...⁶²⁴

Now Dikaiopolis’s lament at the beginning of *Acharnians* becomes politically legible. Wartime conditions have rendered the agora even more crowded than usual,⁶²⁵ but an assembly that lies strangely empty. When the throng of citizens finally does arrive, it jostles blindly and discusses all the wrong things – as any crowd, but especially one of rustics, will do when sufficiently agitated.

An occupationally defined λεῶς⁶²⁶ can be appealed to as well as blamed. Dikaiopolis does so to warn the ambassador to Thrace: ὑποστένοι μέντ’ ἄν ὁ θρανήτης λεῶς, / ὁ σωσίπολις (“Surely the city-saving rowing λεῶς would groan!”) And later in *Peace* itself, Trygaeus proclaims himself the champion of the rural crowd which Hermes has criticized:

⁶²² The chorus leader uses πλῆθος in the restricted sense of himself and his fellow jurors at *Wasps* 267: τί χρῆμ’ ἄρ οὐκ τῆς οἰκίας τῆσδε συνδικαστῆς / πέπονθεν, ὡς οὐ φαίνεται δεῦρο πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος; (“What’s the matter with our fellow-juror, the one from out this house, that he isn’t appearing hither towards our πλῆθος?”). Here, the πλῆθος is a group of people who will arrive enter the politico-judicial scene as a precollected group, but one that seeks only the pleasures of the routine exercise of democratic power. In the *Assemblywomen*, the πλῆθος carries off a coup.

⁶²³ For a political “pack” cf. *Knights* 852-53, of the Paphlagonian’s allies: ὁραῖς γὰρ αὐτῶι στίφος οἶόν ἐστι βυρσοπωλῶν / νεανιῶν (“For you see what a στίφος of young men who hawk leather there is around him ...”). Occupational and other class groupings would be natural sites of faction-formation in the assembly.

⁶²⁴ *Peace* 632

⁶²⁵ On the dislocations and concentration caused by the siege, and the effect on civic discourse, cf. *Eccl.* 243-44, where Praxagora explains how she learned the art of public speaking:

ἐν ταῖς φυγαῖς μετὰ τάνδρὸς ὦικησ’ ἐν πυκνῇ.
ἔπειτ’ ἀκούουσ’ ἐξέμαθον τῶν ῥητόρων.

In the “flights” (Henderson: “displacements”) I lived with my husband on the Pnyx. And listening there, I learned the whole thing from the speakers.

Cf. Thuc. II.16 for concentration within the city and the resulting disruption of social and religious order. For φυγαῖ in this sense see Ussher comm. ad loc.

⁶²⁶ Groups can be labeled along axes other than class and occupation, e.g. πρεσβυτῶν ὄχλος *Wasps* 540; ἐσμὸς γυναικῶν *Lysistrata* 353.

πολλῶν γὰρ ὑμῖν ἄξιος
 Τρυγαῖος ἀθμομενεὺς ἐγὼ,
 δεινῶν ἀπαλλάξας πόνων
 τὸν δημότην ὄμιλον
 καὶ τὸν γεωργικὸν λεῶν ...
 For I, Trygaeus of Athmonum,
 Am deserving of many (plaudits) from you (addressing the chorus),
 Having freed from terrible toils
 The popular ὄμιλος
 And the farming λεῶς ...⁶²⁷

So Aristophanic characters do not only characterize groups and crowds negatively. Even in the same play, crowd vocabulary can carry diametrically opposed social meaning at different times. In the *Frogs*, the first, titular chorus refers to a time

ἤνιχ' ὁ κραιπαλόκωμος τοῖς ἱεροῖσι Χύτροις χωρεῖ
 κατ' ἐμὸν τέμενος λαῶν ὄχλος.
 When the hangover-party ὄχλος of the λαοί
 Came through my holy precinct at the (festival of) holy Jugs.⁶²⁸

Despite its drunkenness, the ὄχλος here is not the object of elite scorn. Rather, it represents the people as a whole, transcending class divisions in ritual unity. The second chorus summons another image of ὄχλος-as-the-whole-community later as it begins the parabasis:

Μοῦσα, χορῶν ἱερῶν ἐπίβηθι καὶ ἔλθ' ἐπὶ τέρψιν ἀοιδᾶς ἐμᾶς,
 τὸν πολὺν ὀψομένη λαῶν ὄχλον ...
 Muse, step into the sacred dances and come for (to put) delight in my
 Song, (coming to) see the great ὄχλος of the λαοί (i.e., the audience).⁶²⁹

Elsewhere in the *Frogs*, however, crowd terminology carries its more typical negative social significance. Hades's slave explains to Xanthias that Euripides's recent ascendancy in the underworld arts scene is due to his popularity with

⁶²⁷ *Peace* 917-22. For solidarity between farmers, cf. *Wealth* 223-26: “Call my fellow-farmers (τοὺς ξυγγεώργους κάλεσον) – you’ll probably find them working hard in the fields – so that each of them, being present here, can take his share with us of this Wealth here.”

⁶²⁸ *Frogs* 218-19

⁶²⁹ *Frogs* 674-76. For similar language applied to the audience-as-crowd, cf. *Knights* 162-63: δευρὶ βλέπε./ τὰς στίχας ὀραῖς τὰς τῶνδε τῶν λαῶν; (one character breaks the ‘fourth wall’ to ask another: “Look there!/ Do you see the ranks of the λαοί?”). If the polity’s constituent groups, especially when they are deliberating over their economic and other interests in the assembly, are labeled as the “farming λεῶς,” the “rowing λεῶς,” etc., then the group τῶν λαῶν is the ideal aggregation of all such λαοί: the true formation of that which majority-rule voting and other democratic procedures can only imperfectly and metonymically display, The People United. Carter 59ff. observes that direct address of the audience is almost entirely absent from tragedy (one of the basic features differentiating it from comedy), apart from a few contested instances.

Οικ. τοῖς λωποδύταις καὶ τοῖσι βαλλαντιοτόμοις
καὶ τοῖσι πατραλοῖαισι καὶ τοιχωρύχοις,
ἔπερ ἔστ' ἐν Ἅιδου πλῆθος, οἱ δ' ἀκροώμενοι ... ὑπερεμάνησαν ...
ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν ...

Ξα. ὁ τῶν πανούργων; Οικ. νῆ Δι' ...

SLAVE: The cloak-stealers and wallet-cutters, and the father-beaters
And wall-diggers (burglars), which are the majority in Hades (or, “who
are a πλῆθος,” i.e., who form a group *constituency* like Praxagora’s posse
of “shoemakers”), and listening, they ... went nuts ...⁶³⁰

The δῆμος cried out to hold a trial (of skill between Aeschylus and
Euripides) ...

XANTHIAS: (The δῆμος) of criminals? SLAVE: Yes, by God ...

Earlier, on hearing the ruckus inside Hades’s palace, Xanthias had asked

τίς οὔτος οὔνδον ἐστὶ θόρυβος καὶ βοή
χῶ λαιδορησμός;
What’s this θόρυβος and outcry and trash-talking inside?⁶³¹

The slave replies

πρᾶγμα, πρᾶγμα μέγα κεκίνηται, μέγα
ἐν τοῖς νεκροῖσι καὶ στάσις πολλή πάνυ.
A matter, a great matter’s in motion, great
Among the dead, and a στάσις very large
(Henderson: “and very intense factionalism”).⁶³²

Here we find the term for the disaster that lies at the end of the road of the crowd:
στάσις, a city’s self-destruction through uncontrollable group violence.⁶³³ In this
imagined underworld society it is less apocalyptic, but it still generates things associated
with crowds in the real above-ground world: crying and shouting, and verbal abuse
(λαιδ-, which in the *Assemblywomen* Praxagora promises to eliminate, as discussed
above; the appearance here of a word from this root confirms that this too is a crowd-
word).

Restoring the proper distribution of bodies in civic space

The monologue at the beginning of the *Acharnians* identifies two problems with
groups: people do not gather together where and when they should, and they act
improperly when they do so. The popular assemblies may be portrayed as an innovation
of degenerate times, but they are accepted by all as a social fact – and recognized as a site
of inter-group tension and sublimated class warfare:

⁶³⁰ *Frogs* 772-76

⁶³¹ *Frogs* 756-77

⁶³² *Frogs* 759-60

⁶³³ See Lintott 252 ff. and *passim*. For Thucydides’s discourse on *stasis*, see fn. 400 above.

ἐκκλησίαισιν ἦν ὅτ' οὐκ ἐχρώμεθα
οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν ...
νῦν δὲ χρωμένων
ὁ μὲν λαβῶν ἀργύριον ὑπερεπήνεσεν,
ὁ δ' οὐ λαβῶν εἶναι θανάτου φήσ' ἀξίους
τοὺς μισθοφορεῖν ζητοῦντας ἐν τήκκλησίαι.
Time was when we made no use of assemblies at all ...
But now, as we do use them, the one who gets money
praises them excessively,
But the one who does not get money declares deserving of death
Those coming to the assembly seeking to draw pay.⁶³⁴

Dikaiopolis claimed that people were arriving too late, shoving each other over pride of place, and refusing to consider important proposals of peace. If attendees are now drawn there partly for mercenary reasons, the crowding and improper talk of the agora will surely infect the deliberative body even when people do bother to show up. The chorus leader in *Wealth* assures Chremylus that monetary incentives will retain the chorus of farmers as allies for his plan:

θάρρει. βλέπειν γὰρ ἄντικρυς δόξεις μ' Ἄρη.
δεινὸν γὰρ εἰ τριωβόλου μὲν οὔνεκα
ὥστιζόμεθ' ἐκάστοτ' ἐν τήκκλησίαι,
αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Πλοῦτον παρεῖην τω λαβεῖν.
Buck up. For soon you'll think you're looking at Ares.
For if we shove our way in every time to the assembly
For three obols, it'd be awful if I passed up the chance to grab Wealth
Himself!⁶³⁵

After Wealth's eyesight has been restored, and the redistribution of his favors to the truly deserving has begun, Chremylus's slave Cario describes the god's approach: ἔρχεται./ ἀλλ' ἦν περὶ αὐτὸν ὄχλος ὑπερφυῆς ὅσος ("He's coming, but there was an extraordinarily big ὄχλος around him.")⁶³⁶ When Chremylus arrives with Wealth, he boasts of his newfound celebrity:

ἐμὲ γὰρ τίς οὐ προσεῖπε; ποῖος οὐκ ὄχλος

⁶³⁴ *Eccl.* 183-184, 185-188. Ussher comm. ad loc:

There is no suggestion of a *legal* disability (to draw attendance-pay). The words do, however, imply that some Athenians (apart from those who came late on any one occasion) could not, for private reasons, get to meetings. Their chagrin revealed itself in strong denunciation of their luckier fellows, and the system.

To me, more seems at stake here than where one lives or any other such "private reasons" which might prevent attendance for logistical reasons. That no one otherwise eligible to participate in the assembly was barred from receiving pay does not mean that the institution of attendance-pay would have been seen as legitimate by everyone. Such pay has the purpose of subsidizing attendance by the non-elite, those without excessive leisure; as such, it both symbolically and functionally strengthens the democracy – and draws crowds.

⁶³⁵ *Wealth* 328-31

⁶³⁶ *Wealth* 749-50

περιστεφάνωσεν ἐν ἀγορᾷ πρεσβυτικός;
Who didn't greet me? What elderly ὄχλος
Didn't crown me in the agora?⁶³⁷

Wealth and the promise of its broader distribution attract people in crowds. If the democratic practice of gathering in assemblies is dysfunctional – and Aristophanes's characters all seem to agree that it is – then the distribution and discipline of groupings must be reformed.⁶³⁸ Several later comedies – *Lysistrata*, *Assemblywomen*, *Wealth* – offer different fantastical options for such reform. *Wealth*'s proposal of redistribution, matched in political reality by an increase in subsidies for citizen participation, is one way of restoring the balance of crowds between market and assembly.

Comedy is paradoxical: it is at once both a more direct representation of present social reality and a more open medium for expressions of fantasy and play. Throughout his career, Aristophanes used both modes to address the problem of crowds in the context of radical democracy and the Peloponnesian War. Whereas Homer's crowds have little or no social concreteness, and tragic crowds are mostly represented as an implacable offstage threat, Aristophanes plays with the crowd through a full range of modalities, using it to think Athens as it is, as it was, and as it might be.

⁶³⁷ *Wealth* 786-87

⁶³⁸ For a reading of *Wealth* as an “essentially conservative” response to the crisis of the Athenian “social, economic and political order” - albeit one decked out with an “apparently revolutionary surface-action” – see Olson 1990 (quotes from p. 4).

POSTSCRIPT

“Όταν, εἶπον, συγκαθεζόμενοι ἀθρόοι πολλοὶ εἰς ἐκκλησίας ἢ εἰς δικαστήρια ἢ θέατρα ἢ στρατόπεδα ἢ τινα ἄλλον κοινὸν πλήθους σύλλογον σὺν πολλῶι θορύβωι τὰ μὲν ψέγωσι τῶν λεγομένων ἢ πραττομένων, τὰ δὲ ἐπαινῶσιν, ὑπερβαλλόντως ἐκάτερα, καὶ ἐκβοῶντες καὶ κροτοῦντες, πρὸς δ’ αὐτοῖς αἰ τε πέτραι καὶ ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἂν ᾧσιν ἐπηχοῦντες διπλάσιον θόρυβον παρέχωσι τοῦ ψόγου καὶ ἐπαίνου. ἐν δὴ τῶι τοιούτῳ τὸν νέον, τὸ λεγόμενον, τίνα οἶει καρδίαν ἴσχειν; ἢ ποίαν αὐτῶι παιδείαν ἰδιωτικὴν ἀνθέξειν, ἣν οὐ κατακλυσθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου ψόγου ἢ ἐπαίνου οἰχήσασθαι φερομένην κατὰ ῥοῦν ἢ ἂν οὔτος φέρηι, καὶ φήσιν τε τὰ αὐτὰ τούτοις καλὰ καὶ αἰσχρὰ εἶναι, καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσειν ἅπερ ἂν οὔτοι, καὶ ἔσεσθαι τοιοῦτον;

When, I said, many of them sit together in assemblies, courts, theaters, army camps, or in any other gathering of a mass of people in public and, with a loud uproar, object excessively to some of the things that are said or done, then approve excessively of others, shouting and clapping; and when, in addition to these people themselves, the rocks and the surrounding space itself echo and redouble the uproar of their praise or blame. In a situation like that, how do you think – as the saying goes – a young man’s heart is affected? How will whatever sort of private education he received hold up for him, and not get swept away by such praise and blame, and go be carried off by the flood wherever it goes, so that he will call the same things beautiful or ugly as these people, practice what they practice, and become like them?

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ταῦτ’ οὖν οὕτω τεταγμένως ἤθελεν ἄρχεσθαι τῶν πολιτῶν τὸ πλήθος, καὶ μὴ τολμᾶν κρίνειν διὰ θορύβου.

Such was the rigor with which the mass of the people was prepared to be controlled in the theatre, and to refrain from passing judgment by shouting.

PLATO, LAWS 700D1-2⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ Trans. Reeve (185-86).

⁶⁴⁰ Trans. Saunders (1389).

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