

How to Do the Psychology of the Ancient World

Leiden, 13-15 December 2018

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Organizers: Dr Luuk Huitink, Dr Vlad Glaveanu, Prof. Ineke Sluiter

Programme and Abstracts



Universiteit
Leiden

Conference Programme

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13

12:30-1:00 Coffee and Registration

1:00-1:15 Ineke Sluiter and Luuk Huitink (Leiden University): *Welcome and Introduction*

KEYNOTE

1:15-2:15 Douglas Cairns (University of Edinburgh): *Emotional Contagion, Empathy, and Sympathy as Responses to Verbal and Visual Narratives: Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues*

2:15-2:35: coffee, tea

PANEL I: CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

2:35-3:20 Paula Castro (ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon): *Reading social psychology with Sophocles' Antigone — and vice-versa*

3:20-4:05 David Konstan (New York University): *How the ancient world learned to sin*

4:05–4:25 coffee and tea

PANEL II: CHARACTER

4:25-4:35 Introduction by Gordon Sammut, senior lecturer in social psychology at the University of Malta and visiting fellow at the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science at the London School of Economics

4:35-5:20 Sheila (Bridget) Murnaghan (University of Pennsylvania): *Anchoring the self: time and character in Sophoclean tragedy*

5:20-6:05 Evert van Emde Boas (University of Oxford): *Individuals or types? Ancient criticism and modern socio-cognitive psychology on characterization in Greek tragedy*

6:05-6:15 discussion by Gordon Sammut

6:15-7:15 drinks

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

From **8:45** coffee

PANEL III: SOCIAL GROUPS

9:00-9:10 introduction by Gordon Sammut, senior lecturer in social psychology at the University of Malta and visiting fellow at the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science at the London School of Economics

9:10-9:55 Xenia Makri (University of Cyprus): *'Not by others but by our own feathers'* (Birds 808): A social psychological reading of Aristophanes' Birds

9:55-10:40 Vichi Ciocani (Babeş-Bolyai University): *Women's attitudes towards marriage in Greek literature*

10:40-10:50 discussion by Gordon Sammut

10:50-11:10 coffee & tea

PANEL IV: NARRATIVES

11:10-11:20 Introduction by Max van Duijn, Assistant Professor at Leiden Science and the Leiden Institute of Advanced Computer Sciences

11:20-12:05 Sarah-Helena Van den Brande (Ghent University): *Folk psychology and narrative sense making in ancient Greek tragedy*

12:05-12:50 Jacqueline Klooster (Groningen University): *Anchoring coincidences in the brain: a cognitive approach to the problem of Euripidean coincidence plots*

12:50-1 discussion by Max van Duijn

1-2: lunch

PANEL V: MEANING MAKING IN RELIGION

2:00-2:10 Introduction by Sandra Jovchelovitch, Professor of social psychology and Director of the MSc in social and cultural Psychology, London School of Economics

2:10-2:55 Michiel van Veldhuizen (Brown University): *God, Google and Greek oracles: divine minds in Herodotus' Histories*

2:55-3:40 Thomas Martin (College of the Holy Cross): *Learning to live with religious innovation as a political community: deification and cognitive dissonance in Hellenistic Athens*

3:40-3:50 discussion by Sandra Jovchelovitch

3:50-4:10: coffee, tea

PANEL VI: CROWDS

4:10-4:20 Introduction by Sandra Jovchelovitch, Professor of social psychology and Director of the MSc in social and cultural Psychology, London School of Economics

4:20-5:05 Alexander Hardwick (University of Oxford): *Innovation, crowd psychology and the comic demos*

5:05-5:50 Daniëlle Sloopjes (Utrecht University): *Representations of crowds in ancient Rome: Livy and the voice of the people*

5:50-6:00 discussion by Sandra Jovchelovitch

7:15 conference dinner (for speakers)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

PANEL VII: COGNITION

- 10:10-10:20** *Introduction by Vlad Glaveanu, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology and Professional Counseling at Webster University, Geneva*
- 10:20-11:05** Ralph Rosen (University of Pennsylvania): *Cognitive and ethological approaches to ancient satire: reconceptualizing the laughter of derision*
- 11:05-11:50** Felix Budelmann (University of Oxford): *Psychological approaches to notions of the present in ancient Greece*
- 11:50-12:00** *discussion by Vlad Glaveanu*

12:--1:00 lunch

PANEL VIII: IMAGINATION

- 1:00-1:10** *Introduction by Vlad Glaveanu, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology and Professional Counseling at Webster University, Geneva.*
- 1:10-1:55** Anne-Sophie Noel (ENS Lyon – UMR HiSoMA): *Characters playing ‘as-if’: cognition and counterfactual imagination in Greek tragedy*
- 1:55-2:40** Efstathia Athanasopoulou (University of Patras): *Anchoring cultural objects in the ancient Greek imagination*
- 2:40-2:50** *discussion by Vlad Glaveanu*

2:50-3:10 coffee, tea

PANEL IX: INNOVATION AND LEARNING

- 3:10-3:20** *Introduction by Eveline Crone, Professor of neurocognitive developmental psychology, Leiden University*
- 3:20-4:05** Karen Bassi (University of California Santa Cruz): *Eschatology and innovation in Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus*
- 4:05-4:50** Eveline Crone and Luuk Huitink (Leiden University): *Cyrus’ Learning Curve*
- 4:50-5:00** Ineke Sluiter (Leiden University): *Closing remarks (followed by plenary discussion till 5:30 at the latest)*

Abstracts

Douglas Cairns (University of Edinburgh)

Emotional Contagion, Empathy, and Sympathy as Responses to Verbal and Visual Narratives: Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues

This paper seeks to air the following basic questions: what is the relationship between the emotions of characters and audiences in genres such as epic and tragedy; and what role do vision and visualization play in the mediation of this relationship? But I approach these questions by means of a more limited one: do the emotional responses of audiences depend to any significant extent on forms of mimicry or mirroring of the emotions of characters, and if they do, must these emotions be elicited by direct visual stimuli or can they be set in train by the imagination? This will then lead to a further question: how (if at all) does this issue bear on the theory and practice of ancient literature, and can ancient theory and practice help us frame the questions that we should like to see answered with the help of modern research in cognitive humanities? The paper will argue that they can – that ancient theory and practice highlight significant conceptual questions that need to be raised regarding the differences and similarities among such phenomena as mirroring and mimicry, imagining how another person might feel, imagining how one might oneself feel in another's situation, and sharing another's emotions.

Paula Castro (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) & CIS-IUL)

Reading social psychology with Sophocles' Antigone — and vice-versa

In this presentation I have the goal of entering the long, but still far from comprehensive, debate on what can define social psychology as a social science (Reicher, 2004; Vala & Castro, 2013; Greenwood, 2014). I will enter it guided by Sophocles' Antigone. I proceed as follows. I start from a distinction already discussed in various Classical Greek texts: that between natural *and* agreed limits to human action (Trindade-Santos, 1999; Steiner, 1986). Then I add to this

distinction a further one, taken from Searle (2005): that between social facts and cultural/institutional facts, where the latter are produced by agreed limits to human action. Drawing from these two distinctions, I argue that a social psychology that is a social science is one that directs its central questions to the psycho-social processes involved in the creation - and created by - agreed limits to human action. In other words, I defend that the main goal of social psychology as a social science is understanding agreed - not natural - limits to human action: those limits that are chosen, create institutions that can be changed and require effort to be maintained. Consequently, one central aspect that such a discipline needs to focus on are the “battles of ideas” (Moscovici & Markova, 2000) involved in processes of legitimization and de-legitimization of institutions: the processes that open up or close down space for change (Castro et al., 2018). Then I re-open Sophocles’ *Antigone*, as a case illustrating and hopefully clarifying the set of theoretical arguments I used before. I analyze, in particular, the argumentative paths that *Antigone* and *Creon* use for legitimizing their choices and actions, and delegitimizing the choices and actions of the other. I will show how one path accentuates natural limits to action, whereas the other emphasizes agreed limits, and how each of them constructs specific positions of resistance and domination. Finally, I systematize the consequences for social psychology of the interpretation of *Antigone* that I offer: more attention to the communicative and argumentative paths used for (de) legitimizing the choices involved in today’s public policies, and to whether and how some of these paths attempt to de-politicize such choices, precisely by hiding the “choice” aspect (Castro, 2018). I conclude by seeking to elucidate how - in a time when the policy sphere insistently relies on discourses de-politicizing its choices (Maesele & Raeijmaekers, 2017) - *Antigone* helps clarify why a social psychology that directs its attention to agreed limits and institutions can ask questions productive for extending our knowledge of the socio-political.

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David Konstan (NYU)

How the Classical World Learned to Sin

Among the most astonishing cultural transformations in the ancient world is the success of Christianity in replacing traditional religious values in the Roman Empire. It was not just a matter of substituting one God for another – or for others. An entire complex of value and emotion terms underwent profound changes, altering everyday language and usage, as common

words assumed new meanings. For example, *metanoia* and *paenitentia*, which in classical Greek and Latin signified a “change of mind” or “a change of heart,” came to mean “repentance,” and carried a powerful emotional charge; *pistis* and *fides*, which meant “trust” or “confidence,” assumed the new sense of “faith,” with its implications of a doctrine or credo as well as belief that transcends reason; *sungignoskô* and *ignosco*, which carried the sense of “exonerate” or “excuse,” now came to mean “forgive,” and responded to a sense of guilt, which again represents a new concept in classical thought, with its own emotional resonances; and finally, *hamartia* and *peccatum* ceased to signify simply “error” or “fault” and acquired the loaded sense of “sin.”

What were the cognitive mechanisms that permitted such a shift of sensibilities? Were the classical terms in some way open to the reception of these new semantic nuances? Was it a matter of systemic transformation, by which an old semantic matrix gave way to a new one? How were problems of translation, for example from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek and Latin, overcome, or did translation simply enrich and renovate the target language?

In my presentation, I will argue that the alteration in the meanings of the key terms indicated above occurred gradually, or more precisely in two major stages. In the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) and the New Testament, these words retained much of their classical Greek significance; it was only later, with the development of ascetic and monastic forms of Christian practice, that the religious vocabulary assumed a fully distinct semantic register. In this two-stage process, it was possible for early Christian values to find an anchor in the traditional Greek lexicon, which subsequently served in turn as a suitable host for new shifts in meaning.

Sheila (Bridget) Murnaghan (University of Pennsylvania)

Anchoring the self: time and character in Sophoclean tragedy

My thinking about the Leiden conference is still at an early stage, but as a title I would propose: “Anchoring the Self: Time and Character in Sophoclean Tragedy.” I will build on the rich body of work on character in Greek tragedy (by such scholars as John Gould, Pat Easterling,

and Christopher Gill), particularly in relation to the perennially pressing issue of the persistence or consistency of character over time. I plan to look at this in relation to Sophocles, the Greek tragedian who is arguably most focused on time as a phenomenon, with particular reference to Antigone in *Antigone* and Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*. Both figures understand themselves in interesting ways in relation to the effects of time: Antigone in relation to the rapid development by which she goes from being a girl with an instinctive conviction that her brother must be buried to someone who rationalizes her action in terms of large general principles, such as the “unwritten laws of the gods” (454-55); Oedipus in relation to the much longer span of time over which he looks back at his past actions and reassesses them, claiming that “my deeds were suffered by me, not done” (266-67). I will be considering these characters’ self-descriptions in relation both to classical ideas and values and to the reception history by which each became an ancient prototype for a particular modern type: in Antigone’s case, the political dissident, in Oedipus’ case the spiritually redeemed penitent.

Evert van Emde Boas (University of Oxford)

***Individuals or types? Ancient criticism and modern socio-cognitive psychology on
Characterization in Greek tragedy***

When, in Euripides’ *Medea*, the nurse explains to the tutor that she is outside complaining because a ‘desire came over me to tell my mistress’ misfortunes to heaven and earth’ (ἴμερος μ’ ὑπῆλθε γῆ τε κούρανῶ | λέξαι ...δεσποίνης τύχας, 57-8), a scholiast comments:

“Euripides has well represented those who find themselves in very dire circumstances, and who dare not tell anyone about their misfortunes, either because of fear of their masters, or because of some need arising from the circumstances. For such people, because they cannot stay silent about the events and are afraid to tell them to people, relate them to the heaven or sun or earth or other gods.”

It is notable that the scholiast interprets (and praises) the characterization of the nurse here in terms of *typical* behaviour — the nurse is assimilated to certain types of people who behave in certain types of ways. This mode of explanation — which, in its appeal to categories of people and behaviour, could well be seen as a form of ‘anchoring’ — is prevalent in ancient criticism, as Nünlist points out (2009: 252–3), and as is borne out in collections of tragic scholia on matters of characterization (cf. esp. Steinmann 1907). Such ancient readings would seem to support notions in modern criticism on Greek tragedy that it is ‘more fruitful to discuss ... characters in terms of classes ... than in terms of individuals’ (Gregory 2005: 261); it would also seem to lend credence to the (implicit or explicit) presupposition in much modern criticism that characterization in ancient drama ‘works’ fundamentally differently from modern drama.

In my contribution I will analyse this and other examples of ancient criticism on characterization in Greek tragedy from the perspective of recent work in cognitive literary studies on characterization (e.g. Schneider 2001, Eder et al. 2010, Herman 2011, Caracciolo 2016), and — more directly — from the perspective of recent work in psychology on intersubjectivity (e.g. Apperly 2011, and in a different vein, Gallagher & Hutto 2008, Hutto 2008). I will argue:

- that the methods of explanation demonstrated in the tragic scholia (and elsewhere in ancient criticism) sit well within — and in some cases anticipate — recent debates about how humans understand each other;
- that the emphasis in modern literary criticism on a distinction between ‘individuals’ and ‘types’ is in some ways misleading;
- that the tragic scholia, on closer scrutiny, in fact offer a richer range of explanatory models than only by type (for this last point see also Nünlist 2009: 253), and that the notion of characterization by type does not, in any case, fully account for tragic practice.

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Xenia Makri (University of Cyprus)

“Not by others but by our own feathers” (*Birds* 808) — A social psychological reading of Aristophanes' *Birds*

Aristophanes' *Birds* has been living up to its title: as birds are difficult to be caught, so is the meaning of the comedy. While the play continues to resist a convincing and unanimous interpretation which will shed light to its original social and political allusions, classical scholars are urged to rethink the effectiveness of the historical perspective for the analysis of classical texts in general and to realise the necessity of adopting new, more productive perspectives. Social psychology offers such a perspective; the *Birds* can be read as a case-study of how the social identity approach (Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory), perhaps the most prominent and influential social psychological theory of our times, can be applied to

classical texts. To be more specific, our analysis follows the propositions of the integrative social identity model of collective action for social change (SIMCA) and seeks to demonstrate how Pisthetaerus invokes the social identity of the birds and mostly the cognition and emotions stemming from it (the prejudice, the hostility and the anger) in order to motivate their revolt against human and divine tyranny. At the same time, our analysis seeks to provide a (psycho)-logical answer to the following questions: how does Pisthetaerus manage to become the leader of the birds, why and under which conditions does his regime become tyrannical and why do the birds succumb to this new tyrannical regime. In order to answer these questions, we draw on the identity leadership theory by Haslam, Reicher and Platow, a rather methodological account of the social identity theory of leadership, as well as on the social identity perspective on tyranny (why and under which conditions people endure tyrannical regimes and/or become tyrants themselves).

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Vichi Ciocani (Babeş-Bolyai University)

Women's attitudes towards marriage in early Greek literature

This paper will raise the question whether it is possible to form a reliable portrait of the archaic Greek women's experience of marriage strictly from interpreting early literary sources, such as Homer's poems, Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Sappho.

There are many aspects we could choose to focus on a literary text – religious, linguistic, narrative. For example, we could look at rituals or religious reverence towards specific goddesses associated with the wedding (Aphrodite) or marriage (Hera). We can distinguish, by lexical analysis or by context, between monogamy and other types of marital arrangements. We can also infer, from the narrative thread of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, a deathlike experience of the wedding.

But the question remains: to which extent literary sources which reflect and corroborate cultural assumptions can reliably offer us a window into women's subjective experience of marriage? Is it of any consequence whether the author of the literary texts is male, female, or simply the voice of the oral tradition?

Drawing from these methodological conundrums, I will look specifically at women who are willing to enter marriage or sustain their marriages and women who are unwilling to marry, or regret having married in the first place. I will then attempt to look for communalities in each category (such as the existence of a 'proper' wedding) and discuss the ambivalent cases (Persephone, Helen?).

In the end I would like to speculate over whether literature is generally a reliable vehicle for women's experiences and emotions, given the fact that they have been, historically, major 'consumers' of literature.

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Sarah-Helena Van den Brande (Ghent University)

Folk psychology and narrative sense making in ancient Greek tragedy

No less central to Greek tragedy than to current debates within philosophy of mind or social psychology, the question of why people act in the way that they do is one that has entertained thinkers from a widely variegated range of periods and disciplines. Following recent paradigm shifts within philosophy of mind and social psychology, questions concerning people’s ‘reasons for acting’ have sparked renewed attention for our so-called *folk psychology*, the sophisticated but everyday capacity with which we impute beliefs, desires, intentions, etc. to other people and to ourselves (Bruner 1990; Hutto 2008, 2009; Wertsch 1998). Proceeding from Bruner’s influential reappraisal of folk psychology as ‘narrative in nature’ (1990: 42), the focus within the field has, moreover, shifted to the relationship between folk psychology and *narrative* (see Hutto’s *Narrative Practice Hypothesis (NPH)*, 2008, 2009): narrative is said to ‘provide support for folk-psychological reasoning, or reasoning about one’s own or others’ reasons for acting’ (Herman 2013: 228). Meanwhile, while the formal qualities of narrative have recently come to the forefront of tragedy research (see e.g. De Jong et al. 2004; Dunn 2009; Gould 2001; Lamari

2010; Markantonatos 2002), comparatively little research has gone into the wider function of narrative in tragedy, especially in relation to its socio-cultural environment.

To bridge the gap between these recent interdisciplinary developments and the great potential of the tragic corpus (being a clear example of a 'socially, culturally, and materially embedded instrument of mind' [Herman 2013: 230]), this paper draws on a select array of examples, from Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* to Euripides' fragmentary play *Cretes*, to investigate the representation of 'reasons for acting' in relation to acts of storytelling within the plays. Dovetailing with recent research within cognitive science and philosophy of mind (Hutto/Kirchhoff 2015), narrative in these plays will be shown to serve as a sense-making device for ethically ambiguous 'reasons for action': as we shall see, Greek tragedy abounds in what Hutto (2008: 4) terms 'folk psychological narratives.'

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Jacqueline Klooster (Groningen University)

Anchoring coincidences in the brain: a cognitive approach to the problem of Euripidean coincidence plots

Coincidence is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as ‘A remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection’. As such, it is apt to cause surprise, as the word ‘remarkable’ hints. For the creators of narratives, coincidence is attractive, but can be a problematic category. On the one hand it represents a type of situation everyone is familiar with in reality. On the other hand it may appear artificial or implausible, when a narrative plot depends on it too much for its effect (cf. Richardson 1997, Ryan 2009).

Ever since Aristotle’s *Poetics*, this problem has been recognized in literary criticism (Dannenberg 2008). On the one hand, Aristotle praises a plot in which *anagnorisis* (*recognition*; typically the result of coincidence) leads to *peripeteia* (*reversal*), on the other hand he thinks that ‘random’ occurrences are the province of history rather than poetry (1451b5-6), and that all events in drama should naturally follow causally from each other (e.g. O’Sullivan 1995, Ferrari 1999). This leaves little space for coincidence as defined above.

In this paper I take a cognitive approach to the issue of evaluating coincidence as a plot device. As Van Elk et al (2016) have shown, the experience of coincidence can be understood as an example of optimizing the predictive models in the brain: when a co-occurrence of two events is too complex to be understood, the attribution to coincidence is among the best explanatory models. However, this also leads to attribution to supernatural powers and superstition.

To what extent can real life experience of coincidence, and of culture specific models of attribution (e.g. to a deity, a personification of Chance or otherwise) enlighten the way in which the use of coincidence in drama is acceptable as a plot device to ancient audiences? In other words, how can narrative coincidences be anchored in actual cognitive structures in human experience? Taking as a case study a number of coincidence plots in the dramas of Euripides (*Ion*, *Andromache*, *Hercules*), I will attempt to answer these questions.

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Michiel van Veldhuizen (Brown University)

God, Google, and Greek Oracles: Divine Minds in Herodotus' Histories

What do God and Google have in common? At least one thing, according to psychologists, namely that they are both perceived as entities with much Agency but very little Experience (Gray, Gray, and Wegner 2007; Gray and Wegner 2010). Studies in the cognitive science of religion have argued that the best way to know the divine is by understanding the minds of those who perceive it. Concepts such as ToMM (Theory of Mind Mechanism), HADD (Hypersensitive Agency Detection Device), and Moral Typecasting have successfully been applied to understand present-day perceptions of the divine (Barrett 2000; Boyer 2001; Gray and Wegner 2009). While cognitive approaches to Ancient Greek religion and intellectual history have been taken up by recent scholarship (Larson 2016; Struck 2016), methodological questions about how to apply insights from cognitive psychology to minds of the past remain (Martin and Sørensen 2011).

In this paper, I contend that one way to understand ancient Greek perceptions of the divine is by examining direct traces, or signs, of perceived divine agency. Such traces are especially visible in oracles: texts that show the mental operations by which a divine message, encoded and transmitted by a perceived divine mind, needs to be decoded by human minds. The literary evidence of a single work—Herodotus' *Histories*, a rich source for divine signs and oracles (Hollmann 2011)—may not allow us to reconstruct real-life experiences, but it is our best index to plot the collective imagination of the Ancient Greeks in detecting divine agency in their environment. Drawing on the semiotics of C.S. Peirce and insights from cognitive psychology about attributing agency to invisible entities, I demonstrate the mental procedures by which the gods are perceived to communicate with humans, and the ways in which humans unpack or decode this knowledge. This includes logical operations such as Peirce's concept of

abduction—an inferential mode to hypothesize “new” knowledge based on signs—and more familiar operations such as analogy and metonymy.

As hidden agents sending encrypted messages, the gods in Herodotus’ *Histories* emerge as entities much like Google: they have much Agency but, contrary to the image we have from Homer, little Experience. What is more, the gods also function as a perceived source of new knowledge in a process that is best understood from the perspective of extended cognition (Logan 2007): oracles, at the intersection of divine and human language, extend the human mind and serve as semiotic anchors of new knowledge.

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Thomas Martin (College of the Holy Cross)

Learning to live with religious innovation as a political community: deification and cognitive dissonance in Hellenistic Athens

Religion in the ancient Greek city-state was an open-ended system with no hierarchical

authority enforcing dogma. Innovation in religious belief and practice was always conceivable as a pragmatic response to newly discovered knowledge about the nature of the relationship between the human community and the divine. The most significant long-term innovation in religion at Athens came with the deification of living human beings in the late fourth century BCE. Alexander the Great was, it seems, recognized by some city-states as a deified human being in 325-324 BCE, but his death soon after in the following year left open the question of what it would mean for a Greek community to anchor this innovation by learning how to live long-term as a religious, social, and political entity now required to adjust to the unprecedented presence and agency of what later Christian thought called a “God-man.”

In 322, the Athenians suffered extraordinary military and political catastrophes that disconfirmed their traditional belief that their communal worship of the traditional gods sufficed to guarantee their national salvation. The inexplicability of this incontrovertible contradiction of a cherished cognition created severe cognitive dissonance for the “many” in the population at Athens.

When in 307 the Macedonian commander Demetrius Poliorcetes liberated Athens from fifteen years of oppression, the Athenians voted to recognize him and his father as “savior gods.” The theory of cognitive dissonance, the cognitive science of religion concerning the human conception of divinity, and the attribution theory of religion explain why this deification was psychologically appropriate as a minimally counterintuitive concept relieving the feeling of distress arising from dissonant cognitions about the nature of divinity. This deification was a sincere and pragmatic decision based on notions of reciprocity; it could not have been hypocritical flattery, as has been asserted. Greeks had always categorized the differences between humans and traditional gods as points at the end of a spectrum rather than an “either/or” phenomenon. The cognition of a new point on that spectrum—a divine being incarnate, present, and mortal with the power to deliver national salvation, though without any guarantee of automatically doing so—made this innovation fit the Athenians’ pre-existing belief system, anchoring the new to the traditional. This anchoring, manifested through a variety of practices, in turn generated a revision of the values of autonomy and freedom that Athenians citizens had established as ideals for their communal existence as a city-state.

The tumultuous military and political events in the eastern Mediterranean world during the decades following the deification created significant stress for Athens and the pre-Christian God-man Demetrius (his father having died in 301). The Athenians and others had to refine this new cognition yet further to accept the existence of multiple God-men and also to determine the extent and the limits of the salvific power of these innovative agents. The text of the so-called Hymn to Demetrius of the late 290s helps document the Athenians' fluctuating and anxiety-ridden learning process of anchoring their religious and political innovation by connecting what they perceived as complicatedly new with what was familiar in their city-state's relationship with the divine.

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to generating discussion of methodological issues concerning how to do the social psychology of the ancient world, such as how to apply psychological theories to large groups and how to interpret innovations in religious beliefs and practices across cultures, time, and space.

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Alexander Hardwick (University of Oxford)

Innovation, crowd psychology and the comic demos

"Always striving for yet another innovation" (*Ecc.* 220) is Aristophanes' characterisation of the Athenian *demos*. This paper argues that Aristophanes' presentation of the *demos* is heavily influenced by the developing contemporary discourse on crowd psychology; furthermore, this led to ancient discussion of the psychology behind the *demos* accepting and anchoring innovative policies. By comparing 5th- and 4th-century BC historiography, political theory and oratory, we can reconstruct the ongoing discussion concerning crowd psychology. Aristophanes' crowds possess certain psychological traits, demonstrated especially by the juxtaposition of individual and group decision-making in *Ecclesiazusae*. Furthermore, crowd psychology enables the *demos* to anchor the radically innovative policies proposed in *Ecclesiazusae* and *Birds*. Pisthetaerus' arguments, which anchor innovation in mythology, depend on manipulating the audience's emotions; Praxagora's communist regime takes effect because each inhabitant is swayed by crowd psychology.

This paper begins by establishing that Classical Greek historians, political theorists and the Attic orators present crowds as psychologically different to individuals. Their portrayals of crowds contain recurring motifs: in particular, crowds make decisions based on emotion rather than reason, and are susceptible to emotional manipulation by orators. This paper discusses how far we can use these contemporary works to understand the discourse on crowd psychology in Classical Athens, comparing (where relevant) recent scholarship on crowd psychology from Le Bon onwards. Whether or not these motifs reflect the reality of Athenian politics, they are important in the ongoing theoretical discussion of crowds in the 5th and 4th centuries. Furthermore, this discourse has a significant influence on Aristophanes' depictions of crowd psychology, which have not previously been discussed by scholars.

Ecclesiazusae and *Birds* depict crowds persuaded to support radical innovation, with crowd psychology playing a crucial role. In *Ecclesiazusae*, Praxagora advocates regime change to Blepyrus and Chremes; separately, her proposal to the Assembly is reported. The differences between these scenes reveal the contrasting decision-making processes of individuals and crowds. Though unintelligent and banal, Blepyrus' counter-arguments reveal rational, logical engagement with Praxagora's innovation. By contrast, the Assembly contains emotion-based argumentation, shouting matches and *ad hominem* attacks on speakers, as Praxagora anticipates in the earlier "rehearsal" scene. A similar presentation of crowds is found in *Birds*, where Pisthetaerus wins the Chorus' support by manipulating their emotions: he uses flattery, sweeping promises which avoid detail and attractive but logically flawed arguments. These are all typical ways to manipulate crowds' emotions, according to Classical Athenian prose discourse.

In both comedies, the influence of crowd psychology explains the audience's enthusiasm for innovation. In *Birds*, the radical upheaval is anchored by Pisthetaerus' appeal to the mythical past, lending his proposal the authority of precedent: his audience's emotion-dominated psychology means that the flawed logic connecting myth and future is ignored. In *Ecclesiazusae*, too, the assembly is won over emotionally. Additionally, Praxagora's communism is anchored through crowd psychology: mass support for her policies helps to normalise them, as even the cynical citizen is carried along by τὸ πλῆθος ὃ τι βουλεύεται (*Ecc.* 770).

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Daniëlle Slootjes (Utrecht University)

Representations of crowds in Ancient Rome: Livy and the voice of the people

In 2011 Garrett Fagan published his 'The Lure of the Arena. Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games'. Fagan applied concepts from social psychology to the behavior of the Romans at spectacles – often considered violent and cruel – and demonstrated how the mechanisms of their behavior bring them much closer to our modern day behavior than we have acknowledged so far. Fagan's work has been of great importance for my own research project on crowd behavior in the ancient and byzantine worlds with a particular focus on Rome and Constantinople (500 B.C. – A.D. 1500). In this project I am developing a model for understanding crowd behavior that is based – in part – upon modern concepts and theories from sociology and social psychology. At this stage, the model consists of three components that I regard necessary for expressions of crowd behavior: occasion, leadership and location. Each of these components contain various elements that together represent a broad variety of different types of crowd behavior.

The aim of this paper is two-fold: it will offer (1) a presentation of the model and its various components as well as (2) a discussion of a case study on the presentation of crowds in Republican Rome in the *Ab Urbe Condita* of the ancient author Livy (ca. 59 B.C. – A.D. 17). Livy's work is a prime example of many of the issues that need to be dealt with in the project such as the meaning of terminology of crowds (*populus, plebs, multitudo, vulgus*), composition of crowds, or the influence of genre on representations of crowds. By way of an in-depth analysis of Livy's work I hope to demonstrate how the application of the model to the ancient sources can be a valuable asset in our quest for understanding the functioning of historical crowds, both in the ancient and byzantine worlds, but ideally also beyond these worlds both geographically and chronologically.

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Ralph Rosen (University of Pennsylvania)

Cognitive and ethological approaches to ancient satire: reconceptualizing the laughter of derision

Social psychologists and evolutionary biologists who study laughter (and its stimuli) across primate species for the most part regard it as a behavior indicating positive subjective emotions in the laugher, and offering prosocial benefits for a community. Spontaneous laughter in response to specific humorous stimuli (so-called ‘Duchenne’ laughter) occurs in all primate species, and has been linked to modes of ‘play’ that develop in infancy. Humans have also developed other forms of laughter, not necessarily linked to humor stimuli and originating in different parts of the brain, which also seem to serve largely positive functions, such as smoothing over uncomfortable conversational interactions (so-called ‘non-Duchenne’ laughter). Since laughter can be ‘emotionally contagious’, people who perceive it will experience elevated and lightened mood and may be induced to laugh themselves.

The one exception is felt to be ‘derisive laughter’ or ‘disparagement laughter’, which psychologists have concluded can lead to negative affect in those who perceive it. Independent of a scientific tradition, the history of literary satire has developed a similar narrative: that satire, which can be defined as a mimetic production that strives to induce laughter through derision and aggressive ridicule of a target(s), is a negative, essentially antisocial phenomenon. Such an attitude can be found among many detractors of satirical literature in classical antiquity, and was often even appropriated by satirical writers themselves as an emblem of their literary power. In our own time, literary critics frequently continue to characterize satire as a negative phenomenon, and classicists almost always separate their discussion of ancient comedy from ancient satire, on the (usually unstated) grounds that comedy implies a *positive* kind of ‘humor’, while satire implies a *negative* kind. Indeed, this disinclination to conceptualize ancient satire

as comic or humorous, has led scholars to foreground disproportionately the aggressive content of such literature at the expense of its social function as of a producer of humor.

I will argue in this paper that both classical scholars and laughter researchers in the social sciences have confused or misunderstood several key aspects of this kind of humor, and that dialogue between the two groups may well clarify some of the issues for each other. Scientists, for their part, seem to have gone wrong in conflating the *target* of derisive humor with the *audience* intended to be laughing at it. By focusing only on the *target's* reaction—which can vary from fear ('gelotophobia') if the target believes the aggression is not 'play aggression', to laughter if the target understands it to be light banter or teasing—these scholars curiously ignore the (Duchenne) laughter that comes from those who are bystanders to the ridicule, i.e., the ones who are supposed to laugh at the ridicule. Classicists, on the other hand, tend to be tone-deaf to the satirist's play-cues—they often read an ancient satirical as if they are channeling the target, and so focus on the aggression of the content, not the signals in the content that indicate play and are intended to induce laughter in an audience. Scientists and classicists alike, then seem to misconstrue the kind of 'mind-reading' required for satirical humor to work, but for different reasons. Focusing on examples from Roman literary satire (esp. Horace and Juvenal), I will suggest ways in which each group can benefit from aspects of their respective research into derisive humor: classicists from better understanding the social function of humor—even satirical humor—as a prosocial phenomenon, and scientists from more clearly distinguishing between the role of an audience/listener and a target in an event of derisive humor.

Felix Budelmann (University of Oxford)

Psychological approaches to notions of the present in ancient Greece

TBC

Anne-Sophie Noel (ENS de Lyon – Research center HiSoMA)

Playing make-believe with objects: counterfactual imagination and psychodrama in Greek tragedy

This paper focuses on the psychological component of the emotional and cognitive companionship with objects as staged in a few ancient Greek tragic plays (Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, or Euripides' *Heracles*, among others). When their main characters interact physically with objects, it involves affects, emotions, and sometimes shared cognitive faculties.¹ However, these characters show an awareness of the fact that speaking to an object, granting him emotive and cognitive faculties, possibly rely on an 'as-if' fiction: a conscious counterfactual scenario which attributes anthropomorphic features to objects, entertained for emotional relief in a situation of crisis and solitude.

Psychodrama is a modern, experiential form of therapy which uses the means of theatrical art. According to its practitioners, the passage through a physically enacted story allows participants 'to put play and movement back into their minds' in order to address their psychological traumas.² On another front, Vygotsky's work has shown that imaginary play contributes significantly to help to think differently and stimulate self-making and self-recreation.³ Therefore, I propose to investigate the connections that may be established between playing 'as-if' in Greek tragedy and modern social-psychological models such as psychodrama or Vygotsky's approach to the role of imaginative play in cognition and creativity. When characters project onto objects emotive and cognitive faculties, are they playing a 'psychodrama'? I show that, at any rate, this 'as-if' fiction helps characters like Electra, Philoctetes, or Heracles to solve problems and tackle identity crisis.

In a second step, I suggest to broaden this line of thinking by investigating other situations where characters play make-believe in Greek tragedy: when they consciously adopt a

¹ On objects and affects, see Telò & Mueller 2018 ; the 'cognitive life' of objects in Greek tragedy is the topic of my forthcoming chapter in F. Budelmann, I. Sluiter, *Minds on stage : cognitive approaches to Greek tragedy*, under review for Oxford University Press.

² Bocquenet 2018.

³ Wilkins 1999; Fonseca 2004; Baim *et al.* 2007; Vigotsky 1967, 1994, 2004; Vadeboncoeur *et al.* 2016.

role, distribute roles to their partners, in other words, when they set up a play-within-the-play. The point is maybe not only to induce a philosophical reflection on the nature of theatre and its relation with reality and illusion.⁴ I explore if, and to what extent, ancient tragic performances presented ‘as-if’ fictions and counterfactual imagination as a way of dealing with existential, political, or societal issues. Could ancient dramatists and their spectators envision performances as artistic interfaces ‘for engaging with and troubling social practices and cultural norms, for *playing at* and *playing with* alternatives’?⁵

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⁴ For instance, this is the way in which the self-conscious Helen is often interpreted, in Euripides’ eponymous tragedy, see Wright 2005; Mastrorarde 2010; Torrance 2013; Wohl 2014.

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Anchoring cultural objects in the ancient Greek imagination

The aim of this paper is to explore the ways in which satyr drama re-creates innovatively given cultural objects on stage thus encouraging their anchoring anew in the audience's imagination. In particular, we are interested in the cognitive and emotional processes involved in the dramatic re-invention of a plethora of cultural objects ranging from lyre and *aulos* to images, robots, fire, and even letters and their impact on the forging of the creative imagination of the theater-goers. While it is generally accepted that tragedy was recreating Greek myths from a democratic perspective questioning the pre-existing aristocratic value system, the recreation of objects in satyr drama, a genre performed at the same place and time, by the same actors and for the same spectators, remains largely unacknowledged. By not taking satyr drama seriously and deeming the genre as ridiculous and a/anti/non-political, the societal impact of the above dramatic choice goes unnoticed. In this paper, we argue for the political and societal implications of the satyr dramatic recreation of cultural objects intended for mass audiences through our reading of Aeschylus' *Prometheus' Purkaios* and *Isthmiastai*, Sophocles' *Ichneutai*, *Dionysiskos* and *Pandora* and Euripides' *Cyclops* and *Eurustheus*. Contrary to modern

expectations, the satyr drama objects are not introduced on stage as complete, fixed products labelled with a particular name and a specific set of properties which is then analyzed, reversed or symbolized. Instead, they are firstly being encountered not verbally or conceptually but mostly physically and multisensorially, via a progressive and interrupted (re/un) learning of the qualities of the object. The chorus of the satyrs, the main more often than not protagonist of this quest for learning, experiences in every step of the process, *ekplexis* intermingled with awe and fear of the unknown which generates both action and pause at intervals. The object in discussion is everything but familiar to the agents who try to invent or discover the object. Furthermore, beyond the tracing of its properties, the object per se, if we are to follow the example of the lyre in Sophocles' *Ichneutai*, is being unraveled as a member of a larger ecosystemic whole which shares ontological affinities with other ecosystemic nodes before and after its functional metamorphosis. Finally, in a climactic process which has already dealt with the properties and the making of the object, its name is being disclosed, giving the object a new identity. All in all, it is argued that satyr drama is not a useless, lesser genre but one that plays an important culturally functional role. It re-creates on stage the making of an established cultural object, thus encouraging the audience to unlearn fixed realities and re-learn collectively what it takes to always innovatively create anew.

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Eschatology and Innovation in Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus

This paper explores the ways in which the prospect of death provides the impetus for "anchoring innovation" in Greek tragedy. This somewhat counterintuitive argument begins from the general premise that the knowledge of human mortality -- comprising both one's own death and the deaths of others -- is the precondition for imagining a human future. This future comprises the defamiliarization (to extend Shklovsky's coinage) of both political institutions and social relations. In the context of the conference theme, the study of death as a heuristic in ancient drama invites a dialogue -- both methodologically and conceptually -- with the field of death studies in the social sciences, including its use of statistical and demographic data (i.e., mortality rates).

In his book *Mortality, Immortality & Other Life Strategies*, Zygmunt Bauman refers to the paradoxical human state of "living with death," and concludes that the knowledge of death is "the ultimate condition of cultural creativity" (Bauman 1992; cf. Freud 1989 [1920]). Without accepting its universalizing implications, I propose that Greek tragedy satisfies this ultimate condition in both its content and its form. My case study is Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and the death of the old, blind Oedipus. Focused on the potential benefit his grave will confer on the city that receives him, the play explores the relationship between the death of the individual and the survival of the *polis*. Uneasily settled outside Athens when the play begins, Oedipus occupies a position of spatial, moral, and ontological ambiguity; he can be invoked as both living and dead (θανόντ' ἔσεσθαι ζῶντά, 390). Positioned between the terrible acts he unknowingly committed in life and the death he knows is imminent, moreover, Oedipus tests the validity of

the adage, spoken by the chorus, that it is best never to have been born or, having been born, to die as quickly as possible (1225-27; cf. Theognis 425-428). The measure of the adage is taken in Oedipus' mysterious off-stage death, in the future it bequeaths to the city, and in tragedy's unique status as a fully mimetic medium that, in effect, brings the dead to life.

I conclude with a brief discussion of the temporal, ontological, and ethical questions raised by tragedy in the context of debates in humanities research. In his 2013 book *Death and the Afterlife*, the philosopher Samuel Scheffler urges us to embrace our mortality as the pre-condition for the collective existence of the species and argues that living and dying well are predicated on the expectation that others will live after us (cf. Benatar 2008). Ancient tragedy both raises this expectation and resists its optimistic consequences. If tragedy is an "anchor" in the western tradition, if it is all too familiar, it also demonstrates how the knowledge of death both limits and promotes human potential.

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Cyrus' Learning Curve

Our joint, and experimental, contribution aims to establish a direct dialogue between a social psychologist and a classicist. We have taken a single text, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, especially Book 1, which describes how the Persian King Cyrus II (ruler from 559-530 BC, also known as 'The Great') grows from a boy into a man, as our test case. Currently, we are both going through the text and are singling out issues which, from our respective points of view, stand out and require further discussion in terms of the social and psychological processes involved. We are organizing a few preliminary meetings between us to see how our perspectives may complement each other. Since the *Cyropaedia* has of course mostly been studied by classicists, we are trying to hone in on issues in the narrative which a psychological approach may illuminate; *vice versa*, we also ask if studying the *Cyropaedia* has anything to contribute to psychology. Themes we may discuss is whether and how Xenophon suggests that Cyrus' boyhood influences the character of the later man, whether he is interested in aspects of development still deemed relevant by social psychologists today, the effectiveness of the "Persian" education system which

Xenophon expounds and the group processes at work at Cyrus' court at the end of the work. In addition, methodological issues are on the table, such as the value of narrative as evidence. Our contribution at the conference we will report selected findings, probably in the form of a dialogue (of which Xenophon would, of course, have approved).