

how trolls stoke indignation from those not in on the joke, Rosen shifts the focus from Aristophanes' intentions to his audience's reaction. There is much potential in Natalia Tsoumpra's (Chapter 13) argument for madness's inherent comedic nature, and she makes good use of ancient testimonia on acting and verisimilitude.

Two essays on adaptations of Aristophanes end the volume. Magdalena Zira (Chapter 16) argues that modern Greek producers infuse their adaptations with melancholia, and David Bullen (Chapter 17) reflects on his own adaptation of *Clouds* to protest proposed cuts at Royal Holloway. Both chapters consider the power of Aristophanic drama to respond to crises of our own age.

Readers of the volume will come away with new ideas about the dynamics of humour, what it could mean and how it operates in Aristophanes' plays. If we are to move beyond the standard lament that, as Hall's preface remarks, too little attention has been paid to Aristophanic humour, this volume will play a key role in that progress.

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TELÒ (M.) **Archive Feelings: A Theory of Greek Tragedy**. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2020. Pp. ix + 327. £91.95/\$99.95. 9780814214558.  
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This ambitious and challenging book sets out to theorize an 'anti-cathartic aesthetics of Greek tragedy' (4). Mario Telò challenges the critical legacy of Aristotelian poetics, as he construes it, by developing an alternative to theories which emphasize the genre's reparative potential. Instead, he asks, 'what if the pleasure of tragedy is produced not by release but by the lack of it' (7), by the very absence of cathartic restoration? The most important components of his theoretical apparatus are Derrida's concept of the archive and Freud's death drive. Derrida frames the archive in terms of its derivation from *archē*, which connotes both a chronological point of origin ('beginning') and a source of normative authority ('rule'). Telò sees 'archive fever', the futile search for an authentic *archē*, as a pervasive feature of tragedy (48–49). Freud's death drive, for Telò, motivates that search: a psychic impulse towards the dissolution of the self which leads tragic subjects to enjoy the painful denial of release.

The book consists of three parts with a total of five chapters. The first part, 'Archival time', explores the temporality of tragic plot. Chapter 1, 'Archiving Oedipus', reads Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Euripides' *Phoenissae*. The *Oedipus at Colonus*, Telò argues, stages the rush to archive Oedipus' body, reflected in the language of haste and urgency that permeates the play. *Phoenissae*, on the other hand, is marked by sluggishness: an 'archive fatigue' that leaves its characters worn out (83–84). This very 'boredom', Telò argues, is alluring: it reflects the death-driven desire to 'collapse into the abyss of non-being' (86–87). Chapter 2, 'The archive and the loop', reads *Medea* and *Heracles*. Both plays, Telò shows, explore what comes after filicide. *Medea*, suspended in her chariot at the end of the play, is precariously balanced between life and death; this suspension challenges the reproductive logic of the future. *Heracles*, after killing his children, contemplates suicide, therefore resisting Theseus' attempt to help him; this longing reflects anti-cathartic desire. Both plays, then, locate aesthetic pleasure in their central characters' reluctance to be 'assimilated into history' (132).

The second part, 'Archival space', turns towards the synchronic. Chapter 3, 'Anorganic archives', reads Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Hecuba*. Both plays, Telò argues, show their central characters struggling to become inorganic. Philoctetes consistently resists his own embodiment, offering up his flesh to be eaten by animals and expressing an affinity with the water that surrounds him. Hecuba loses her body entirely: her transformation into a dog reflects a complete departure from mimetic representation and a failure of catharsis, becoming both 'animal and water' (177). Chapter 4, 'Archival crypts', reads the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides*. In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Athena rescues Iphigenia, but demands the continuation of sacrificial violence, thereby prolonging the cycle of bloodshed. In *Libation Bearers*, Orestes' desire to take revenge for his father entails a desire to share the experience of his father's death. Finally, the *Eumenides* shows Athens incorporating a destructive force – the Furies – whose abiding threat is not quite controlled by the play's conclusion.

The final part, 'Archival endings', consists of a single chapter, 'Tragic jolts, jouissance, impossibility'. Here, Telò takes on four plays: *Agamemnon*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King* and *Bacchae*. In the first three, he explores the language of bodily emissions. In doing so, he aligns ejaculation with Aristotelian catharsis: the graphic emissions of blood described in each play enact the failure of orgasmic closure and satisfaction. *Bacchae* goes on to stage 'post-orgasmic tristesse': Cadmus' refusal to embrace Agave at the play's conclusion is a violent comedown from the high of Dionysiac ecstasy (261).

On the whole, the book makes a number of exciting contributions to tragic scholarship: Telò's close readings are often innovative, offering compelling observations about the language of the plays which open up new paths for interpretation. More broadly, his theory of anti-cathartic aesthetics offers a new approach to tragic form which should prove thought-provoking for the entire field. Of course, it also raises questions. Telò's approach is consciously non-historicist: he believes strongly in tragedy's 'aesthetic autonomy' from any particular time and place (8). History might reassert itself, however, in Telò's characterization of the death drive as a 'fact of human existence' (23). Some readers will struggle with this premise: scholars like Hortense Spillers have long argued for the historical specificity of the Freudian model, particularly stressing its difficulty in accounting for racialized and gendered experience without careful adaptation; more engagement with this scholarship, critical or otherwise, might have helped to win over sceptics. Neglecting these questions risks universalizing one particular kind of tragic subject, eliding the specificities of aesthetic experience which vary along axes of space, time and embodiment: Chapter 5's alignment of orgasms with ejaculation is a case in point (despite his defence of this equation at 241). Nevertheless, for readers willing to accept the project's premises, *Archive Feelings* is important and useful reading.

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Standing in the tradition of recent studies examining the relationship between Classics and national cultures, particularly in postcolonial contexts, this interesting and substantial