

poem begins with the urbane and orderly sound of a herald summoning male citizens to their rational civic business in the Assembly and the Council. The poem ends with an otherworldly echo of women shrieking in the wolfthickets. Moreover, the women are uttering a particular kind of shriek, the *ololyga*. This is a ritual shout peculiar to females.²⁰ It is a highpitched piercing cry uttered at certain climactic moments in ritual practice (e.g., at the moment when a victim's throat is slashed during sacrifice) or at climactic moments in real life (e.g., at the birth of a child) and also a common feature of women's festivals. The *ololyga* with its cognate verb *ololyzo* is one of a family of words, including *eleleu* with its cognate verb *elelizo* and *alala* with its cognate verb *alalazo*, probably of Indo-European origin and obviously of onomatopoeic derivation.²¹ These words do not signify anything except their own sound. The sound represents a cry of either intense pleasure or intense pain.²² To utter such cries is a specialized female function. When Alkaios finds himself surrounded by the sound of the *ololyga* he is telling us that he is completely and genuinely out of bounds. No man would make such sound. No proper civic space would contain it unregulated. The female festivals in which such ritual cries were heard were generally not permitted to be held within the city limits but were relegated to suburban areas like the mountains, the beach or the rooftops of houses where women could disport themselves without contaminating the ears or civic space of men. To be exposed to such sound is for Alkaios a condition of political nakedness as alarming as that of his archetype Odysseus, who awakens with no clothes on in a thicket on the island of Phaiakia in the sixth book of Homer's *Odyssey*, surrounded by the shrieking of women. "What a hullabaloo of females comes around me!" Odysseus exclaims²³ and goes on to wonder what sort of savages or supernatural beings can be making such a racket. The savages of course turn out to be Nausikaa and her girlfriends playing soccer on the riverbank, but what is interesting in this scenario is Odysseus' automatic association of disorderly female sound with wild space, with savagery and the supernatural. Nausikaa and her friends are shortly compared by Homer to the wild girls who roam the mountains in attendance upon Artemis,²⁴ a goddess herself notorious for the sounds that she makes—if we may judge from her Homeric epithets. Artemis is called *keladeine*, derived from the noun *kelados* which