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Drama and Society
According to Aristophanes'
(*Clouds* and) *Frogs*

To the outstanding author of *Aristotle on the
Function of Tragic Poetry*, a presentation of
Aristophanes' ideas on the same topic

I

Clouds and Frogs compared
The Wisdom and Intelligence of Educators
Theatre and Society Mirroring Each Other

The point of departure of this study may be described as follows:
Today the average classical scholar will be better informed on matters related to ancient poetics, rhetoric, and criticism than was the case fifty years ago with even such great scholars as Bruno Snell, Max Pohlenz, and E. R. Dodds. So perhaps it is time to try to redress the balance as far as the topic of this paper is concerned. It is not treated here for the first time, and progress is only to be hoped for within this study of poetological ideas if we are willing to re-consider each and every passage of the texts involved, not regarding *die kritisch-exegetische Methode* as outworn and not allowing the old editions and commentaries to collect dust on the upper shelves of the libraries. Their authors—Meineke, Fritzsche, van Leeuwen, Neil, Wilamowitz, Coulon & alii—

knew Greek better, even much better, than most of us do, so let us make use of them.¹ A summary of the points presented in this paper will be found near its end.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to include a comparison between the ideas of the ancients on poetry and goodness and the so-called ethical turn to be observed in the works of some contemporary critics, among whom James Wood should be singled out. Wood's work *The Irresponsible Self* is an examination of comic elements in serious novels.

Let us first examine Aristophanes' –or his characters'– attitude to *sophia*, the dominant buzz-word of his epoch, the Greek Enlightenment. We seem to be in need of such a foundation.

The agon –the contest, the dispute, the altercation– of Aristophanes' *Frogs* might be said to comprise lines 814-1481 or even 738-1481, with 738-813, the «second *prologos*», preparing the poets' dispute about the chair of honour, the *thronos*. This is the agon in the broad sense of the word. The present paper will concentrate on the agon proper, the so-called epirrhematic agon, i.e. lines 895-1098. In the epirrhema the principal speaker is Euripides: 907-35 on the weaknesses of Aeschylus, 936-70 on the strengths of Euripides. In the antepirrhema the principal speaker is Aeschylus: 1006-45 on the strengths of Aeschylus, 1046-76 on the weaknesses of Euripides.

The connexion between the first part of the *Frogs*, the *katabasis* comedy, 1-673, with Dionysus travelling to the Underworld because he «needs a talented poet» (71), and the so-called *thronos* comedy, 738-1481, i.e. the agon-like part, including the agon proper, is the slightest conceivable.²

1. Ludwig Radermacher's commentary (originally 1921; 1954) does not belong to this company (too often his syntactical observations miss the point), but it is a thesaurus of poetological and rhetorical material, to be used with care, of course, but to be used. Ch. 38 «L'art» in Taillardat (1965) is valuable. O'Sullivan's study (1992) is exemplary.

2. Between the two parts we have the parabasis, 674-737. On the grave structural difficulties of this grand comedy Gelzer (1971) 1485ff. may be consulted. Admittedly, the analytical approach endorsed by me in the text may seem to be

The subject of the contest is *sophia*, wisdom & intelligence³ (*Frogs* 882, cf. 780, 895), just as the first of the two contests in *Clouds* – the original version of which was eighteen years older than *Frogs* – was a *peri sophias agon*, a dispute about wisdom & intelligence (cf. *Clouds* 955ff.). Although the term *sophos* in Aristophanes is frequently surrounded by an air of modernists and Sophists (*Clouds* 1369f. and the telling sequel 1377-9), we should notice in connection with the agon in *Frogs* that both the adjectives *sophos*, wise & intelligent, and *synetos*, intelligent, can, just like their nouns *sophia* and *synesis*, be attributed to both Aeschylus the traditionalist and Euripides the modernist (*Frogs* 1515-19 and the difficult 1413 and 1434; 876, 892f., 1483, 1490). The lines 895-8 in *Clouds*, quoted below, are very revealing here: Right and Wrong, the respective proponents of Old and New, while agreeing that each of them has to prove himself *sophos*, are in radical disagreement as to the content of the term (925, cf. 932).

In the following a comparison between the contests of these two comedies of ideas, *Clouds* and *Frogs*, is offered.⁴ I feel that the simi-

weakened if C. W. Müller's redating of Sophocles' death from 406/5 back to 407/6 is correct; see Schwinge (2002) 28. Still, it is no responsible procedure to ignore the fact that the plot of *Frogs* takes a totally new turn after the parabasis and build one's reading on this unitarian "foundation"; thus, among others (see note 83 below), Rosen (2004), esp. p. 304 (Rosen's comparison of Dionysus in the *Frogs* and Panedes in the *Certamen* depends on this, cf. note 6 below; incidentally, Rosen's comparison would have been more convincing, had either agon had the opposite outcome, cf. his p. 309).

3. An argument in favour of the –admittedly cumbersome– rendering "wisdom & intelligence" will be presented in the following. There is regularly both an intellectual and a moral side to *sophos*.
4. Dover on *Clouds* 889-1114 [debut 1104]: «In formal structure, and to some extent in content also, this section of the play has something in common with the first part [the part ending at line 1098] of the dispute between Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs*. [...] The decision taken in consequence of the dispute, 1105-12, corresponds roughly to the much more elaborate process of decision in *Ra*. 1414-81; nothing corresponds to *Ra*. 1099-1413; but of course, a second formal dispute is in store for us in *Nu*. 1321-1451. Cf. Gelzer, 88ff. [the reference is to Gelzer (1960)]». We shall have to return, directly or indirectly, to the points that I have emphasised.

I should make it clear from the beginning that among Aristophanic schol-

larities, well-known as some of them are, between these two comedies might be worked out with a little more precision, and this may form the basis for a clearer understanding of the pedagogical ideas, including the ideas about poetry and poets, prevalent in Athenian culture around 405 B.C., the year of the first performance of *Frogs*.

In *Clouds* the two contestants –usually named Right and Wrong– are the personifications of two moral principles, the Stronger and the Weaker Argument, *Kreitton* and *Hetton Logos* respectively.⁵ Their central theme is education (*paideia*, *paideusis*), with Right praising the Old Education, «in which he has confidence» (1043), and Wrong refuting it and pulling it to shreds. It is important to notice that Wrong's procedure is much more a refutation (*elenchos*, 1043, cf. 941-48 and 1037) of the Old Education than it is a positive presentation of a new education; he is *antilogikos*, given to contradiction, and by dint of his *antilogia*, his contradiction (938, 1040, 1339, cf. 321, 888, 1173 and

ars of the last decades I consider Dover the one with whom it is most fruitful to discuss.

5. Dover (1968) LVII-LVIII prefers the designation *Kreitton* to *Dikaios* and *Hetton* to *Ádikos* (retaining, however, the translations Right and Wrong, whereas Sommerstein has Better and Worse Argument; why not Stronger and Weaker?). Editors after Dover have been convinced by his arguments. I strongly doubt the correctness of this: (a) Even the scholia lend more support to the names *Dikaios* and *Ádikos* than we are led to believe by the apparatus criticus in Wilson's OCT on 889 and 891 (see Dover loc. cit.; Wilson is silent on 1038). (b) The pivotal passage is 1037-43; here Dover makes things a little too easy for himself by quoting only 1038 and omitting 1039f. (c) That the two *logoi* call themselves «stronger» and «weaker» in the context of a competition (893ff., 990), should cause no surprise. (d) Newiger (1957) 140 makes the following observation: «Nirgends soll nur der *schwächere* Logos gelernt werden, sondern beide [882ff.] oder der *ungerechte*: 116ff., 245 [244-5], 655ff., 885 [882-8; 883=113]». (e) This may be considered Dover's trump by many: «The expression *dikaios logos*, though not alien to Greek, does not occur in our play». See, however, 900 (to be compared with Ar. *Eq.* 1257f.), not to forget 902 (notice *gar*). And should not precisely the fact that *Dikaios Logos* does not occur in the text of the play (where we have more than one example of *Kreitton*) but «in the hypotheses, the *dramatis personae*, the scholia, and the sigla against the text» (Dover) point towards its authenticity and dispose us in *favour* of it?

1314), the Weaker Argument wins the contest.⁶ The victory goes to the weaker part.

Unfortunately, several points –some of them important– related to the proceedings of the comic contest between Right and Wrong are still in dispute. It should not be too difficult, however, to arrive at a clarification of at least some of these points if agreement is obtained on three basic principles concerning the exegesis of Aristophanic Comedy: (a) that the chief subject of Old Comedy is the morale of Athenian society, (b) that the basic attitude of this highly sophisticated genre is phallic primitivism, and (c) that it is part and parcel of Comedy's method to take words literally and jokes seriously.

What we see in *Clouds* is that negativity carries the day, negativity in form (destructive refutation) as well as in content (degenerate effeminacy⁷). This outcome of the contest is forced upon the comic poet by the fact that the morale of Athenian society, which is the subject of both *Clouds* and *Frogs*, has, at least as seen through the prism of Comedy, come to be dominated by what is wrong and unjust. Since Old Comedy is basically a phallic genre, intensely preoccupied with sex and virility, there could be no better, i.e. more colourful and concrete, way of saying «negativity» than by using the term «buggery», in Greek *eury-proktia*, which, clinically put, denotes the state of having

6. Much of this is well set forth by Newiger (1957) 134-143, esp. 140. A similar asymmetry can be observed in the agon in Catullus 62 *Vesper adest*, where the youths merely *respondent* (cf. line 18), the issue being wedding & marriage. On the Catullan contest see Thomsen (1992) 171, 224 and Thomsen (2002) 272. In Catullus' poem the order is this: (the girls') attack precedes (the youths') defence, whereas in *Clouds* the order is: first defence, then attack. In both cases an age-old institution is dealt with in the agon. The party that starts the agon loses, in these two cases as in almost all others. Hence Dionysus' decision to declare Aeschylus the victor is not at all "unexpected", *pace* Rosen (2004) 295, 296, 302, 305ff. (Rosen's comparison with the *Certamen* depends on this; cf. note 2 above).

7. See, for instance, *Clouds* 1043-1054: bath-houses (with enervating warm water) combined with cowardice and chattering, *laliá* (cf. 930f. «if he [Phidippides] is to be **sav**ed, and not to study mere idle blabber»). The themes of cowardice and chattering will be resumed in *Frogs*.

had one's anus enlarged by habitual subjection to anal coitus.⁸ Public advocates (*synégoroi*), actors/singers/writers of tragedy (*tragodoi*) and demagogues (*demegóroi*) as well as the overwhelming majority among the audience are, all indiscriminately, recruited from among the company of buggers.⁹ This diagnosis, which culminates in a markedly empirical approach to the audience («this one I know as wide-anused, and this one, too...») is carried out during lines 1083-1104; and the audience in the theatre = the sovereign Athenian *demos* (among others). Dramatic performances were public and civic events; the theatre mirrors the state. The *Frogs* will teach us the same lesson, which was later given its philosophical formulation by Plato in his analysis of the interaction between *theatrokratía* and *demokratía* (*Laws* 3.697c5-702a1).

As a result, Right—who survives only through the sympathy of the Athenians (cf. 889 f., 892, 926 f. «and the *polis* that feeds you», 959)—is left with no other alternative than declaring himself—and the Athenians—vanquished. The battle, the agon, is lost, and he «deserts to» the spectators, who are at the same time defeated (their way of life, epitomised in the wide-open anus, represents the defeat of *sophrosyne*) and victorious (they are the majority, with triumphant Wrong on their side) (1102-4¹⁰). This is why Right rushes out of the orchestra into the audi-

8. Cf. Dover (1968) on *Clouds* 1084 and Dover (1978) 135-153. *Katapygosyne*, a synonym of *euryprokta*, is seen by Aristophanes (fragment 128 Kassel-Austin) as characteristic of Euripides' much too spicy style.

9. As for poetic creativity as a result of being fucked cf. Ar. *Th.* 153ff. As for political eloquence as due to being fucked cf. Ar. *Ec.* 110-14. Cf. Isolde Stark (2002).

10. «We are defeated [meaning: you, the audience, and I are defeated by Wrong], you buggers [i.e. *because* you are buggers; literally «being fucked»]. Please for heaven's sake accept [or «receive», but not «take», see van Leeuwen on 1103: «δέχεσθαι [...] non est *abicientis* quae molesta sunt, sed donum *offerentis*, e. g. Pac. 906»] my cloak; for I am deserting to your camp [the prefix *ex-* may imply that the desertion is radical]». Syntax and metre, and even the elision of the alpha in ἡττηήμεθ', tell against punctuating with a full stop or a colon after «We are defeated» (thus, after Kuster and Blaydes, Dover, Sommerstein and Wilson, but not Coulon). It would also be extremely artificial, if not impossible, with Dover to let the imperative «accept» be addressed to persons other than the «you» implicit in «your camp». For a different solution from the one argued here see now Revermann (2006) 219ff.

ence. – The decision made by Sommerstein to let Right re-enter the *Phrontisterion* is hardly correct: see line 1102 with the natural punctuation (cf. note 10), and lines 897 f., interpreted below.

The spectators (= the Athenians) are not as Right expected them to be (889f.), they are exactly as Wrong expected (891f.). The basis of this diagnostic proof, which constitutes the uproarious finale of the first agon of *Clouds*, is formed by a tacit agreement among the two contestants that arguments resting on words taken literally –or rather physically– may be considered absolutely compelling (the word thus treated here being *eurý-proktos*, wide-anused, 1083-8). There is *proof* in funny puns. This is in accordance with the method of Old Comedy and of Comedy in general. We might speak of Comedy’s linguistic literalism or, better, its linguistic sensualism. Even high comedies of ideas such as *Clouds* and *Frogs* and *Le Misanthrope* have recourse to this kind of “reasoning”.

The outcome of the agon between Right and Wrong should come as no surprise.¹¹ After all, we were told at a very early point which of the two Arguments has the upper hand. I refer to the point where Strepsiadés explains to his son what is going on inside the *Phrontisterion* (112-15, cf. 99):

It is said that they have in their house both the Arguments, the Stronger, whatever that may be, and the Weaker; and it is said that one of this pair of Arguments, t h e W e a k e r , prevails by pleading the unjust cause.¹²

11. Dover (1993) 11: «[...] an audience of *Clouds* which expected Right to triumph would have had a surprise at the end of the first agon there». Conversely, Dover finds that the audience of *Frogs*, after having been told in 771-83 that good people champion Aeschylus and bad people Euripides, is not likely to think that Euripides will win the throne of poetry – despite 66 ff.

I consider this way of comparing the two comedies under the –important– aspect of *surprise* a little inadequate: Nothing about the triumph of the bad in *Clouds* (t h e t e m p o r a r y t r i u m p h , that is, see *Clouds* 1452-64: the irruption of A e s c h y l e a n *pathéi mathos* theology). And nothing about the rule that the person who begins an agon (nearly always) loses; this was a rule with which every Greek was familiar (see note 6).

12. In this paper I have allowed myself to borrow freely from the translations by Alan H. Sommerstein (*Clouds*, 1982, 3. corrected impression, 1991; *Frogs*, 1996) and Jeffrey Henderson (*Frogs* in vol. IV of the Loeb Aristophanes, 2002).

Notice also the thinly varnished defeatism on the part of Right in passages like 896f. and 925-31. When I wrote earlier that the outcome of the agon is «forced upon the poet», this has to do with the way these moral issues were presented in Old Comedy as he cultivated it. Here I have in mind a passage very near the beginning of the agon (893-8):

RIGHT You destroy me!?! Who do you think you are?

WRONG An Argument.

RIGHT Yes, but a Weaker one.

WRONG Yes, but I will defeat **you** who vaunt yourself Stronger than me.

RIGHT Oh, what will you do that's so intelligent (*sophos*)?

WRONG Devise a new (*kainos*) set of principles.

RIGHT Yes, that's what is flourishing now,¹³ thanks to these fools (*anoetos*) (*indicating the audience*).

WRONG Not fools, but intelligent (*sophos*) people.

The outcome of the contest will faithfully mirror the prevailing mentality of the Athenians. This very agon in today's comedy will show whether Right is entitled to believe that the Athenian majority sides with him and with Justice (900ff.) – or he is pathetically wrong.

A passage such as this one is very telling with regard to the kind of social comment and contemporary relevance (what the Germans call *Zeitbezug*) to which Aristophanes as a writer of *polis* comedies felt committed. In making the Weaker Argument the Stronger one, Aristophanes, while echoing, of course, the provocative cynicism of the rhetors' slogan,¹⁴ also displays the brand of worldly-wise realism we rightly associate with high comedy with its disillusioned depictions of

13. Contrast, with the same metaphor, *Clouds* 961 (Right speaking) «When I was flourishing by saying what is just, and *sophrosyne* was *nomos*» and 1026f. (the Chorus praising Right) «How sweet on your words is the bloom of *sophrosyne*». I refer to these two passages because, taken together with 897, they make a small contribution towards showing how coherent *Clouds* is, even in the revised version before us (the extremely analytical approach taken by MacDowell (1995) 144-9 is ill-founded).

14. Protagoras and Gorgias; see Newiger (1957) 135 and Kerferd (1981) ch. 9.

“the way of the world”. The question is whether *Frogs* holds cynicisms in store for us comparable to those we have met in *Clouds*. If it does not, a profound difference in ethos between these two works should be recorded.

In *Frogs* the two contestants are two individual tragedians, Aeschylus and Euripides, not two personified abstract entities; but in this comedy, too, we have a confrontation between old and new *paideia*, because writers of tragedies are here (as elsewhere in Greek literature) judged in their capacity of educators. In view of the fact that the two personifications of moral principles in *Clouds* are seen as educators (919, 929) – this is their function even within the dynamism of the plot, since the winner of the *Clouds* contest is going to teach young Phidippides – as in the case of the two poets in *Frogs*, who are presented as teachers of the entire Athenian people, it does seem advisable to translate *sophia* «wisdom & intelligence». «Wisdom» alone will not do, since Wrong, influenced as he is by the highly fashionable intelligentsia, the Sophists, wins a contest in *sophia*. Given the identity of the theme of the contests in *Clouds* and *Frogs*, translations like poetical «talent» or «genius» are to be avoided.¹⁵ Right and Wrong are not poets.

Considering the parallelism between the contests of *Clouds* and *Frogs*, the question arises of what role, if any, poetry plays in the con-

15. Thus, among others, the translator (Van Daele) of Coulon's *Budé Aristophane* (1928): «talent» (line 884). Dover (1993) 10-24 argues in favour of such translations. These fifteen pages in Dover's introduction, filled as they are with illuminating observations, have as their foundation this interpretation – misguided in my view – of *sophos* and *sophia* as poetological terms; one of Dover's chief aims being to reach a well-founded interpretation of lines 1413 and 1434 (both spoken by Dionysus): «One of them I consider to be *sophos*, and the other I enjoy», and «One of them has spoken intelligently [in a *sophos* manner] and the other intelligibly [in a *saphes* manner]». In both 1413 and 1434 the reference is, according to Dover, to Aeschylus and Euripides, respectively. But Dover would not translate «intelligently», like Sommerstein (in the renderings just quoted), but «poetically». Incidentally, Dover keeps the possibility open that the actor's presentation of 1413 and 1434 was indecisive (p. 19). There are illuminating remarks on *sophia* and *synesis* in von Möllendorff (1996/96); but for all its systematic symmetry, an interpretation built on *saphes* as a «political term» (pp. 134 ff.) will fail to convince.

test of Right and Wrong. Put differently: Is it at all conceivable, within an Athenian context, that a pedagogical programme could be presented without poetry being introduced as an important element of that programme? An answer to this question might also be of use in shedding light on the manifold explicit statements about poetry and character-building made in *Frogs*. As a matter of fact, there are only three references to poetry in the agon between Right and Wrong (*Clouds* 966ff., 1056f., 1091f.). But our expectations concerning poetry and education were not unfounded: the theme of *paideia* continues well into the second agon, the contest between Strepsiades and his by now totally reformed son,¹⁶ the one being a stout supporter of Aeschylus, the other a passionate fan of Euripides (as to the *sophia* see *Clouds* 1377f.). And here, in the second agon, poetry forms the very point of departure, the *arche* (1351, 1353), and the dominant theme of the altercation. So, if the two *agones* are viewed together, the similarities between *Clouds* and *Frogs* become really remarkable.

As we shall see, major *differences* also exist between *Clouds* and *Frogs* (see sections III and VIII). To what extent these differences should be related to the profound political changes that took place between 423 and 405 is less obvious to me (see, however, the point suggested in the final paragraph of this paper).

II

Comedy and Society

Homo Euripideus

Comedies usually take place here and now, *hic & nunc*, and as a rule they dramatise tensions between then and now, old and new. It then follows that inherent in the genre of comedy –whether the specimen at hand is by Aristophanes or by writers of classical comedies such as Menander, Plautus, Terence, Molière, Ludvig Holberg, and Goldoni—there is a scientific element, an element of sociological analysis, of a

16. See Dover (1968) 248: «Pheidippides has emerged from his education a replica of Wrong».

generalising diagnosis of the existing state of things, preferably the bad state of things. Thus, Wrong *must* prevail in *Clouds*, and this victory is part and parcel of the very conception of this drama (see above). Similarly, in *Frogs*, the theatre god Dionysus *must* love Euripides – and not Sophocles. This follows from the fact that comedy is committed to depicting the socio-psychological realities of Athenian life as seen through the comic prism. Before my attempt at proving this view of *Frogs*, let us listen to a fine characterisation of the *Zeitbezug* of Aristophanic comedy in general:

So haben wir die Paradoxie, die in Wahrheit doch etwas ganz Natürliches ist, dass kaum ein Zeitalter der Geschichte, auch der uns näheren Vergangenheit, uns so gegenwärtig und innerlich zum Greifen nahe ist wie das der attischen Komödie.

Thus Werner Jaeger;¹⁷ hopefully the reader will be kind enough to forgive him his excessive trust in *geistreiche Synthesen*, with every major phenomenon tending to be *quite* natural and at the same time *quite* paradoxical. Jaeger's approach to Attic Comedy has a long history behind it. It can be paralleled in the writings of Karl Reinhardt and Søren Kierkegaard, both of them drawing on Hegel and this philosopher's enthusiastic praise of the *Lustspiele* of Aristophanes and Shakespeare. «The Anglo-Saxon empiricist» Dover¹⁸ will have nothing, or very little, of all this; neither will the Marxist Ste. Croix. For us there is no need to take this as an *aut-aut*: either Reinhardt or Dover.¹⁹

Now, why does Dionysus love Euripides, and not Sophocles, that extremely lovable gentleman (cf. *Frogs* 82²⁰)? Because «an enthusiasm for Euripides [who had been satirised in several comedies already] instantly establishes Dionysos as a target of humour».²¹ Thus Dover – quite appropriately.

17. Jaeger I (1936) 451.

18. This characterisation of Dover is due to himself, see Dover (1994) 261.

19. As an example of the prevailing schism: Douglas MacDowell publishes a monograph entitled *Aristophanes and Athens* without even mentioning Reinhardt's «Aristophanes und Athen».

20. See *Peace* 531-2 with Olson.

21. Dover (1993) 9, cf. pp. 38-41.

But the question is better addressed from a different angle. In *Frogs*, Dionysus is simply identified with the Athenians.²² I know of no better detail to demonstrate this than the “you” (*vobis*) in line 1025; see also 916-18 on Dionysus’ development from “dim-witted” admirer of Aeschylus to fan of Euripides. So, given that Dionysus the god epitomises and symbolises the Athenian theatre-goers, i.e. the entire auditorium of the theatre dedicated to him, which implies that he is at one with their tastes (see *Frogs* 909-21, esp. 917f. compared with 910) and shares their assessments (see the parody in 1475, which “kills” Euripides), then Dionysus *must* love Euripides and none other, since the diagnosis of the Athenians’ mentality arrived at by this comedy is that they are completely Euripidised, each and everyone of them, from top to toe, according to lines 971-91, the *pnigos* of the agon, to which we shall return in section VII. So, then must Dionysus also be: Euripidised, a *homo Euripideus*.

A major development is dramatised during this comedy, inasmuch as Dionysus changes from effeminate (45ff.) fan, or rather lover (66f.) or friend (1470), of Euripides to a patriot determined to view Aeschylus, Euripides’ antagonist, as the saviour of Athens (1418f., 1500f.), whereupon this old warrior poet, who has been missing for fifty years, is escorted back to Athens by a band of singing torch-bearers. Since Dionysus epitomises the Athenians, this metamorphosis of the god functions as a *cadeau* to the Athenians, as a celebration of the god’s worshippers gathered by the thousand in the theatre, stating that *after all* they are mentally sound. At bottom our *polis* is healthy. That an Aristophanic comedy may have such celebratory –or perhaps incantatory is the right word– qualities is familiar to us from *Peace*, among others. But here in *Frogs* it should not be overlooked (a) that Dionysus retains some sympathy for Euripides until very late in the drama, and

22. For a full discussion see now Lada-Richards (1999), an impressive work, but one that is permeated by a kind of *Systemzwang*. Here are some of the headings: “Dionysiac” and “Heracleian” in the Prologue, Dionysus “Returns” to Heracles, A “Carnavalesque” Reversal?, Euripides’ “Dionysiac” Subversion of the Male *oikos* – and so forth. But how can it be in any way illuminating to make the arch-proponent of rationality and critical sense (*Frogs* 971ff., *passim*) Dionysiac or even “Dionysiac”? A kind of antithetic automatism is at work in this expansively erudite book. – An exemplary discussion of Dionysus the *bomolochos* –and Aeschylus’ singularly privileged relationship to him in 1006 ff.– is found in Kloss (2001) 158-64.

(b) that his conversion to Aeschylus the saviour has something fickle and arbitrary about it (see 1468-78).²³

In brief, *Frogs* is a problem play. And its message may well be termed nostalgic, but Aeschylus, the victor of its agon, is the *opposite* of a nice old chap. In this he resembles two more Aristophanic identification figures – identification figures *after all*, as I take them to be: Right in *Clouds* and Penia, alias Poverty, in *Wealth* (I take this drama to be ironic, like *Assemblywomen*). Over the years, I have become more and more convinced of the existence of a marked ideological *stability* in these dramas, which cover a period of no less than 35 years (cf. the remarks made in section VII below on the ideological correspondences between *Knights*, *Frogs*, and *Assemblywomen*). But a truly systematic study, literary as well as historical, of the values informing the agones of *Clouds* (423), *Frogs* (405), and *Wealth* (388) is a desideratum.

III

The Poet as Educator

The poets are educators. According to most, if not all, scholars, the classical statement to this effect is *Frogs* 1008-10:

AESCHYLUS (*furious*) Answer me this: for what qualities should a poet be admired?

EURIPIDES For skill (*dexiotes*) and admonition (*nouthesia*), and²⁴ because we make people better members of their communities (*polis*).

23. Dover (1972) 186f.: «It is to be observed first of all that Aiskhylos does not have a walkover victory». I repeat my reference to the detailed analysis in Kloss (2001), esp. 162f.

24. Blaydes (1889): *Notanda insolita particularae τε collocatio* (cf. Denniston (1954) 517, Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 229f., Barrett on Eur. *Hipp.* 848-51, and Friis Johansen and Whittle on Aesch. *Supp.* 282-3). The emendation $\gamma\epsilon$, suggested but not printed by Blaydes, is now printed by Wilson in the OCT. See Wilson (2007) 177, who offers no real discussion of the postponement of this particle, let alone the *meaning* resulting from the Blaydesian *Schlimmbesserung* of it. Ar. *Av.* 257 (with Dunbar) and Ar. *Th.* 325-6 (with Austin and Olson) –both of them ignored by Denniston– should be sufficient to vindicate the transmitted –and meaningful– $\tau\epsilon$ in *Ra.* 1009.

Here, the following points may be noticed:

- 1) Euripides' answer is not subjected to discussion, compare his «we» (which is later modified!). Euripides is a follower of Socrates (1491-99) –which forms a link to Wrong in the *Clouds*– and much of what he says in the *Frogs* is controversial, but not this point about the admiration due to poets who make their fellow-citizens better.
- 2) The statement concerns poetry in general, not tragedy in particular, or comedy for that matter.
- 3) The words «in their communities» (literally «in the states») point to Greece in general, not only to Athens. Cf. 1023-25.
- 4) A poet should be admired on two counts (viewed together, of course): on the one hand for his artistic skill and dexterity (*dexiotes*) and on the other hand for improving people affected by his poetry. Thus we have a formal quality combined with and put into the service of a propagation of values. These lines, 1008-10, do not pronounce on the poet's own morality; they only demand talent combined with a didactic ability to improve character in others (cf. 1019). Of the poet's own character nothing is said here. We are left with two questions: Can this silence about the poet's character last? And: what are the values deserving admiration propagated by the poets?

In lines 1019-22 Aeschylus praises himself for having made people noble (*gennaios*, cf. 1011, 1014), inasmuch as he filled each and every spectator with the desire (*eros*) to be warlike and destructive (*daios*), in other words, to kill enemies. By watching –or, less probably,²⁵ after having watched– his tragedy *Seven against Thebes*, which was «a drama full of Ares», everyone became²⁶ hot with aggression. An irresistible

25. For coincident aorist participles see lines 1021, 1026 & 1027. See Barrett on Eur. *Hipp.* 289-92.

26. Not «would have been...» (Sommerstein). The modal particle with the aorist indicative amounts to an *iterative* (to be taken together with «every single man»), not to an *irrealis*.

identificatory mimesis, mediated by *eros*, was the result of his drama.²⁷ This is a collective experience or, rather, an individual experience (πᾶς τις ἀνήρ) of universal occurrence. The central line 1022 runs: [the drama *Seven Against Thebes*] ὁ θεασάμενος πᾶς ἄν τις ἀνήρ ἠρώσθη δάϊος εἶναι. For reasons that will later become clear (in section V), I want to put particular stress on the possibility, mentioned by the commentators, that Aristophanes adopted this depiction of *Seven against Thebes* as «full of Ares» from Gorgias (cp. Plut. *Mor.* 715e). Here, the depiction makes the underlying mimetic doctrine more easily intelligible: a drama full of war fills its spectators with war. Within the field of *Produktionsästhetik* the mimetic doctrine runs like this: a *vir vere erectus* just behind the poet will enable him to create life-like Satyrs (Ar. *Th.* 157 f.).

Aeschylus goes on (*Frogs* 1026f.): «After that, by producing my *Persians* I taught them to yearn (*epithymein*) always to defeat their opponents...» The word «always» in 1027 corresponds to the words «every single man» in 1022; the effect on both the spectators and their victims is 100 %. His poetry works with necessity.

If we take the two passages together, we see that according to Aeschylus the poet raises the most intense of passions (*eros* and *epithymia*, respectively). These are the *Wirkungsaffekte*, i.e. the passions filling the area between the work that teaches and the audience that is taught. But in addition to this piece of *Rezeptionsästhetik*, Aeschylus also deals with *Produktionsästhetik*, especially concerning the relationship between tragedy and historical reality: With his *Persians* he made them yearn to defeat their opponents «by adorning (*kosmesas*) a splendid achievement [the defeat of the Persians at Salamis and Plataeae]». On art as *kosmos*, adornment, more in the following.

As we saw in 1008-10, the two tragedians agree on didacticism. But as far as passions, adornment, idealisation, and propaganda are concerned, they disagree heartily, as will become clear.

Let us elaborate the points arrived at thus far. Poets are useful to their communities – «the noble (*gennaios*) among the poets», that is.

27. On emotional identification conveyed by *poiesis* (i.e. tragedy, as the context shows) we have Gorgias' wonderfully precise words in *Encomium of Helen* ch. 9.

With this statement (1031) the issue of the poet's own character *is* introduced, as was to be expected from two competing poets; and much will follow regarding the poets' minds. This leads to the second point.

Nothing is more characteristic of Aristophanic comedy, phallic as it is, than viewing people's language, style, pronunciation, and gait in the light of their sex-life. Therefore it should come as no surprise that *Rhetorik* and *Erotik* are viewed synoptically in *Frogs* (1078-88; notice «as a result», 1083), that they are associated with Euripides (whose lyrics resemble a courtesan, the famous «Cyrène aux douze postures», 1325-8) – and that their exponent is opposed to the warlike, muscular, self-disciplined and obedient *homo Aeschyleus* (see 1069-73). As for rhetoric: Euripides is viewed –by Hermes– as a «poet of small [i.e. prosaic] forensic terms» (*Peace* 534), and the *homo Euripideus* is depicted as *agoraios*, vulgar and manipulative (*Frogs* 1015), a key term among conservatives, the connotations of which are well illustrated by the fact that Right in *Clouds* (991) teaches the young to «hate the Agora», whereas Wrong defends the Agora and the way of life belonging to it (*Clouds* 1055ff.). Also, *laliá*, chatter & babble, is seen as immensely characteristic of contemporary Athenians (*Frogs* 1069 ff., with *laliá* and *stomyliá* functioning as the grammatical subject!). Now, how does sex come in? The point is that rhetorical competence –«chitchat and gab»– is seen as inextricably bound up with extreme hedonism,²⁸ including *eury-proktia*, signifying, as the reader may recall, the situation of the permanently wide-anused. But just as *Frogs* does not expatiate on the moralist's theme of religion (see section VIII), it does not *expatiate* on the moralist's theme of sex (see section VII).

Before the arrival of Euripides, the Athenians were sitting (!) like sheer gawping dunces (989-91). They were infantile then and unable to speak; now Euripides has turned them into critical and rhetorically competent democratic citizens. «*Laliá* has prompted the crew of the *Paralos* [radical democrats, all of them] to talk back to their officers» (1071f.). More on this below; the diagnosis offered by *Frogs* is a first-rate contribution to the Athenian discussion of democracy and its ideology (see sections VII and VIII below).

28. See Ar. *Nu.* 1083ff., Ar. *Ra.* 1070f., Ar. *Ec.* 112f. and O'Sullivan (1992) 144ff.

IV

Tragedy and the War-Trumpet
Aristophanes and Isocrates on Role-Models
Mimesis of Sublime Poets
Aristophanes and [Longinus]

In lines 1040-42, Aeschylus, after having explained in 1030-36 how beneficial the noble among the poets, including «the divine Homer», have been from the earliest times, makes the following declaration (here in a literal translation):

My mind (*phren*), having from there [from Homer] received the imprint of (*apomattesthai*) many manifestations of courage (*arete*) –courage in men like Patroclus, men like lion-hearted Teucer–, composed poetry (*poiein*) about these heroes in order to rouse (*epairein*) my fellow-citizen to stretch himself out (*ant-ek-teinein*) against these every time he heard the trumpet.

The crucial line, 1040, runs like this: ὄθεν ἡμῆ φρήν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐποίησεν. Commentators usually compare Call. *Epirgr.* 27, which is only parallel, however, in so far as literary mimesis is concerned in both passages. In the Callimachus passage one poet –actively– ἀπομάσσεται another,²⁹ whereas here the subject is a poet’s mind, which is affected by another poet’s work or, rather, from another poet’s sphere (notice the neutral «from where»). Fortunately, a useful parallel is offered by Blaydes (among many less useful) and van Leeuwen, viz. Theoc. 17.121f., where the subject is, not a person, but dust, receiving the imprint of footsteps.³⁰ Since the participle is neither aorist *passive* nor *perfect* in the middle voice, but aorist in the middle voice, the right course, especially with the word-order found in this line, is to take πολλὰς ἀρετὰς as the object of both the participle and the –poet-

29. In the accusative, not «c. gen» (LSJ).

30. Theoc. 17.121f.: ὄν ἔτι θερμὰ κονία ... ἐκμάσσεται ἴχνη, «those the imprint of whose steps still warm [...] the [...] dust holds [or rather: receives]» (Gow). See also Austin and Olson on Ar. *Th.* 514.

ically active— *ἐποίησεν*. The metaphor is explained thus by van Leeuwen: «effinxit sibi, imitata est»). The *sibi* is an important pointer to the fact that the poet's mind is *affected*. We will need to return to this.

It will be seen that we have this imitative or identificatory bond:
 from (a) the sphere of «the divine Homer», the m o d e l,
 to (b) Aeschylus' receptive imagination,
 to (c) the heroic dramatis personae, «the demigods» (1060), intended
 as m o d e l s
 for (d) the citizen competing with them.

The phase (c)-(d) is parallel with the phase (a)-(b). Perhaps I may be allowed to anticipate the following comparison with [Longinus] and mention the fact that in his treatise he repeatedly refers to the great models, Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, as «these heroes» (4.4, 14.2, 36.2).

The poet is a teacher. Here, this does not mean that the poet conveys useful knowledge about war and peace or about administration and economics (contrast 1032-36,³¹ and also 975ff.) or that he inculcates wise and memorable maxims (see below on paraenetic poetry). The poet is a teacher in so far as he rouses passions (*epairein* is the proper verb here³²); he is an educator to the extent that he stimulates desires (*eros*, *epithymia*) that *must* be transformed into action, mindless of all difficulties (1042), by each and every person affected by his drama. Militant and mobilising drama is what Aeschylus has in mind. The tragedy and the trumpet cooperate, serving one patriotic goal. The warlike patriotism roused by tragedy is activated the moment the sound of the trumpet is heard (cf. 1041f.).

There is a profound parallelism between *Frogs*, not least lines 1040-42, and Isocrates' *Euagoras*, esp. chapters 75-77 with such key terms as *homoion*, *mimēsthai*, *paradeigma*, *epainein*, *eulogein*, *paraklesis*, *protrepein*, *zeloun*, *epithymein* («desire the same habits [*epitedeumatôn* in the genitive] as those possessed by the objects of praise»), and, final-

31. However, the echo ἀρετάς, 1040/1036, should not be ignored.

32. See, for instance, Ar. *Nu.* 809, where and *ekplettein* and *epairein* are coupled.

ly, *arete* in word, deed, character (*tropoi*) and thought (*dianoia*). This similarity was hinted at by Johannes Sykutris in a 1927 interpretation of Isocrates' ninth oration (to be dated ca. 374). One of the themes of Sykutris' study is the way in which Isocrates regarded himself as having founded «das Prosaenkomion» in constant competition with the poets:

Charakteristisch für die ganze Rede ist die Konkurrenz mit den Dichtern, in die Is[okrates] mit Bewusstsein tritt; sie ist ausserordentlich häufig [chapters 6, 8 ff., 36, 40, 65, and 72 are adduced by Sykutris] und herausfordernd.³³

Sykutris' magisterial interpretation should be taken into account in any assessment of the *Frogs* as a document on the didacticism of poetry. Let me add that the idea that other people's noble deeds may be an object of desire or love (*epithymia*, *eros*) is familiar from other texts instantiating the erotic aspect of ancient idealistic psychology; see, for instance, Socrates' speech in Xenophon's *Symposion* 8.10 (*eros tôn kalôn ergôn*), 8.32 (interpreted in Thomsen [2001] 148-54).

Now we shall have to investigate the Aristophanic ideas on literary mimesis, on the poet's malleable mind, on grandeur, and on passion, by comparing them with the doctrines of [Longinus], which have the merit of being more explicit.

Several scholars³⁴ have pointed to a similarity between *Peri Hypsous* (9.3; 30) and *Frogs* 1058-61, where Aeschylus claims that *necessity* demands that poets should engender grand expressions to equal their grand ideas and thoughts. This is a reply to Euripides who has just declared that the very phenomenon of poetic grandeur (*megethos*) is an obstacle to intelligibility. Thus, the poet who aims at writing great poetry may be seen as undermining the pedagogical programme on which the two tragedians seemed to agree (see above). Given that «the notion of

33. Sykutris (1927) 43. Cf. Plato's description of tragedy as a branch of popular rhetoric (see section V).

34. See Russell (1964) XXXII. This is an important parallel, but Dover did not find it worthy of mention (as far as I can make out). Such omissions seriously affect the value of Dover's historical survey (in section III of the introduction «The contest of Aeschylus and Euripides»).

the “poetic” is consistently associated with the “grand” style throughout antiquity),³⁵ the incompatibility of «poetic» and «pedagogical» is implied here. Implication: Euripides is an opponent of poetry...

But that is exactly what [Longinus]’ treatise is: a defence of poetic *megethos*, alias *hypsos*. These two concepts are used concurrently in *Peri Hypsous*, with *megethos* sometimes taking the upper hand (see 11-12.1 and 12.4). And according to [Longinus], *megethos* and *hypsos*, i.e. grandeur & sublimity, should be cultivated with a view to an end, viz. to become better «political men» (1.2). To acquire poetic and rhetorical grandeur presupposes a great mind, since «sublimity is the echo of a great mind» (9.2), and this grandeur, firmly rooted in an impressive personality, is seen as *politically* useful, nay, as indispensable to young men of ambition and talent. The similarities with martial Aeschylus end here, since [Longinus] writes in an epoch of universal peace (44.6).

There is an overall similarity between *Frogs*, not least 1040-42, and the Longinian focus, from beginning to end, on enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is so all-pervading that even great *thoughts* –the first of the five sources of grandeur– are infused with emotions –the second source– in [Longinus]’s system (or “system”). As for enthusiasm in the spectator, we have already met with more than one Aeschylean statement on that (1022, 1026, 1041); but what about the poet and the poet’s *mind*? Let us take a look at chapter 13 of the *Peri Hypsous*, the subject of which is the passionate and competitive imitation of sublime models, including Homer. A combination of *mimesis* and *zelos* is represented as leading to creative ecstasy and grandeur, «flowing into the minds (*psyche*) of the passionate imitators» (13.2). It is a matter of shared enthusiasm and greatness channelled from the poet hero to the creative mind of his fervent admirer (*ibidem*). Here is a calm summary of this oracular chapter: The kind of *mimesis* [Longinus] envisages «is obviously a matter [...] of being steeped in an author and reproducing his spirit».³⁶

Here in *Frogs* Aristophanes does not use the word *mimesis* with reference to the activity described by Aeschylus in 1040. That he might have done so is clear from *Clouds* 559.

35. O’Sullivan (1992) 9.

36. Russell (1964) 112.

V

Tragedy and Utility

Identification Figures, Aeschylean and Aristophanic

The History of a Distortion

Greek Idealism

Since it was not possible for a tragedian to comment upon his poetic intentions in a tragic drama, it is only natural that interpreters of Attic tragedy, being of course interested in the intentions underlying the genre and the expectations with which it would be met by contemporary Athenians, repeatedly have recourse to *Frogs*, this unique 5th century manifesto on the aim of tragedy. Thus, on one of the final pages (175) of his monograph *General Reflection in Tragic Rhesis*, Holger Friis Johansen,³⁷ after quoting *Frogs* 1009f., makes the following observation:

It has been doubted whether these lines, which are among the inevitable quotations to be found in all works on Greek tragedy and therefore may have provoked the irritation of some scholars, represent more than Aristophanes' personal view, and whether the tragedians were at all to be regarded as moral teachers of their people [Bruno Snell and H. D. F. Kitto are mentioned as anti-didacticists]. It would seem that the traditional place accorded to general reflection in Attic tragedy necessitates the inference that at any rate the poets themselves regarded the moral education of their people as an important part of their business. How else can we explain passages like [Aesch. *Eum.* 707f. «... exhortation to citizens...», Soph. *Ant.* 1242f., and Eur. *Andr.* 950f. are adduced]? It is rare of course that we can demonstrate so directly and unambiguously the didactic function of what is going on on the stage; but it is enough that we can do so in a few cases.

37. Friis Johansen refers to Radermacher (1954) 289: «Allein schon der Umstand, dass Euripides in dieser Auffassung mit Äschylus vollkommen einig ist, zwingt zu dem Schlusse, dass der Satz im 5. Jahrhundert allgemeine Geltung hatte». But as we have seen already, the two poets are in complete *dis*-agreement as to the implications of the sentence «der Dichter ist Lehrer seines Volkes». This would become obvious if this focusing on 1009f. –to the exclusion of several other relevant passages– found in so many students, not only of tragedy, but also of *Frogs* (incl. Dover) was finally given up.

But what Aeschylus speaks of and makes the basis of his critique of Euripides is not direct exhortations or general reflections on moral and political issues, nor is it eulogies of ancient heroes. On such eulogies (*epainoi*, *enkomia* are the words used) of age-old role-models, taken from “good poets” and used in the schools, see Pl. *Prt.* 325e-326a, where, interestingly enough, the key-concepts, *νοθητήσεις*, *ζηλῶν μιμῆται*, *δρέγεται*, are closely related to the ones we have become familiar with from *Frogs* and from Isocrates. Nor is the real basis of Aeschylus’ critique useful knowledge of the kind he mentions in 1036: «tactics and...weaponry of men». What Aeschylus really has in mind is neither moral exhortation nor practical instruction, although both activities are seen as fitting for great poets (see 1031-6 and 1420ff.); it is setting the entire theatre ablaze by dint of lion-hearted dramatic personae. Role-models are the means, emotion and combative action the purpose. This is what it means for a writer of tragedies to be a moral teacher, according to Aeschylus.

Let us pass from tragedy to comedy for a moment. While listening to Aeschylus it is difficult not to be reminded of Aristophanic comedy and the extensive use made therein of identification figures implementing a Great Plan (*mega bouleuma*): the peasants (Dikaiopolis, Trygaios), the housewives (Lysistrata, Praxagora) – all these comic *heroes* retaliating on society on *my* behalf. Perhaps some of us, in our capacity of teachers, have been a little hesitant about adopting that complex of attractive ideas about «fantasy», «self-assertion», and «vicarious revenge» from chapter 3 in Dover’s *Aristophanic Comedy* (inspired by Cedric Whitman’s *Comic Hero*), for fear of propagating Herbert Marcuse, the author of *Eros and Civilization* (1955; 1966), in the guise of Aristophanes Philippou. The above analysis of the sympathetic identification presupposed by the Aristophanic Aeschylus shows that such a fear of anachronism is groundless. But please notice that in contrast to Aristophanic comedy, Aeschylean tragedy is supposed to lead the spectator to action, action in war.

Back to the *Frogs*! It may be added that the passage 1040-59 focuses on the characters, not on the events of the drama; in Aristotelian terms the focus is on *ethos*, not on *mythos*. More on this to follow.

There is a silence in this part of the *Frogs* that may also help us grasp Aeschylus’ real point and, furthermore, throw some light on the prob-

lems discussed by Friis Johansen (whose subject, it should be noted, is tragic *rheisis*, i.e. *spoken* passages). It might be expected that something would be said, in this long and detailed discussion between Aeschylus and Euripides, about the theological and moral maxims uttered by the tragic choruses. But the didactic role of the choruses is ignored – just as Plato and Aristotle ignore it.³⁸ This is all the more remarkable since a) the speaker is Aeschylus, whose tragedies are highly chorus-centered,³⁹ and b) the writer of the present play is Aristophanes, who, when recommending his own drama, constantly stresses the high patriotic value of the just exhortations by the chorus, «the sacred chorus» (*Frogs* 686f.⁴⁰). So, in my view, the silence on choral moralizing is not due to Aristophanes and his audience finding it banal and worn-out;⁴¹ it is a pointer to the fact that the dramatist focuses on *drama*, i.e. the characters of his drama. The implications of this will become clearer as we proceed.

Several years ago I began wondering what might be the cause of a, at least to me, marked tendency among leading scholars to conceal the obvious in these studies concerning the moral agenda of Attic drama. Here is what I have detected at the roots of this phenomenon.

In Plato's *Gorgias*, the passage 501d1-502d9 is –in the words of Dodds in his indispensable commentary (1959)– a «digression on the

38. See Arist. *Poet.* 18.1456a25-32.

39. *Frogs* 914f. These lines comment interestingly on our subject –the relationship between drama and choral lyrics– if they are taken together with 913 «a mere pretence of a tragedy» and not least with 920 «and the drama proceeded», i.e. proceeded to its completion, without Niobe ever uttering one word. For an explanation of the lines 919f. see van Leeuwen: «interim procedebat», the point lying in «interim» (a point not conveyed by Sommerstein's and Henderson's «went on and on»). Choral lyrics constitute about 60% of Aesch. *Supp.*, 50% of Aesch. *Pers.*, and 48% of Aesch. *Ag.* See Friis Johansen and Whittle's commentary on Aesch. *Supp.* (1980), the introduction, I 26. – The premise of Euripides' poetological polemics is that it is *much* easier to write songs than speeches (= drama)!

40. As for «sacred» see Dover (1993) 68f. As for the «Rügef়reiheit», using praise as well as blame, of the comic choruses, see the numerous passages collected by Gelzer (1971) 1528f. Much choral moralising in comedy is addressed directly to the Athenians, «you super-intelligent spectators» (this is out of the question in a tragedy) – much, but far from all.

41. Thus Dover (1972) 184 and Dover (1993) 14.

social purpose of public musical and dramatic performances», where tragedy is «described as a branch of popular rhetoric [502d2], since it employs a verbal medium to gratify mass audiences». So, we have in this Platonic dialogue a pronouncement on tragic theatre and society – exactly the theme of this part of the agon of the *Frogs* (in *Gorgias* Plato finds nothing to say about comedy). Dodds goes on:

In stating that the tragic dramatist aims at giving pleasure Socrates is merely echoing a widely held opinion about the proper function of all poetry and music [in order to demonstrate this, Dodds refers to *Laws* 2.658e, to Aristotle's *Poetics* on *hedone* and to *Gorgias* on *apate*]. [...] Such a view runs counter to the notion –based mainly on a single passage of the *Frogs*, but erected by many Victorian writers into a dogma– that the Greek dramatists wrote their plays in order to inculcate moral “lessons”. I suppose, however, that nowadays most scholars would agree with Ehrenberg that «the tragedians were “teachers”, not because it was their purpose to teach, but because they could not but do so» [Snell, Gomme, and Lesky are added to Ehrenberg].

First, it may be observed that Ehrenberg's distinction between didactic purpose/intention and didactic effect can be paralleled in almost every scholar who comments on this topic.⁴² But should we not start by making another distinction and realise that we do have Greek tragedies the *purpose* of which is most appropriately described as didactic, as «making people better in their states»? I have in mind especially plays by Euripides (yes, Euripides), not least «die vaterländischen Dramen des archidamischen Krieges», viz. the *Children of Heracles* (ca. 430), the fragmentary *Erechtheus*, and the *Suppliant Women*. The aim of these plays was not, it would seem, «Furcht und Mitleid [...], sondern patriotisches Hochgefühl».⁴³ The militantly anti-Spartan *Andromacha* (ca. 425) may be added.

Dodds' note (above) was written by a wise and open-minded intellectual in the late fifties, an era marked, morally and artistically, by anti-Victorianism and New Criticism, the latter having a tendency to regard

42. For instance Taplin (1983) 331, 333. Cp. Dover (1993) 16.

43. Cp. Pohlenz (1954) 353, 364.

«didactic» and «artistic/dramatic» as mutually incompatible, just as its adherents were on their guard against what was termed the «intentional fallacy». Within classics, a reaction had arisen against German scholars such as Werner Jaeger, the author of *Paideia* I-III, and Max Pohlenz, a truly impressive scholar, both of them convinced didacticists, idealists and anti-individualists, and both politically compromised by their involvement with Nazism.⁴⁴ In the wake of the giant Wilamowitz they were exponents of the kind of source studies, historical reconstruction and more or less daringly imaginative combination of data that is so uncongenial to many British scholars, not least to Dover, especially in his capacity of expounder of comedies.⁴⁵ And so the only contemporary scholar with enough authority to have changed the prevalent reductionist approach to Aristophanic comedy, viz. Sir Kenneth, didn't.⁴⁶

What we have in the note on *Gorgias* is Dodds at his most one-sided, and this goes for his use of both Gorgias and Aristotle. It is not admissible to ignore the fact that «illusion» and «pleasure» in these two authors form part of highly complex ideas, and it should not be concealed that many interpreters do find that Aristotle in his *Poetics* regards improvement of character as a function of tragedy. And certainly Plato in the *Republic* –and in the *Gorgias* passage itself– demands this from tragedy; this is to Plato the criterion according to which tragedy (which to him, at least sometimes, includes Homer) should be judged – and fails.⁴⁷

44. Jaeger, *Die Erziehung des politischen Menschen und die Antike*, published immediately after Hitler became chancellor in 1933. Pohlenz *Antikes Führertum* (1934). On Pohlenz, whose 1934 study on Middle Stoicism is still indispensable, see also Dodds (1977) 166 (and 167 on Dodds' friendship with Snell).

45. An exemplum instar multorum: «[...] the comic poets of the fifth century were unanimous in their adoption of what seems to their modern readers a reactionary and philistine *persona*, and in this respect they resemble modern music-hall comedians rather than modern writers of comedies». Thus Dover (1968) LII-LIII.

46. Olson, by now the leading commentator on Aristophanes, on the attitude underlying *Frogs*: «[...] the tragedian's [Euripides?] plays promote vicious behaviour and do incalculable damage to the city [...]» (note on *Ach.* 461). But Aristophanes was no fundamentalist preacher. He had *charis*.

47. See Pl. *R.* 10.606e-608b, esp. 607d, and compare Pl. *Phdr.* 245a. As for Aristotle, the various views of his view of tragedy's benefits are admirably summed up by Sifakis (2001) 108f.

To this may be added the weighty evidence of Isocrates' *Euagoras* that was brought to our attention by Sykutris (see above).

Relevant is also the following observation made by Edith Hall on the 4th century reception of tragedy's eulogies of patriotic Panhellenism:⁴⁸

Fourth-century texts retrospectively suggest that patriotic eulogy not only of Athens but of all Hellas was perceived to be an important didactic function of the tragic genre [...]. The tragedian [Euripides!], he [Lycurgus] claims, chose the subject of the play [*Erechtheus*] in order to increase his spectators' love of their country [*τὴν πατρίδα φιλεῖν*].

Lycurgus regards Euripides' choice of *mythos* (cf. *Ar. Th.* 546-50, below) as dictated by his wish to provide his fellow-citizens (*politai*, cf. *Frogs* 1010) with a *paradeigma* capable of implanting in their hearts (*psychai*) a love of their country that is even stronger than the love they feel for their children. The orator describes Euripides' verses as educating (*paideuein*) the ancestors of the jury, obviously hoping that the poet's words will turn out to possess educative power in the present case too. This is fully-fledged idealism. As we know, orators usually echo ideas widely current among ordinary Athenians.

Older evidence may be adduced, this time from Aristophanes himself. A look at statements concerning *comedy's* beneficial admonitions can teach us something about the expectations with which the Athenians met the *tragedies* presented to them:

(1) *Frogs* 686f. employs didactic terms about the chorus of comedy (*χρηστὰ τῆ πόλει ξυμπαραινεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν*), terms that are similar to those used about Homer in *Frogs* 1035 (*χρήστ' ἐδίδαξεν*) and about patriotic tragedy in 1420f. (*τῆ πόλει παραινέσειν... τι χρηστόν*). This agreement in terms I consider important, especially when it is realised that in 1008-10 (see above) corresponding expressions are used with reference to poetry *tout court*.

(2) In *Peace* 748ff. the comic dramatist praises the towering building, the *pyrgos*, of grand art (*technē megale*) constructed by himself. Aristophanes' colleague Pherecrates made Aeschylus use the same

48. Hall (1989) 164. See esp. Lycurg. *In Leocratem* 100f.

tower metaphor with reference to his own tragic poetry (Pherecrates fr. 100 Kassel-Austin). Just as the chorus employs the *pyrgos* metaphor in their address to Aeschylus in *Frogs* 1004, where it is combined with the adjective *semnos*, so often associated with tragedy in general (see Plato below) and with Aeschylus in particular (cf. 1020).

(3) Finally, there is the eminently telling line 500 of the *Acharnians*: «Comedy *too* knows what is just», says Dikaiopolis; but the word he uses for comedy, *trygodia*, is identical with the word for «tragedy» apart from one letter, and this is the light in which his «too» should be seen.⁴⁹

In referring to these Aristophanic passages about comedy & tragedy, one is reminded that a discussion resembling the one we are delineating in this paper with regard to tragedy, has divided Aristophanic scholars for several decades, since many of these doubt the sincerity and/or relevance of the comic poet's words about his didactic and patriotic intentions.⁵⁰ A. W. Gomme was active in both fields, in that he warned against taking both tragedy and comedy too seriously and treating the dramas too heavy-handedly: What was really important to these artists was their *métier*. This debate is still going on.⁵¹ Some of

49. Olson on Ar. *Ach.* 500: Taplin (1983) “argues” that *Ach.* 500 «implies that contemporary tragedy had a serious and self-conscious ethical agenda. In fact, the hero's [Dikaiopolis'] remark shows only that comedy likes to present tragedy [...] as having such a purpose [...], which is a different matter». Olson refers to Dover (1993) 14-18 –but these pages do not bear Olson out– and to Mastronarde (1999-2000), esp. pp. 24-6 – which are not about «contemporary tragedy», but about Aeschylus and the «wishful retrojection» with which *Frogs* presents him as stated by Mastronarde. Let it be added that Taplin does not say a word about «contemporary tragedy». Also, Olson fails to tell us with what purpose comedy would, according to the possibility considered by him, impute an overall didactic purpose to tragedy. Was that a way of poking fun at tragedy – to make it as beneficial as one's own comic genre, the utility of which Aristophanes stresses at every given opportunity? I strongly doubt whether such inverted playfulness would have been grasped by Aristophanes' audiences. What a joke imputes on its victim, is negativity, not positivity.

50. Important contributions to this discussion are found in Reinhardt (1938), Heath (1987), and Silk (2000) ch. 7.

51. An important contribution is found in de Ste. Croix (1972) 355-376 («The Political Outlook of Aristophanes»).

the contributions can be boiled down to this: A tragedy cannot be both edifying in purpose and artistic. A comedy cannot be both edifying in intention and funny.

Here is the place to make an addition to the above three observations extracted from Aristophanic passages: perhaps the message emerging from the combination we made in section I of the two *agones* of the *Clouds* provides the weightiest Aristophanic statement of them all concerning poetry and *paideia*.

My main objection to Dodds' influential note is this: rather than making Socrates echo a widely held opinion, viz. the hedonistic view of the proper function of tragedy,⁵² Plato makes him *oppose* a widely held opinion, viz. the didactic view, in showing that tragedy fails according to this very criterion. And this emerges, I think, from Plato's own words: Why else should he make Socrates begin the passage on tragedy with this piece of confrontational irony (502b1ff.): «What is the quality about which this “august and marvellous” (ἡ σεμνὴ αὐτῆ καὶ θαυμαστῆ⁵³) art of tragedy is so earnest?»

And now for the argument that the Victorians' «dogma» was «based mainly on a single passage of the *Frogs*». Given that this is a play that views the noble poet as no less than the potential *saviour* of his city,⁵⁴ this «single passage» –1008-10, of course– actually has wide ramifications both backward and forward within our comedy. We recall, first, that lines 1008-10 are about all poetry in all states, which makes it less likely that the idea underlying that passage should have been an ad hoc invention designed to form the conceptual basis of Aeschylus' return from Hades to guide the Athenians through the *annus horribilis* of 405. The Spartans too may be instructed by poets and thus become better warriors! However much one shares Snell's dislike of Jaeger's *Paideia*, the fact should not be obscured that an old and wide-spread Greek attitude to poetry held that it is capable of improving its recipients.⁵⁵ Concerning tragedy in particular, we shall presently see that the

52. Notice that Callicles does not totally agree with Socrates, Pl. *Grg.* 502c1.

53. As is often the case, the demonstrative pronoun functions as a pointer to irony and quotation-marks.

54. See Dover (1972) 184 and Dover (1993) 16.

55. Dover (1993) 16: «[...] the substantial and widely diffused corpus of didactic

two contestants frame their –shared– notion of an educatory tragedy into two widely different, but internally coherent theories, which fact, especially since the theories are presented in a comedy, calls for the assumption that the didactic view of tragedy had a history of some length behind it.

Hence, for a number of reasons, I cannot endorse Bruno Snell’s idea that the earliest demand that tragic poets should be educators was voiced in the *Frogs*. In his essay «Aristophanes und die Ästhetik» (1937) Snell made the following statement:⁵⁶

Diese Moralisierung der Poesie hat Aristophanes erfunden; sie erscheint programmatisch und prinzipiell zum erstenmal in den “Fröschen”.

Albin Lesky modified Snell’s “radical” words as follows:⁵⁷

poetry available in the fifth century had long implanted the conventional idea that the poet is a teacher». Cf. Harriott (1969) 105-9, Murray (1996) 17-19. Snell will have very little of this; see his p. 164 on Pindar and Aeschylus («kein Selbstzeugnis»)! Rosen (2004) notes with satisfaction that his reading of the *Frogs* «ultimately relieves the Aristophanic Aeschylus and Euripides of the moralizing burden they have had to shoulder for so long» (295, cf. 296, 314, 316ff.; cf. note 6 above). Similar conclusions are reached by Pucci (2007) 113ff., who finds that Aristophanes subjects his didactic statements to *mise-en-abîme*. Starting from the debatable axiom that «l’ironie et la dérision sont l’essence même de la comédie», Bouvier (2004) ascribes to *poiein* a «double sens»: «créer» and «procréer». But neither in 1009 nor in 1010, does the verb carry either of these meanings, let alone both of them: in 1009 it means «rendre» (French), in 1010 it functions as *verbum vicarium* («And if you haven’t done this»). Also, ἀπέδειξας in 1011 does not mean «tu as montré» (thus Bouvier), but «tu as rendu» (cf. 1009). In Bouvier’s translation of 1009 there are two (more) mistakes.

56. Snell (1955) 163, cf. 164.

57. Lesky (1956) 24-25. As a matter of fact, Snell’s influential essay is far below his usual level: Eight lines after having admitted that Pohlenz may be right that the ideas Aristophanes presents in *Frogs* are «Allgemeingut seiner Zeit», he *jumps* to the assertion quoted above in my text. Snell’s article has little about Aristophanes’ comedy, but much about its reception (nothing extraordinary). Why did the great Snell go to such extremes this time? Chronology will tell. The year is 1937, and this is a period of his life where Snell invested his professional powers in combating Werner Jaeger (to whose *Paideia* there is an allusion on p. 164 of the Aristophanes essay): In 1932 Snell delivered a lecture against Jaeger’s Third

Über den persönlichen Anteil des Aristophanes an der Begründung dieser Auffassung mag man streiten, aber in seine Zeit gehört sie und ist letzten Endes aus der sophistischen Bewegung hervorgegangen.

Given the Sophists' much-advertised promise of making people better (or better still: good), of teaching *arete*, human excellence,⁵⁸ one willingly believes that they played a decisive role in systematising the age-old Greek ideas of poets as teachers. Especially if we keep in mind the technical aspects of the agon of the two poets, incl. the two distinct views of the function of tragedy that I am in the process of setting forth. Also, there is a piece of corroboratory evidence, fairly strong in my view, to add here: in another Aristophanic comedy, viz. the *Thesmophoriazusae* from 411, behind the most glaring obscenities can be discerned a fully-fledged theory of *mimesis*,⁵⁹ the source of which can hardly be found anywhere but inside the Sophists' circles. Given the fact that identical ideas are ascribed to none other than Euripides in *Acharnians* (410ff.), the Sophistic provenance of the *mimesis* theory may even be considered certain.

Humanism at Amersfoort, not published at the time because of the political climate (on this lecture see Latacz in Flashar [1995] 41-64), and his great review of *Paideia* I appeared in 1935. Thus, Snell's blameworthy one-sidedness (echoed in Dodds's one-sided note on *Gorgias*) is due to his praiseworthy *philologia militans*.

58. See Kerferd (1981) ch. 11.

59. Most of the observations that call for this conclusion are presented by Muecke (1982). In contrast to Stohn (1955) 89 and Grube (1965) 30 (a brief synthesis), Muecke does not believe that the term *mimesis* is used in *Thesm.* in a technical sense: «Given the lack of evidence for a general theory of artistic mimesis in the fifth century, it would be dangerous to assume that the word *μίμησις* here alludes directly to a theory of poetry». But a comically coherent passage in an Aristophanic comedy *is* such evidence. It is to be regretted that the issues raised by Muecke's paper are treated with such lack of empathy (things are "simply" so and so) by Austin and Olson in their commentary (2004), which also makes mistakes of the following kind: (a) it is overlooked that the word *mimesis* is attested in *several* 5th century authors, in two of which, Hdt. 3.37.2 and Democr. fr. 154 D-K, it is related to art; and (b) we are presented with the non-existing verb *μιμέω*. Neither Ford (2002) nor Ledbetter (2003) shows awareness of the weight of the *mimesis* passage in *Thesm.* 148ff.

Anyhow, it is a grave error by Snell to make Aristophanes the first inventor of a given idea; his comedy was a laboratory where ideas already in the air were processed with a view to their dramatic and critical potential.

Now, why did several great scholars go to such extremes in playing down the Greeks' ideas of poets as teachers? In brief, the conclusion of this study within my study is this: because of Werner Jaeger and what they saw as his «pale Classicism» (Snell), his unscholarly emphasis on *paideia*, his collectivism, his idealism, his voluntarism – his Nazism.

VI

Life Imitating Art *The Poets and the Young*

They «reacted against the didactic approach to tragedy, which they felt obscured emotional and aesthetic priorities and “dramatic effect”». ⁶⁰ In this, they formed part of a long and illustrious tradition: Lesky was proud that Goethe, ⁶¹ Grillparzer, and several Romantics had contributed to shaping his opinion on this subject, and he added as another influence Kurt von Fritz's detection of alien and anachronistic Stoic and Christian elements in the then prevailing interpretation of Greek tragedy.

But if these great scholars had allowed themselves to follow the argument leading up to, and the discussion subsequent to «the *locus classicus*», «the inevitable quotation», «the single passage», in other words *Frogs* 1008-10, oh, what emotions, aesthetic priorities and dramatic effect would have met their eyes!

In this and the following section I shall try to show that Aeschylus and Euripides in the present agon are made to represent two fundamentally different notions of the influence exerted by a drama on its audience: an emotional-mimetic and an intellectual-methodological notion. The contrast at work here bears no small resemblance to the

60. Taplin (1983) 331.

61. See Lesky (1956) 25. As for Goethe see Pohlenz (1954) 489 and index.

one established by Bertolt Brecht between traditional, idealistic, identificatory drama on the one side and his own epic, “anti-Aristotelian” theatre on the other.

Did women attend the theatre? Even among scholars who –correctly, in my view– assume that women were not officially barred from attending the performances, there is agreement that male citizens, fathers and sons, constituted the intended, the proper audience. With this in mind one wonders what goes on between line 1042 about the war trumpet releasing all the combative emotions created by Aeschylus’ tragedies, and lines 1043ff. about the complete absence, according to the poet himself, from Aeschylus’ repertoire of «trollops like Phaedra or Stheneboea». How can Aeschylus pass from his paradigmatic heroes, his male role-models, immediately to these Potiphar’s wives? Who would imitate *them*? Young men and their fathers maybe?!

An answer to this question seems to lie in the difficult passage 1049-52, which I would interpret as follows⁶²:

EURIPIDES (*to Aeschylus*) And what harm, you shameless rogue, do my Stheneboeas do to the community (*polis*) [*his point being that no man would dream of imitating these dubious women, whereas everybody simply had to replicate Aeschylus’ heroes, as Aeschylus just claimed in 1040-42*]?

AESCHYLUS Because you have persuaded [*this sounds like direct influence on women attending the theatre*] respectable women, the spouses of respectable men, to drink hemlock, because they were seized with shame on account of your Bellerophons [*after having been spurned by them. This appears to concern –and it actually does concern– in-direct influence on Athenian women, through direct influence on the city’s young men*].

EURIPIDES But that story (*logos*) about Phaedra was already in existence, wasn’t it? I didn’t just concoct it, did I?

Aeschylus’ point in answering as he just did appears to be this: It is not your Stheneboeas, it is your young *men* of the Bellerophon and Hippolytus kind that do harm to the *polis*. His focus is on the young men

62. Differing from van Leeuwen as well as from Dover on 1051 and p. 15, cf. p. 17, I follow a hint by Radermacher (1954) 295f. (inspired by Henri Weil), not even mentioned by MacDowell (1995) 291 or in Sommerstein’s note.

in drama and in life, and on the way real-life youths imitate certain, to them fascinating, *dramatis personae*. The words «your Bellerophons» in line 1051 must refer to life more than drama – really a formidable compliment from Aeschylus to the power of Euripides’ drama: our youngsters have become mere replicas of your studiedly chaste creations,⁶³ life is imitating art nowadays (cf. Euripides in 964-79 about his own and Aeschylus’ «pupils»), a much more intellectual term, however). These puritan characters in Euripides’ plays, with their «hochmütig ablehnender Tugendstolz in Verbindung mit blendender Erscheinung» (Radermacher), are imitated by the city’s young narcissists, who enter the city’s leading houses (cf. 1050), where they cause 1) desire (1043f.), 2) desperation and shame (1051), and 3) voluntary death (1051) among the ladies – to the detriment of the families and the *polis* (1049f.). This is, I believe, the way the words «you have persuaded...women» in 1050 should be interpreted; they do not presuppose direct communication with women in the theatre.

And now the way Aeschylus passes from 1042 (survival) to 1043-51 (ruin) causes no problem – which cannot be said about the other ways of construing 1049-51 known to me.⁶⁴

On the interpretation here adopted, the basis is still formed by the contrast between the two ways of conceiving the function of drama: directly mimetic according to Aeschylus, but not to Euripides. Also, we become able to understand why the poets –in 1055, after the theme of Phaedra and young Hippolytus has been resumed– are said to be teachers for *οἱ ἡβῶντες*, which it is not only unnecessary, but misleading to endow with the special meaning «the adults».⁶⁵ The verb *ἡβᾶν* has its usual meaning: «in voller Jugendkraft stehen, altersreif sein, jugendlich froh sein» (Frisk). These young persons are the ones from whom «what’s

63. Barrett on Eur. *Hipp.* 79-81: «[...] the Athenian audience, while they feel the beauty of his [Hippolytus’] ideals (the poet has taken care of that), will at the same time feel their narrowness, and will find it excessive and unnatural».

64. Lada-Richards (1999) 263 takes the issue at stake to be that the husbands «like Bellerophon, become the objects of uncontrollable female lust». That must be a misunderstanding.

65. Thus Dover, and Sommerstein and Henderson; the older commentators say nothing about any special meaning.

wicked should be concealed» (1053). Add to this that the very specific diminutive «*small* children» fits the juxtaposition «fresh youngsters» much better than it would fit the unspecific category «the adults».

Lines 1054 f. I take to mean⁶⁶: «For small children everybody who explains [this or that to them] is a teacher, for teen-agers poets [are teachers⁶⁷]». The young will take their models from poets only – not from *paidagogoi*, not from school teachers, not even from their fathers. That is why the poet's responsibility is so overwhelming (see 1056: «Therefore...we...»). If we are in need of a strong image of a father opposing the *sophos* poet Euripides and his family-undermining themes, we may recall the altercation between father and Socratised son in the second agon of the *Clouds* (1369-79).

VII

The Accountable Dramatist
Domestic, Democratic, Realistic Drama
Aeschylus: Emotion and Character,
Euripides: Intellect and Structure
Sublimity Versus Structure

The upshot of this: Not only his own martial drama is conceived by Aeschylus in mimetic terms, thus: every single spectator imitated warlike Patroclus and lion-hearted Teucer, and the *polis* was preserved. Also his opponent's erotic drama is conceived in mimetic terms, thus: youngsters imitate chaste Hippolytus and unapproachable Bellerophon, and the *polis* is damaged.

66. Notice *διδάσκαλος* in the singular, but *ποιηταί* in the plural. The indicative after *ὅστις* should, pace Dover, cause no problems; see Ar. *Th.* 916-17 with Austin & Olson and Soph. *Ant.* 661-65. Conversely, *ἄν* with the subjunctive would not disprove the interpretation adopted by Dover (the meaning would be «a teacher to tell them things»). But I cannot answer Denniston's problems (*apud* Dover) with the position of *ἔστι*.

67. This was understood by van Leeuwen.

The poet's duty to embellish, to idealise, to camouflage «what's wicked» is emphasised very strongly by Aeschylus in 1053ff.; cf. his words in 1027 about *kosmos*, i.e. *ornatus*, or what we might call linguistic idealisation.⁶⁸ This stress on manipulating the truth for edifying purposes should be compared with passages in Isocrates where this rhetor justifies the kind of *pseudologia* «which is capable of benefiting or entertaining the listeners with instruction (*meta paideias*)». Isocrates, of course, distances himself from the bad, dangerous kind of *pseudologia* which he identifies as demagogic cheating.⁶⁹ One purpose, and one only, may justify these embellishing lies concerning the deceased Euagoras' character and deeds: the creation of a role-model capable of alluring Isocrates' pupil Nicocles into goodness.

Given that Aristophanic comedy is vehemently hostile to rhetors and sophists, my reader may have found improbable the hypotheses that the provenance of the *mimesis* game in *Thesm.* and of the twofold drama theory in *Frogs* should be Sophistic. Then please regard the resemblance we have just demonstrated between the justifications of propaganda and lies argued by Isocrates, Gorgias' pupil, on the one side and –not Euripides, but– Aeschylus, the ultimate victor of *Frogs*, on the other. Ergo: Aristophanes is not averse to Sophistic borrowings.

Now for the *Wirklichkeitsbezug* of tragedy, its bonds to reality, as depicted in this comedy. Euripides had objected to Aeschylus' critique of his shameless Phaedra that «the story is an existing one» (1052, translated above). Here in *Frogs* Euripides thus declares himself determined by the *backwards* bonds so to speak, i.e. by myth. Both aspects are dealt with in *Thesmophoriazusae* 546-50, the problem in that comedy being put in the following way: Why does Euripides always choose myths about wicked women to dramatise? The character In-law replies: The reason is that among all «the present women» there is not a single Penelope; they are Phaedras, all of them.

68. Compare Ar. *Ra.* 1027 with Isoc. 9.76 εἴ τις ἀθροίσας τὰς ἀρετὰς τὰς ἐκείνου [Euagoras] καὶ τῷ λόγῳ κοσμήσας παραδοίη θεῶρεϊν [cf. Ar. *Ra.* 1022] ἐμῶν καὶ συνδιατρέβην αὐταῖς.

69. Isoc. 12.246, cf. Isoc. 9.5-11, 76f. (but Isoc. 9.66 *mythos* vs. *aletheia*). Cf. Sykutris (1927) 33 ff. A series of Isocratean passages concerning rhetorical theory in Radermacher (1951) 163-187.

Hence Euripides is bound by both past and present. Yet there is no doubt that in *Thesm.* the present is regarded as the weightier pole: it is the women he sees around him that dictate to Euripides the choices to make among the myths of the past. As for «the present women», the women close at hand, there is a truly diabolical passage in *Frogs*, viz. 1045-48 about Euripides' domestic calamities, which are gradually disclosed through three venomous remarks built upon each other.⁷⁰ Dionysus, in his usual role as *tertius gaudens*, caps the exchange with this proclamation: «What you [Euripides] wrote against other people's wives, that is exactly what you have been afflicted by yourself». From a poetological point of view the interest lies in the by now familiar triad (see section I): the poet, the characters, and the audience in interaction. Dionysus' nemesis or *ius talionis* philosophy in the line just quoted presupposes –on the level of the aggressive joke– that *saying* that other men's wives are whores *makes* them whores. Otherwise the reasoning would be lopsided, and the joke pointless.

So much for the inescapability of realism and the impossibility of idealism in Euripides' world. The key words are «erotic» and «domestic».

They still agree that poets are teachers, as they did in 1008-10; but in a strongly polemical vein Euripides insists that Aeschylean bombast should be avoided and «guidance be given in the language of human beings (*anthrôpeiôs*)» (1058). This method, which I would term Socratic on the basis of *Clouds* 385ff., a revealing, but usually neglected passage, is diametrically opposed to Aeschylus' poetics of emotive receptivity, backed up by alluring embellishment, *kosmos*, of the splendid victories (1027) and accompanied by the war trumpet releasing floods of patriotic emotions.

An earlier portion of the epirrhematic agon may illustrate this opposition. My drama is a *democratic* innovation, says Euripides (952). After I had succeeded in removing all the excess weight of the tragic art (*techne*) as I found it when I inherited it from you (939ff.), and after having brought order, regularity, and action into the plays (945ff.:

70. On the gossip –not exploited in *Thesm.*– on the liaison between Euripides' wife and one of his slaves see Dover (1993) 54.

no *tyche!*), «I wouldn't leave any character idle: I would make the wife speak, and the slave just as much, and the master, and the maiden, and the old crone». And this «I did in the name of democracy» (952).

«And then I taught these people [the Athenians] how to *lalein*». And he expatiates on this *lalein*, which is, in the words of Neil O'Sullivan, «at once ordinary chatter and argumentative dialectic seen through hostile eyes». ⁷¹ But following which method, by using which artistic means, did he teach them *laliá*? This is revealed in 959-61:

By bringing domestic affairs (*oikeia pragmata*) on stage, things we're used to, things we're familiar with, things about which I was open to refutation, because these people knew them as well as I, and could have exposed any flaws in my art.

Euripides' drama is democratic because everybody on stage gets a chance to speak, irrespective of status, age and sex, and, secondly, because its events (*pragmata*) are of a sufficiently everyday character for the spectators to be able to take the dramatist to task – as his equals in knowledge (960). Euripides' audience, his “pupils”, are capable of thoroughgoing refutation, of *elenchos* (960f., twice), which, as we saw in our analysis of *Clouds* in section I, was exactly the stock-in-trade of Wrong.

With democracy on the stage and democracy in the auditorium we are as far removed as possible from the sublime towers of grand, august Aeschylean art.

When Euripides made drama democratic and domestic, he also intellectualised it: ⁷² He has «put rationality (*logismos*) and critical thinking (*skepsis*) into the art (*techné*)» (973 f., below). If my reader would care to peruse the passage 954-91, he will realise how this dramaturgical reform comprises the construction of tragedies, democracy, family, intelligence, and economic progress (for this in particular see 976 f., below).

71. See O'Sullivan (1992) 9.

72. Lada-Richards (1999) finds that Euripides' influence is presented in *Frogs* as «carrying distinctively “Dionysiac” overtones» (277, cf. 261, *passim*). This seems meaningful within the world of *Initiating Dionysus*; but it is not helpful as a key to the Aristophanic drama *Batrachoi*.

What the Athenians have learnt from Euripides is *method*: His extremely rational dramaturgy has made them rational.⁷³ The poet is *sophos*, the spectators have become *sophoi*. Athens is full of myopic managers (see presently), not because Euripides' tragedies were peopled with managers for the audience to imitate (!), but because his transparent drama has taught them planning.⁷⁴ This view of the intimate relationship between the dramas and the mentality of their spectators stems from a tremendous confidence in the power of intelligent art.

Your drama, Aeschylus, was massive and immoderately emotional (961f.), whereas mine is slim and rational. And this is reflected in our respective pupils (967ff.). After this documentation comes the breathtaking *pnigos* of the agon (971-91):

EURIPIDES *That* is how I encouraged these people to think, by putting rationality and critical thinking into my art, so that now they grasp and really understand everything, especially how to run their households better than they used to, and how to keep an eye on things: «How is this going?» «Where do I find that?» «Who's taken this?»

DIONYSUS Heavens yes, these days each and every Athenian comes home and starts yelling at the slaves, demanding to know «Where's the pot? Who chewed the head off this sprat? The bowl I bought last year is shot! Where's that garlic from yesterday? Who's been nibbling olives?» Whereas previously they used to sit there like dummies, gaping boobies, Simple Simons.

According to the *pnigos*, every Athenian has now become a *homo oeconomicus*, pedantic and stingy in the extreme, noisy and restless – in short *polypragmon*. The way this theme was amplified by the poet a good ten years later sheds much light back on the strictures uttered in *Frogs* on the Athenians whom Euripides has turned into *diadrasipolitai*, «duty-dodging citizens» (*Frogs* 1014): In his great post-war comedy *Ecclesiazusae*, alias *Assemblywomen* (392 or 391), he took this as his

73. Notice an echo like this: *skepsis* in the work (974), *ana-skopein* in its «pupil» (978).

74. For *oikonomia* as a dramaturgical term see the commentaries on Ar. *Poet.* 13.1453a29 (on its relative *absence* from the dramas of Euripides!).

basic theme: how the Athenians, in changing their focus from *polis* to *oikos*, have become utterly effeminate. This ironic comedy dramatises an «affrontement entre la politique et l'intendance», and the latter, the provisioning, prevails,⁷⁵ as was already the case in *Knights* (1211-24).

The *homo Euripideus* is the exact opposite of the Aristophanic ideal, «the quiet Athenian». In his chapter 4 «The Peasant Farmer», so useful to students of Aristophanes, L. B. Carter makes this observation on Aristophanic comedy in general:⁷⁶

[...] an antithesis which is one of Aristophanes' most enduring preoccupations: between the town and the country, between money and frugality; between pleasure and hard work; between variety and simplicity; between *polypragmosyne* and *apragmosyne*.

If the *pnigos* of the agon is put into this perspective, the result should be an antidote to attempts like the ones found in some recent interpretations, not least the one by von Möllendorff (1996/97), at downplaying the desirability within the Aristophanic universe of Euripides' total defeat. Cf. lines 1475 and 1482-99.

The two Aristotelian concepts *ethos* and *mythos* may or may not be applicable to the *Frogs*. Let us give them a try! The importance of characters, i.e. *ethos*, to Aeschylus' view of drama I believe has been by now sufficiently demonstrated. Nothing similar can be shown for Euripides, who conceives of his own drama in intellectual terms, far removed from Aeschylus' emotive mimeticism. Euripides declares with pride: «I have put rationality and critical thinking into the art». (973f.). And there *are* passages to suggest that the modernist's focus is on dramatic structure, i.e. *mythos*, rather than on *ethos*. I have in mind the elegant 914-20 (interpreted in note 39) and 945ff. (see above: *tyche* versus *techné*⁷⁷) and not least *Clouds* 1367, where young Phidippides criticises Aeschylus' bombastic drama by applying to it the term *a-xy-statos*, i.e. devoid of structure, *systasis*. The expression *systasis tôn pragmatôn*, «the construction of the events», «die Zusammenfügung der Geschehnisse», is

75. See Saïd (1979) 44. Saïd's study is exemplary.

76. Carter (1986) 84.

77. On this antithesis see Nussbaum (1986).

the one Aristotle will use in the *Poetics* to explain what he means by *mythos* (*Poetics* 6.1450a15, alibi).⁷⁸ In the *Clouds* passage under scrutiny, *axystatos/asystatos* is set off as a technical term by being surrounded by imaginatively derogatory expressions: «[Aeschylus] full of noise, *unstructured*, a bombastic ranter, a creator of cliffs».

Aristophanes in the *Frogs* –Europe’s earliest work of real literary criticism and literary history– presents a total *artistic* disagreement in a historical perspective: What Euripides, Aeschylus’ successor (939, cf. 1013), sees as the triumph of *techné* (see above) is regarded as the defeat of *techné* –and the triumph of *laliá*, Socratic chatter– by the chorus saluting Aeschylus (1491-5).

The assumption underlying *Clouds* loc. cit. of an opposition between bombast or, positively put, *megethos* and *hypsos* (see section IV) on the one hand and structure on the other is taken for granted by [Longinus] from the very beginning of his treatise: «Sublimity, on the other hand, produced at the right moment, tears everything up like a whirlwind, and exhibits the orator’s whole power at a single blow».⁷⁹ Just before this [Longinus] has the punning antithesis *hypsos*, height, versus *hyphos*, web, texture, i.e. structure. Unless I am indulging in an anachronism here, we have, with this “Aeschylus: character versus Euripides: structure”, hit upon data to add to the (pre)history of these two central concepts within ancient –and modern– poetics: *ethos* and *mythos*.⁸⁰ It will be seen why I cannot quite agree with Thomas Gelzer’s statement: «Nirgends redet er [Aristophanes] aber von der Struktur der ganzen Stücke».⁸¹ His modernists do speak about structural coherence and dramatic progression (cf. note 39).

78. See also Dover (1968) on *Clouds* 1367.

79. The close relationship between *systasis* and *megethos* –in the sense of *reasonable* size, resulting in a drama focusing on one *mythos*– is discussed by Stohn (1955) 67ff. I am hinting at a quite different matter: *megethos* in the sense of sublimity, as *opposed* to *systasis*.

80. For *mythos-ethos* in Aristotle, Neoptolemus, and Horace see Brink (1963) general index.

81. Gelzer (1971) 1542. And Gelzer’s words about *Frogs* 916 are misleading. Conversely, Heath (1987) in his appendix on unity finds that it is the plot that creates the unity of Aristophanic comedies; in *Wasps*, for instance, he finds an «admirable causal continuity» (pp. 48f.).

An open question: If I am right that the old poet is a mimeticist, whereas the modernist is not, what does that teach us about mimesis (mimesis on the part of the recipient, that is)?

Those interested in probing the relationship between the Euripides presented in *Frogs* and Euripides' actual oeuvre will, for all its anti-essentialist correctness, find an eminently useful tool in Mastronarde's paper «Euripidean Tragedy and Genre: The Terminology and its Problems» (1999-2000). As may be gathered from the title of the paper, its subject is not the relationship between the comedian's Euripides and the Euripidean oeuvre, and Mastronarde's description of *Frogs* is brief.

In his latest plays, esp. *Kokalos* (lost, but known through the descriptions of ancient critics), Aristophanes was deeply influenced by Euripides, whose dramaturgy via the writers of New Comedy conquered the world.

VIII

Summary

These are the headings of the seven sections of the above paper: *Clouds* and *Frogs* compared. The wisdom and intelligence of educators. Theatre and society mirroring each other. Comedy and society. *Homo Euripideus*. The poet as educator. Tragedy and the war-trumpet. Aristophanes and Isocrates on role-models. Mimesis of sublime poets. Aristophanes and [Longinus]. Tragedy and utility. Identification figures, Aeschylean and Aristophanic. The history of a distortion. Greek idealism. Life imitating art. The poets and the young. The accountable dramatist. Domestic, democratic, realistic drama. Aeschylus: emotion and character, Euripides: intellect and structure. Sublimity versus structure.

I have a brief *envoi* to add: During the last fifteen to twenty years what may be seen as a new kind of didacticism has been adopted by interpreters of Attic tragedy, many of whom see the tragic performances as an essentially ritual activity and simultaneously as exercises in democratic

criticism and subsequent *polis* cohesion. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, edited by Pat Easterling (1997), has many samples of such ritualist-cum-collectivist readings. As was to be expected, the proponents of this «democratic moment» approach (Goldhill and Seaford among others) have been assailed from various quarters (Griffin and Scullion among others). The *TLS* reviewer, after acknowledging the «undeniable gains» of this approach, added: «[...] but one feels that this Companion shows the current consensus just before it begins to crack» (D. Feeney, *TLS* 29.5.97).

Since *Frogs* is the only preserved 5th century document on tragedy, students of tragedies and their function will always have to return to this *comédie à thèse*. As for the themes of religion and ritual, and politics and democracy, one is struck by the relative unimportance in the poets' contest in *Frogs* of religion on the side of patriotism,⁸² which constitutes an important difference from *Clouds* (see 225 ff. and the finale of this comedy).

Also noteworthy is the fact that Aeschylus, the victor of the contest, is made to voice a warlike attitude that would seem incompatible with the ethos of such plays as *Acharnians*, *Peace*, and *Lysistrata*,⁸³ and, sec-

82. See, however, 890f. on Euripides' «private gods of his own», on which see Kerferd (1981) ch. 13, and 1080-2. Please notice that the meaning of Aeschylus' address to Euripides (936) *θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸς* is «you god-detested scum» (Sommerstein), not «you enemy of the gods» (Henderson).

83. Serious denunciation of war is found in all three plays; for *Peace* see especially Hermes' speech, 603-48. As for peace, war, and patriotism see Dover (1972) 84-8 and index, Dover (1974) index, and Dover (1993) on *Frogs* 1039 (Lamachus). MacDowell (1995) 182-198. Willi (2002) attempts to integrate lines 1463-65 into his reading of *Frogs* as a «peace play». Failure to take (a) the ambivalent Greek attitude to war and (b) Aristophanes' complex approach to the Sophists (see section V, near the end) into account undermines the unitarian reading (cf. note 2 above) presented by von Möllendorff (1996/97). According to von Möllendorff's thesis, the victor of the agon is a «new Aeschylus», «eine utopische Dichtergestalt» (p. 130), created by making Aeschylus resemble Euripides more and more as the drama proceeds (p. 137). But Aeschylus is not compromised by quoting «der Erzsophist Gorgias» in line 1021 (p. 138), and Lamachus is not an «Aischyleisches Pendant» to Euripides' pupil Theramenes (ibidem). It is a problem with this paper and others that they ignore passages like 895-1098 and focus almost exclusively on the final proceedings of the contest.

ondly, there is the paradox that the outcome of Euripides' self-styled democratic tragedy is depicted as a hyperactive, hypercritical egoist, whose horizon is limited to his family, a «duty-dodging citizen». The point seems to be the one stressed again and again by Lada-Richards, esp. in her chapter 5, that Aeschylus' drama is seen as furthering the strict hoplitic spirit, whereas Euripidean drama is seen as undermining the *polis*' male order.

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