

VEGETABLE-HAWKING MOM AND FORTUNATE SON: EURIPIDES, TRAGIC STYLE, AND RECEPTION

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AS EVERY STUDENT OF ATTIC DRAMA KNOWS, Euripides did not win many first prizes.¹ Yet it would be rash to assume that this meant his plays were not wildly popular with theater audiences. Evidence from Old Comedy, pot-paintings in Southern Italy, and reperformances of Euripidean drama in Athens (and beyond) all attest to the poet's immense popularity.² In a well-known anecdote addressing

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¹Reportedly only four in his lifetime and one posthumously: see *TrGF* T 65a, b. All fragments of the comic poets are cited from Kassel and Austin 1983–; tragic fragments are cited from the volumes of *TrGF*. All dates are B.C.E. unless otherwise noted.

²See Allan 2001; Easterling 1994; Porter 1999–2000; Taplin 1993 and 1999. Revermann 1999–2000: 451: “Where there is contact with Greek tragedy, it is normally being appropriated in its Euripidean guise.” For the evidence, see Funke 1965–66 and Schmid and Stählin 1940. Xanthakis-Karamanos (1980: 28–34) provides some evidence for fourth-century reception of Euripides in Athens. It is likely that Euripides “was rarely if ever refused a chorus” (Stevens 1956: 92; see also Martin 1960: 250). There is some evidence that Sophocles was not so lucky: Cratinus fr. 17 complains that Sophocles was not given a chorus by the archon, but Gnesippos received one; for the similar plight of Morsimos (*TrGF* 29) and Melanthios (*TrGF* 23), see *Ar. Peace* 801–817 with Olson 1998: 229, *ad loc.* Euripides’ few victories were in fact victories for the entire production; we should not push the evidence too far to condemn the poet or, with Martin (1960), divide the audience between those wealthy and intellectually sophisticated individuals who supported Euripides and the masses who did not. The random selection of the votes, which were inscribed on tablets and were likely removed one at a time from the urn until a majority decision was established, may also have affected the outcome of the competition: Jedrkiewicz 1996. The judging process for dramatic competitions deserves further attention: see now Marshall and van Willigenburg 2004. Additional problems appear from ancient remarks about tampering with the jars containing the names of citizens put forward by the ten tribes before the Council (Lys. 4.4), then sealed by the *khoregoi* and kept on the Acropolis (Isoc. *Trapeziticus* 33–34), and from remarks about partisan sentiment (Plut. *Cim.* 8.7–9). Lysias 4.3 likely deals with a dithyrambic competition, yet its implication that considerations other than the quality of the production could influence the judges’ decision would likewise apply to drama; on the (elite) dynamics at play here, see Wilson 2000: 100–101, suggesting that there may be inter-elite tensions between members of the *phyle*. A phyletic decree (*IG* II² 1153) honors a judge at the Thargelia for casting his vote well and without bribery; Wilson (2000: 347, n. 234) suggests that “it is likely that theatrical judges will have been of high socio-economic class, given the kind of interaction we see here” (i.e., in the decree of the *phyle* and Lys. 4). Other motivations are attested: when Alcibiades was *khoregos* of a dithyrambic chorus of boys, the judges voted for his chorus on account of their fear of him and their desire to please him (ps.-Andoc. 4.21): see Gribble 1999: 5, 140; Wilson 2000: 148–155. Additional charges of corruption: Dem. 21.5, 17, 65. There is also evidence that the audience was expected to influence the judges’ decision: *Ar. Ach.* 1224–34, *Clouds* 1115–31, *Eccl.* 1154–62; Pl. *Laws* 659a–c; Ael. *V.H.* 2.13. For discussion of the judging procedures, see Csapo and Slater 1995: 157–163; Pickard-Cambridge 1988: 95–99; Wilson 2000: 98–102; Marshall and van Willigenburg 2004.

the fate of the Athenians after the Sicilian Expedition, Plutarch records that the Sicilians exempted from labor in the mines those who could recite Euripides from memory (*Nic.* 19.2). Fourth-century drama was clear in its allegiances: Nicostratus referred to Euripides as the dearest one who summed up all human life in one line (fr. 28); Diphilos had one of his characters proclaim that he would have hanged himself if he were sure of seeing Euripides in the afterlife (fr. 130).³ Fifth-century Aristophanic poetry, however, is less straightforward in its engagement with Euripides. In this paper, I discuss the representation of Euripides on stage—specifically the derogatory remarks about his mother in Aristophanes and how they might relate to Euripidean drama. I think this slander has a lot to tell us about the early reception of Euripides in Athens.

Discussions of ancient biography since Mary Lefkowitz's *Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore 1981) have exercised considerable skepticism concerning the anecdotes surrounding the life of Euripides.⁴ For Lefkowitz (1981: viii) "virtually all the material in all the lives is fictional." Certainly no one would put any faith in Euripides' exile and death while staying with King Archelaus of Macedon.⁵ In these anecdotes the narrative content or the perceived style of the author's work often serves as material with which to construct an image of the author.⁶ As a result, the historical value of such biographic anecdotes appears dubious at best; but there is no need to discount these anecdotes simply because biography can no longer be viewed as a transparent medium for the historical reality of the individual author.

Sociological theories of biography starting in the 1970s evaluate the ways in which a biographic text constructs communicative forms in the narrative for the articulation of its theme.⁷ Extra caution, however, needs to be exercised in interpreting discussions of poets in Old Comedy.⁸ Fifth-century comedy engages

³ Axionikos' Φιλευριπίδης seems to have mocked the fourth-century theater audience's great demand for Euripides; fr. 3 notes that the spectators believe that only Euripidean poetry is worthy of attention.

⁴ Lefkowitz 1978 and 1981; see also Fairweather 1974 and 1983. In a classic piece of New Criticism, Cherniss (1943: 290) argues against the "insidious danger of biographic criticism," since "a work of art exists independently of its author and of the accidental circumstances of its production . . . its artistic qualities are entirely contained within itself and are not to be explained by anything outside of the work."

⁵ See now Scullion 2003, arguing that the exile and death of Euripides at the court of Archelaus is an invention.

⁶ Arrighetti 1987; Fornaro 1977 and 1979; Graziosi 2002; Noël 2001; Noille-Clauzade 2001. I have not been able to consult Wright 1988.

⁷ See, for example, Nassehi 1994: 59: "Soziologisch interessant an solchen Texten ist, in welcher Weise also Lebensläufe von Personen kommunikativ thematisiert werden, in welcher Weise also Lebensläufe biographisch erzeugt werden"; see also Ellis 2000: 97–116. Piccirilli (2002) argues that ancient biography serves as an index for historical *mentalité*.

⁸ See discussion in Kaimio and Nykopp 1977; Muecke 1982; Silk 2000a and 2000b: 42–53; Storey 2003: 327–333. For recent discussion of autobiography in Old Comedy, see Rosen 2000.

with poets as dramatic subjects; in addition to the appearance of Aeschylus and Euripides as characters in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, as well as Agathon and Euripides in *Thesmophoriazusae*, other individual poets are the focus of plays (Dover 1993: 25–28). Yet this should not be interpreted as “biography” pure and simple. Aristophanes' engagement with Euripides seems to have bordered on a new kind of comedy—perhaps not unlike the new “demagogue comedy”—that put the poet at center stage.⁹ Yet what this might tell us about the “biography” of the author is far from obvious—Old Comedy was not concerned with relating the life of an individual. It is perhaps best to think of the anecdotes in comedy about a particular individual as the “truest antecedents” of biography and thus constitutive rather of a “biographic element.”¹⁰

Recently classical scholars have begun to take a new look at these anecdotes for what they can tell us about the societies that produced them.¹¹ Biographic anecdotes may not be good history, but their fictional value speaks to contemporary cultural beliefs. The style of the work could also affect the biographic and serves as a valuable means to construct the author according to culturally recognizable forms of representation.¹² In the case of Aristophanes (and Old Comedy in general), we are obviously dealing with comic distortions, and one may rightly be skeptical of getting at the heart of Aristophanes' image of Euripides, distorted as it is through comic filters.¹³ There is the further possibility that these comic distortions are themselves produced by and within the comic genre.¹⁴ Yet as

⁹ Compare the relative paucity of tragic parody in Eupolis: Storey 2003: 327–333. Other comic poets did, however, seem interested in Euripides as a comic subject: Strattis' *Phoenissae* seems to have parodied Euripides' play (see further Bowie 2000: 323–324). In addition to appearing in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Frogs*, Euripides seems to have figured in *Proagon* (schol. ad *Wasps* 61c) and perhaps in the first *Thesmophoriazusae*. There may also have been a character named Euripides who was dressed as a woman in Callias' *Pedetai* (Diog. Laert. 2.18; Callias fr. 15).

¹⁰ Momigliano 1993: 23; cf. Edwards 1997 and Piccirilli 2002. See further Averintsev 2002; Gentili and Cerri 1988; Cox 1983: 4–9; Momigliano 1993; Sonnabend 2002; Swain 1997: 22–24.

¹¹ Graziosi (2002) examines the different ways of conceptualizing Homer as a means to understand the reception of epic. Unlike Lefkowitz's dismissal of the biographic anecdotes, my approach has much in common with Graziosi's own claim (2002: 3) that “the fictionality and popularity of the ancient material on Homer's life does not warrant our ‘disregard,’” pointing out (2002: 7) that “representations of authors, ancient and modern, result from the impact of their work on a particular set of readers.” See also West's (1999) exploration of the creation of “Homer” in sixth-century Athens.

¹² See, for example, Noël 2001: 130: “Dans les reconstructions auxquelles elle procède, la *Vie* d'Antiphon ne puise donc pas seulement dans les parties biographiques de sa source, mais s'inspire plus directement de l'analyse stylistique, dont elle constitue une mise en forme biographique.” In the case of Euripides, see Fornaro 1977 and 1979. Arrighetti (1987: 149–151) argues for the characterization of Euripides' style in Aristophanes through attacks on his mother, but retains the idea that Old Comedy also points out certain petty features of the poet himself.

¹³ For ancient biography as a reflection of *mentalité* filtered through an author (engaged with the audience), see Piccirilli 2002.

¹⁴ Halliwell 1984 and 1993. The question of the political thrust of the plays is complicated: see, for example, Carey 1994; Foley 1988; Henderson 1998; Ste Croix 1972. If comedy aimed at making

Sommerstein has noted in the case of Cleisthenes, “the *persona* had to be created in the first place, and it could not be created *ex nihilo*: the satirist needed to have a *point d’appui*.”¹⁵ Just as earlier iambic poetry had mocked individuals, Old Comedy (drawing in part on the iambic tradition) put popular figures on stage for the purpose of making a joke about them that was expected to be understood by the theater audience.¹⁶ The “*point d’appui*” could derive from a broader social discourse. It need not spring from a desire to represent the biography of an individual or the comic poet’s own particular views.¹⁷

In this paper, I first examine the cultural context in which slander of Euripides’ mother was produced and argue that such slander reflected as well as produced the popular image of Euripides in the theater. As Graziosi has recently argued in the case of Homer, biographical facts are themselves fabricated products. Thus the *Certamen* does not so much provide us with biographical information about Homer and Hesiod as give us “a means of exploring the meaning and value of their poetry in a particular context: democratic Athens.”¹⁸ The discourse about the poet could be used to promote ideas about his poetry.¹⁹ References to

fun of popular politicians and trends, that alone would not explain—as Sommerstein (1996b: 336) suggests (cf. Ste Croix 1972: 326)—the favorable mention of anyone, such as Nicias or Sophocles. Yet, these more traditional (“Cimonian conservative”) politicians (and perhaps poets), do not always appear in such favorable light: Storey (2003: 213) notes that the “passages taken together do possess an overall belittling and condescending attitude to him (Nicias).” In the case of Sophocles, *Ar. Peace* 695–699 does not appear favorable to him (see below, 36–37, n. 152). The fact that attacks on “demagogues” and the “radical” leaders of the *demoi* are statistically prevalent does not, however, imply that the author(s) sympathized with this view.

¹⁵ Sommerstein 1996b: 328; for comic references to Cleisthenes, see Sommerstein 1996b: 353.

¹⁶ Kaimio and Nykopp 1997; Sommerstein 1996b: 329: “To ask what sort of people became *komodoumenoi* may be something like asking what made a person well known in fifth-century Athens.” On the relationship between *iamboi* and Old Comedy, see Degani 1993; Henderson 1991a: 17–29; Rosen 1988. Carey (1994) emphasizes the multifaceted functions of Old Comedy and notes that comedy defines social groups “by emphasizing negatively the equality of all citizens and by confirming the existence of freedom of speech” (71). *Ar. Frogs* 1–15 plays with an understanding of the tastes of the theater audience and comedy’s skillful manipulation of these expectations.

¹⁷ There has been much discussion concerning the personal views of the poet: see, for example, Ste Croix 1972: 355–376; Sommerstein 1996b (Aristophanes as a Cimonian conservative); Henderson 1998 (Old Comedy as oppositional); Gomme 1938; Heath 1987 (Old Comedy as non-political). Goldhill (1991) emphasizes the difficulty in pinning down the poet’s own voice. For my purposes, Aristophanes’ own views are not at issue (and arguably impossible to reconstruct). Instead, I address the question of comedy’s relation with broader social discourses in Athens (concerning, e.g., performance style, oratory, music)—views and attitudes shared by different groups in the theater audience—in order to approach the meaning of Euripides on stage.

¹⁸ Graziosi 2002: 180; cf. 7: “a description of Homer is the very direct expression of a particular interpretation of the poems.” Silk (1990: 161) argues that the character of Euripides in *Thesmophoriazusae* is a “personification of the ‘real’ Euripides’ own plays”; cf. Jens 1968: 2, claiming that comedy invents “facts” to portray characteristic ideas.

¹⁹ See further Graziosi 2002: 168 and *passim*. Griffith (1983) discusses autobiographical passages in archaic poetry and their construction of a particular audience.

Euripides in Old Comedy may have been fodder for later writers of the *Lives* of the poets, but comedy also expresses ideas about Euripidean drama and its relation to the heterogeneous fifth-century theater audience.²⁰ Throughout Aristophanes' comedies the trinity of Euripides, his mother, and his plays functions to express ideas about Euripidean drama and its production. It is no coincidence that slander of mothers also appears in the depiction of demagogues in Old Comedy.²¹ Since Aristophanes was competing with fellow poets, the mockery of such political and tragic "demagoguery" suggests that it was imagined to be appealing to the mass audience in the theater.

In the second half of the paper I discuss the notion of Euripides' popularity and the demotic appeal of Euripides' plays in terms of acting and performance style.²² A comparison of anecdotes describing the highly emotive and mimetic style of actors in Euripides with the oratorical style of the demagogues provides evidence for a conceptual link between political and theatrical audiences. Another important aspect of this linkage is the reception of New Music in Euripides. Fifth-century musical innovations affected tragedy, and the response of critics both to New Music and to the adoption of these musical developments in Euripidean drama offers us invaluable insights into the reception of Euripides in Athens. Old

²⁰ Another aspect of this reception of Euripides in Old Comedy involves his association and problematic relationship with women and/or female characters. Although space precludes discussion of this complex development—i.e., leading to stories of misogyny and trouble with his spouse(s)—I hope to argue in a separate study that the use of female characters in Euripides contributed to this particular strand of criticism. The use of *καλεῖν* is instructive: found most often in the context of women and with negative connotations (e.g., *Lys.* 356, *Thesm.* 717), it can also be used in a neutral sense instead of *λέγειν* (e.g., *Frogs* 751, of a slave; *Ecll.* 16, 119). It is also closely associated with Euripides in *Frogs*: see Willi 2003: 169, 191, suggesting that female speech was more receptive to linguistic innovation. Ar. *Frogs* 951 further connects Euripidean female characters (among others) with democracy.

²¹ Saïd (2001: 13) asserts that Aristophanes, "grâce à cette généalogie qui fait de lui fils d'une 'marchande' (-*polis*), ... associe Euripide, le 'nouveau' poète tragique, aux nouveaux politiciens qui appartiennent tous à la catégorie des 'marchandes' (-*polis*)." Saïd provides no argumentation and focuses on literary texts; it is also unclear why Euripides is the "nouveau" poet. My study argues in detail for the association of tragic and political demagoguery in Old Comedy (including Aristophanes) and explores not only the textual but the broader cultural and ideological effects of this slander in light of theatrical performance. Such slander of mothers also looms large in Attic oratory. Aeschines (3.171–173), for example, makes much of the alleged Scythian ancestry of Demosthenes on his mother's side: Demosthenes' wickedness, inherited from a barbarian, is not native to Athens.

²² See now Worman 2002 for discussion of style in drama as embodying both linguistic as well as physical aspects. Yet Worman's study tends to focus on rhetorical constructions of style despite her insistence on (Bourdieu's) "bodily *hexis*." Recent discussions of the physical body in performance include Green 2002 and Valakas 2002 (both with additional bibliography). See below, 33–36, for brief discussion of the actor's style in terms of physical movements and gestures on stage as well as comments on Euripides' style in Aristophanes (also at times based on physical movements and gestures by actors on stage). Worman (2004) discusses the performance style of orators as evidenced in the debates between Aeschines and Demosthenes.

Comedy may have created its own comic distortions of Euripides, but evidence from the reception of the plays as well as aspects of the dramatic productions point to a particular Euripidean persona created because of its popularity and thus for competitive reasons. This paper explores the prejudices and expectations of the theater audience.²³

Central to my understanding of the theater is its connection with the non-theatrical. By this I mean that the theatrical performance *also* refers (in perhaps oblique or mystified ways) to a general understanding of the world outside the theater.²⁴ Athenian dramatic festivals offered an opportunity not only to witness the celebration of Athenian culture and its empire (especially at the City Dionysia), but also to deal with some of the deep-seated ideological issues of Athenian society.²⁵ The theater audience included the residents of Attica (most of whom were not wealthy)—citizens, metics and (perhaps) women and slaves—as well as foreigners.²⁶ It was this predominantly non-elite audience

²³ It is therefore not concerned with the *Realia* of Euripides' life—e.g., whether he really was a misogynist or really did work in a cave on Salamis—since such statements by themselves tell us little about Euripides. As Stevens (1956: 89) suggests, the story of Euripides' working in a cave may have something to do with Athenian ideas concerning intellectuals: they could be regarded as "proud and unsociable." Yet Stevens posits some "further foundation" for this story: Euripides "really was" less sociable than Sophocles (who in the *Lives* and various anecdotes is portrayed as a *bon vivant*). I argue here that these "facts" need to be understood within the logic of the narrative from which they come and that biographical motifs—e.g., the asocial artist—must be historically contextualized within the culture that expressed them. The context of performance is crucial: Old Comedy is particularly clear about its desire to win first prize in the competition (see, e.g., Ar. *Ach.* 1224–34, *Clouds* 1115–31, *Birds* 445, *Eccl.* 1154–62; the reference to ὁ βασιλεύς mentioned at *Ach.* 1224 likely refers to the *archon basileus* who may have crowned the victor: see Olson 2002: 363, *ad* 1224–25). It is not unreasonable to think that comic poets trafficked in the sensational and the popular—both of which were sure to attract attention favorable to the production.

²⁴ See, for example, Citti 1978; Di Benedetto 1971; Griffith 1995, 1998, 2002; McClure 1999; Mendelsohn 2002; Seaford 1994; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988; Wilson 1996; Wohl 1998.

²⁵ See, for example, Bassi 1998; Foley 2001; Goldhill 1990; Griffith 1995, 1998, 2002; Hall 1997; Winkler 1990; Seaford 1994; Zeitlin 1996. For a broader perspective, see Turner 1982. For a critique of recent social and ritual readings, see Griffin 1998 and Scullion 2002.

²⁶ On the composition of the fifth-century theater audience, see Csapo 2000; Csapo and Slater 1995: 286–311; Goldhill 1994; Henderson 1991b; Moretti 1999–2000; Pickard-Cambridge 1988: 263–278; Sommerstein 1997; Wallace 1997. Although the evidence for the presence of women is hotly contested, there is good evidence for Athenian citizens of different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as foreigners, metics, and even slaves. The size of the theater audience has been subject to some debate: estimates range from 3,700 (Dawson 1997) through 5,500 (Korres 2002) or 10,000–14,000 (Moretti 1999–2000) to 14,000–17,000 people (Pickard-Cambridge 1988). In light of the probability that the *theatron* was made of wood and constructed for each festival and the limitations imposed on the size of the *theatron* on account of its rectilinear shape, a smaller estimate for the size of the theater audience (4,000–7,000) is most likely (see Csapo forthcoming). Even with this smaller number of spectators, however, it is unlikely that the majority of the audience was wealthy; *contra* Vickers (1997: xxiv), who asserts that Old Comedy was not written for "peasants or potters." But these were precisely the individuals who populated Athens in large numbers at the end of the fifth century: Raafaub (1998) discusses the explosion in the numbers of the *thetes* in Athens during the Peloponnesian War; cf. Xen.

before which Aristophanes' productions competed. Representations of Euripides on the comic stage and innuendo that his mother hawked vegetables in the market offer commentary on his tragic style—particularly in terms of its (problematic) reception in Athens—and the role of the mass audience in theater production.

ALL ABOUT HIS MOTHER?

In Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, when Dicaeopolis asks Euripides for some *skandix*, which he got from his mother, Euripides declares that he is being humiliated (*hybrisdei*, 479) and orders the doors to be shut (473–479):²⁷

Dicaeopolis	ἐπελαθόμην ἐν ᾧπέρ ἐστι πάντα μοι τὰ πράγματα. Εὐριπίδιον <ὦ> γλυκύτατον καὶ φίλτατον, κάκιστ' ἀπολοίμην, εἴ τί σ' αἰτήσαιμ' ἔτι πλὴν ἐν μόνον, τουτὶ μόνον, τουτὶ μόνον· σκάνδικά μοι δὲ, μητρόθεν δεδεγμένον·
Euripides	άνήρ ὑβρίζει. κλῆε πηκτὰ δομάτων.

Dicaeopolis	I forgot the thing on which all my plans depend. Oh my sweetest and dearest Euripides, may I perish most miserably if I ever ask you for anything again—except for only one thing, just this, just this: give me some chervil, “which you received from your mother.”
Euripides	The man humiliates me. Shut the doors of the house and fasten them tight!

Thus ends an extended parody of Euripidean tragedy and characters, all of whom are represented as lame, dressed in rags, and wretched. This is the first extant reference in Aristophanes to Euripides' mother as a vegetable-seller or someone associated with *skandix* (chervil), a plant akin to parsley (Theoph. *HP* 7.7.1). Wild, gathered plants like *skandix* seem to have been eaten by the rural poor or, more generally, in times of economic distress; as Gallant argues, such plants “were utilized by the poor regularly and by the rest of the peasantry frequently when crop yields fell.”²⁸

Mem. 3.7.6, which relates that the Assembly was full of craftsmen. Ancient critics of the Athenian theater (e.g., the Old Oligarch, Plato, Aristotle) likewise attest a high degree of (elite) alienation from the cultural practices of the (mass, demotic) theater audience. There is also some evidence for slaves attending the performances (e.g., Theoph. *Char.* 9.5), and after the battle of Arginusae (see Hunt 1998: 92–101; Dover 1993: 50) we might expect more (enfranchised) former slaves to have attended the performances—thus opening up another line of reception for lower class characters (among others) in drama. I address the sociology of the theater audience in a separate study in progress.

²⁷ The text I use for Aristophanes is based on Sommerstein's editions of the plays with the exception of *Acharnians*, which is based on Olson 2002; translations are adapted from Sommerstein's editions and the Loeb series edited by Henderson.

²⁸ See Gallant 1991: 117; he further notes in the context of comparative evidence (1991: 115): “When food began to dwindle, ancient Greeks, like peasants elsewhere, could exploit a wide variety of wild resources to supplement or to replace their normal dietary regime.” See also Garnsey 1988 on

In *Thesmophoriazusae*, we find Mica referring to Euripides as the “son of a vegetable-seller” (383–388):

φιλοτιμία μὲν οὐδεμίᾳ μὰ τῷ θεῷ
λέξουσ’ ἀνέστην, ὦ γυναῖκες· ἀλλὰ γὰρ
βαρέως φέρω τάλαινα πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον
προπηλακίζομένας ὁρῶσ’ ὑμᾶς ὑπὸ
Εὐριπίδου τοῦ τῆς λαχανοπωλητρίας
καὶ πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖ’ ἀκουούσας κακά.

Out of no personal ambition, by the Two Goddesses, have I
risen to speak, ladies. Rather, for a long time now I have felt
wretchedly aggrieved at seeing how you were being dragged
in the mud by Euripides, the son of a greengrocer,
and were having many evil things of all kinds said about you.

References to *λάχανα* also suggest that it was associated with beggars and not particularly valued.²⁹ Still later in the play, Euripides’ savagery against women is explained through his upbringing among wild herbs by the Garland-Seller (455–456):

ἄγρια γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὦ γυναῖκες, δρᾷ κακά,
ἅτ’ ἐν ἀγρίοισι τοῖς λαχάνοις αὐτὸς τραφεῖς.

He does the most savage things to us, ladies, as one might
expect from a man brought up among wild herbs.

The ancient *Lives* of Euripides tend to read such scenes literally. Thus we read at the beginning of the *Genos* that “Euripides the poet was the son of Mnesarchides, a shopkeeper, and of Cleito, a seller of vegetables; he was Athenian . . .” and so on. The early third-century Athenian historian, Philochorus, however, offers us a different family history. He relates that Euripides was “from one of the very best [i.e., elite] families.”³⁰ In Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1416a) we hear that Euripides was involved in an *antidosis*. Whether he was or not, the implication is that he has

food supply and crisis. For additional references to *skandix*, see Olson 2002: 196, *ad loc.* Andocides fr. 4 includes a wish that the people of Athens may not have to eat such wild herbs as *skandix*; in light of the rest of the fragment, this may have been a result of the dire situation caused by the stress of the early years of the Peloponnesian War. Forbes (1976) discusses the significance of collecting wild herbs for ancient as well as modern Greek peasants. Olson (2002: 195, *ad* 466–469) notes that the scholiast insists that the ἰσχνά φυλλεῖα (*Arch.* 469) “must be old vegetable greens, trimmings of a sort that anyone who can afford to do so discards and beggars pick up to eat.”

²⁹ Ar. *Pl.* 298 (see Sommerstein 2001: 158, *ad* 298), Dem. 50.61: although the elite trierarch, Apollodorus, mentions *λάχανα* grown on his land, his reference to them suggests that they were not highly prized; see also Ar. *Thesm.* 456, fr. 938.

³⁰ *FGH* 328 F 218; cf. *Suda* s.v. Euripides E 3695: τὴν σφόδρα εὐγενήν. Scullion (2003: 391) notes that “It was . . . Philochorus who established that Euripides’ mother was not, as the comic poets had it, a hawker of vegetables, but well-born.” Scullion (391) suggests further that sources that contradict Philochorus “researches are, some certainly and the rest very probably, the product of methods other than his, and unworthy of anything other than aggressive suspicion.” This may be

enough money to perform liturgies. The problem for us is how to evaluate the status of Euripides' family—is he the son of a relatively poor market woman or a member of an elite family?³¹

So why does Aristophanes represent Euripides' mother as a vegetable-seller?³² Wilamowitz judged the question unanswerable, leaving it to the *Literaturgeschichtler* as he snidely remarked.³³ Subsequent *Literaturgeschichtler* have, in fact, explained this biographical anecdote in remarkably uniform ways—much like the ancient writers of the *Lives of the Poets*.³⁴ While registering the obscurity of the precise point behind such anecdotes, scholars have tended to explain such references to Euripides' mom as biographical facts. Previous explanations have attempted to connect remarks about Euripides' mother to the family's life “in an economically backward” deme, or to the family's actual production of food for the marketplace, or to the fact that the family had fallen on hard times and was forced to sell produce.³⁵ Taking a different approach, Lefkowitz argues that, “for ordinary men, the *Lives* . . . preserved a distant sense of the critical judgments passed on

“comic badinage,” but the meaning of this badinage is more complicated than a simple question of right or wrong. As I argue here, such slander was an effective means of communication before the mass theater audience.

³¹ See Olson 2000 for discussion of families of tragic poets. Aristophanes (*Knights* 512–550) presents the difficulties facing the comic poet. Hunzinger (2001) suggests that the *Lives*—and the ancient biographic tradition in general—are composed of θαύματα that evoke the marvelous and the sensational as, in this case, the base lineage of the poet.

³² For Aristophanes' particular relationship with tragedy in general and Euripides in particular, see Silk 2000a and 2000b: 49–51; see also Schwinge 2002.

³³ Wilamowitz 1959: 11.

³⁴ On the problems of treating comic statements as historical facts, see Halliwell 1984. In particular, Halliwell (1993: 88) argues against the assumptions motivating ancient commentary on the *komodoumenoi*, “that Aristophanic satire accurately reproduces the historical truth about individuals; secondly, a faith that the poet's strictures are directed against those whose moral deficiencies merited them.”

³⁵ Brock 1994: 339, n. 19: “Might the slur perhaps have been due either to origins in a deme represented as economically backward (although Phlya is not especially remote), or to the family's practicing market-gardening rather than growing cereals?” Mastronarde 2002: 2: it “may be a distortion of some actual family connection with production of food for the Attic marketplace.” Dover 1993: 297, *ad* 840: “The reason why comedy treated her as a greengrocer is obscure; perhaps his father had productive land and sold his surplus profitably, in which case his enemies would enjoy portraying her as trudging to market laden with vegetables; or it may be that the family fell on hard times and made a living in ways which could be treated as unworthy of a solid citizen (cf. Dem. 57.35, 42, where the speaker has to defend his mother's social status).” Sommerstein 1996a: 230, *ad* *Frogs* 840: “In fact Cleito was of high birth [citing Philochorus], and the origin of the canard is obscure.” Schwinge (2002: 8) dismisses the charge against Euripides' mother as *bomolochosartige* but goes on to discuss the relevance to the plays of charges of the author's misogyny and unbridled realism. Olson 2002: 197, *ad* *Ach.* 478: the “precise origin and point of the slander are obscure . . . [T]he general implication is that she was (1) of a very low socio-economic status and (2) as a result of her occupation exposed (and perhaps open) to sexual advances.” Schachermeyr (1972: 318) argues from additional (anecdotal) evidence that the family belonged “ganz gewiss der guten Gesellschaft,” but they were *neoploutoi*. In the context of a thorough collection of ancient anecdotes about Euripides' family Schachermeyr suggests that the slander of the mother relates to the father's activities as a merchant; Euripides'

by the experts.”³⁶ Yet such references to the lives of the poets are not best viewed as purely literary inventions (or as products of the experts, unless this includes the mass theater audience). At any rate, we are still left wondering what Aristophanes’ remarks might *mean* to the theater audience in fifth-century Athens.

A few studies have tackled the issue directly. Ruck quickly dismissed the idea of viewing the joke about Euripides’ mom as having to do with her lower class origins and went on to discuss the term *skandix* and its use as an aphrodisiac.³⁷ He suggests (1975: 31) that references to Euripides’ mother as a vegetable-seller are likely to be the butt of some joke which portrayed her in a sexual role. His theory *presupposes* a comedy that had such a scene in it, but we have no evidence for one. Borthwick tentatively suggested that the anecdotes have to do less with the genre of Old Comedy than with Euripides’ *actual* mother. Arguing that “selling green vegetables” was a “euphemism for prostitution,” Borthwick put forward the idea that the mom in question was a *step-mom*. Since chronology renders it unlikely that Aristophanes refers to Euripides’ mother, as she would have been nearly 80 when Aristophanes mocked her and her son in *Acharnians* (457, 478) and about 100 when Aristophanes made reference to her in *Frogs* (840), Borthwick proposed instead that Aristophanes was making fun of the woman that his father was seeing—Euripides’ *step-mom*.³⁸ Whereas Borthwick insists on interpreting the anecdote as having something to do with a living person, Ruck foregrounds the obscene and sexual in Old Comedy and explains the anecdote as one such example of a comic scene for which there is no evidence.

To contextualize this anecdote more fully, I sketch briefly the role of such market-women in Old Comedy and examine in particular the other instances in which the mothers of prominent individuals in Athens were presented as market-

family, he argues, was wealthy, but that did not stop comic poets from using a topos to cast aspersions on the source of this wealth.

³⁶ Lefkowitz 1981: 137 (e.g., Plut. *Nic.* 29 explains the popularity of Euripides); she further notes (88, n. 3) that “Criticism of social background is a standard mode of invective.” For Lefkowitz, the *Lives* (1981: 136) tell us little “about what we most want to know: why poets wrote and how they worked,” yet the anecdotes do tell us something of the history of the reception of poets. For it is precisely the meaning of these popular prejudices, their historical and/or literary sources and their transmission, that *can* be investigated. See Lefkowitz 1978: 460: biographical data are “none the less worthy of interest as a form of a popular and pervasive new mythology.” McGlew (2002: 109, n. 56) likewise notes that comedy does not tell people what to do but what they are doing.

³⁷ Ruck 1975; the centrality of obscenity in Old Comedy is the point here: Ruck seeks to recuperate the vitality of Aristophanes (e.g., “what he has been kept from expressing by his critics”). Lefkowitz (1981: 88, n. 3) also faults Ruck for taking “at face value what Aristophanes says in a comedy about his friends.”

³⁸ Borthwick 1994. The age of Euripides’ father is not considered. Such a woman in Borthwick’s view (1994: 40) would have become a “considerable embarrassment to the austere poet” and an “irresistible target for the humor” of the poet and his audience. Borthwick (1994: 38) notes the abuse directed against Hyperbolus’ mother and suggests that, “similar scurrility is involved in the jokes about Euripides’ mother,” but does not develop the connection. See my discussion below, 15–17.

women in connection with two of the so-called “new politicians,” Hyperbolus and Cleophon. I then take a close look at Euripides as represented in Aristophanes as well as other indications of his popular appeal. By contextualizing the remarks about Euripides’ mother in Aristophanes’ comedies I hope to show that these passages revolve around questions of Euripidean style and the expectations of the theater audience.

My argument is that such biographical anecdotes have *nothing* to do with Euripides’ own class, himself, or his family. They also have little to do with the obscenity and sexuality of Old Comedy. Rather, representing Euripides’ mother as a huckster of vegetables has everything to do with his tragedies and criticism of the style of his tragic productions.³⁹ In light of recent work on fifth-century culture that has emphasized the value of (biographic) anecdotes to express general perceptions (or *mentalité*) rather than historical facts, I suggest that biographic anecdotes about Euripides’ mother—instead of reflecting contemporary truth—could constitute the *reality of the reception* of Euripides in the theater for a segment of the theater audience. And we should imagine that Aristophanes thought this segment to be significant enough to include anecdotal information about Euripides’ mother in his comedies. Previous scholars have read these lines too literally.⁴⁰ There may indeed be a hard kernel of the Real that we cannot see lurking below here, but what is more important is the telling and retelling of a particular theater history through Euripides’ mother.⁴¹

MARKET-WOMEN AND DEMAGOGUES

Old Comedy is full of loud-mouthed and abusive market-women. These anonymous garland-sellers, inn-keeper’s wives, and bread-sellers characteristically

³⁹ Old Comedy, for Momigliano (1993: 39), was “no objective contribution to the biography of Socrates or Cleon or Euripides.” See also Arrighetti 1987 and Fornaro 1977 and 1979 for the idea that the representation of Euripides’ mom as a vegetable-seller was a projection of stylistic considerations: Euripides’ style represented the *genus tenue* and thus his mother was depicted as a (vulgar) market woman (on the “grand” and “plain” linguistic styles, see O’Sullivan 1992). Whereas these studies emphasize rhetorical categories, the present paper foregrounds the role played by literary criticism, articulated through biographic anecdotes, in the formation and maintenance of social ideologies.

⁴⁰ Yet see Kris and Kurz 1979, emphasizing the structure of biographic narratives and explain the “artist anecdote” as evidence of the artist’s legend that was already held by a particular culture: stereotypical themes are thus embodied in the narrative structure of the genre. Narrative can also, however, serve to constitute reality as well as reflect it. For discussion of Kris and Kurz 1979, see Soussloff 1997.

⁴¹ Lefkowitz (1981: viii) poses a different problem: “how reliable a source is Aristophanes, who was not a historian but a comic poet?” But even “historical” texts do not simply provide “reliable” facts; see now Piccirilli 2002 for biographies and biographic anecdotes as evidence of the culture’s and author’s *mentalité* (with additional bibliography). The studies of Gribble (1999), on the representation of Alcibiades, and Michelakis (2002), on the representation of Achilles in tragedy, provide valuable attempts to understand the narrative function of biographic material and dramatic characterization, respectively.

address economic issues. For instance, the garland seller in *Thesmophoriazousae* complains that her income has been drastically cut and that she cannot feed her children on account of Euripides' teachings that the gods do not exist. She is unable to stay with the women at the festival as she needs to make money (445–458). In *Wasps*, Philocleon's attack on a poor bread-seller, Myrtia, elicits her complaints about lost revenue (1388–91). Here it is worthwhile to remember that Philocleon has just been receiving lessons in aristocratic behavior at the symposium. His problem is an excessive adherence to a new aristocratic way of life that he is unable to moderate.⁴² Earlier in the play, a female vegetable-seller (λαχανόπωλις) speaks out against a customer asking for free onions with which to season his sardines; she accuses the customer of hankering for a tyranny (496–499). Market-women speak out against economic and political conditions and criticize their customers for their transgressive elite behavior.⁴³ Such public raillery often falls to these female characters, as if it were "something fit only for 'fish wives,' inn-keepers and other similarly 'low' women."⁴⁴ Henderson has argued that these market-women represent the concerns of the urban poor and the sentiments of the radical democracy in Athens.⁴⁵

Old Comedy often depicts Athenian demagogues in association with the marketplace.⁴⁶ The new politicians of the radical democracy are characterized as "sellers" and "hucksters" of all sorts, and their origins—and especially those of their mothers—are often assailed as poor and servile.⁴⁷ Aristophanes' *Knights* is the only extant version of a "demagogue comedy."⁴⁸ In this play, Cleon is reviled as a coarse and pernicious demagogue whose eventual defeat is joyously

⁴² On social tensions in Attic symposia, see, for example, Fisher 2000; Murray 1990.

⁴³ In the *Lysistrata*, the "warrior women" (e.g., 341–349, 561–564) protest against (masculine) civic policies and the effects of the war; *Lysistrata* (e.g., 489–529) critiques (masculine) politics. See further Henderson 2000: 140–143.

⁴⁴ Halliwell 1991b: 289–291 (quote from 289, additional references at 289, n. 40). This tradition goes back to epic: see Hom. *Il.* 20.251–255, where Aeneas ends his squabble with Achilles by suggesting that such behavior is appropriate for abusive wives.

⁴⁵ Henderson 1987; see also Ehrenberg 1962.

⁴⁶ Lind 1990: 247–289; Connor 1971: 151–175; Ehrenberg 1962: 128; Rosenbloom 2002: 305–310 and 2004b: 341–349. Davies (1981) discusses the sources of wealth for the "new politicians." On personal abuse in Old Comedy, see, for example, Atkinson 1992; Carawan 1990; Carey 1994; Halliwell 1984 and 1991a; Henderson 1993 and 1998; Reckford 1987: 461; Rosen 1988; Storey 1977 and 2003: 338–348. Additional bibliography on politicians and Old Comedy: Harvey and Wilkins 2000: 540–541.

⁴⁷ For discussion of the role of comic poets in the debates surrounding political leaders in the *polis*, see Carawan 1990; Carey 1994; Dover 1974: 30–33; Halliwell 1991a; Henderson 1993, 1998, and 2003; Storey 2003: 338–345. On the abuse of the mothers of demagogues, see Lind 1990: 242, 245–252.

⁴⁸ On the portrayal of the demagogues and the genre, see Finley 1962: 16; Lind 1990; Schwarze 1971; Sommerstein 1996b and 2000; Storey 1977 and 2003: 342–345. Pericles was not immune to charges of pandering to the people: see Plut. *Per.* 9.1, 9.3, 10.4, 11.4; for his portrayal in Old Comedy, see McGlew 2002; Schwarze 1971.

celebrated—yet he was famously elected general a few weeks later, a fact which may suggest that Aristophanes' portrayal of Cleon was not entirely designed to malign the demagogue.⁴⁹ *Knights* 128–145 depicts the leaders of the *demos* as a series of market-sellers: first Eucrates, the hemp monger; then Lysicles, the sheep-seller; then Paphlagon (i.e., Cleon), the tanner. Ultimately Paphlagon, however, will be replaced by the sausage-seller. The parabasis of Aristophanes' *Frogs* (esp. 718–737) further assails demagogues as *poneroi* vis-à-vis the traditional, “aristocratic” leaders. Platon (fr. 22) presents the new politicians as a class unto themselves: membership is predicated on being buggered.⁵⁰ Eupolis (fr. 384) assails the generals and leaders during the years of the radical democracy as *nouveaux riches*. Another fragment (fr. 104) compares contemporary leaders with the previous generation: “And, lords Miltiades and Pericles, do not let these young buggered men hold office, who drag the generalship around their ankles.”⁵¹ These progressive *poneroi* are contrasted with more conservative (and traditional) *chrestoi* (Rosenbloom 2004). The Old Oligarch (2.19) suggests that these two factions competed for control in the *polis* and notes that the *demos* not only recognizes the members of these opposed factions but prefers the *poneroi*, since these *poneroi* (unlike the *chrestoi*) are advantageous to the *demos*. These politicians were wealthy, but their wealth derived from new sources that were considered base and vulgar in the eyes of the (traditional) conservative elite in Athens.⁵² Such

⁴⁹For recent discussion of the role of Cleon in *Knights* and the politics of his representation in Thucydides and Aristophanes, see Hesk 2000: 257–265 and Wohl 2002: 73–174. In her elaborate discussion, Wohl convincingly argues (2002: 120) that Aristophanes allows the audience to leave the theater with a vision of the *demos* as sovereign (the audience is seduced by the image of “*demos* enthroned”) or as clever (the audience learns a lesson concerning the dangers of such flattery). Either way, the audience is “flattered”: Aristophanes “seduces by warning against seduction and educates by gratifying.” Cleon allegedly prosecuted Aristophanes for speaking ill against the city before foreigners (*Ach.* 496–508) and for committing *hybris* against the *demos* in *Babylonians* (*Ach.* 628–631); it is impossible to say whether this prosecution happened or not. Rosen (1988) argues that this was a fictive account constructed by Aristophanes (see further Csapo and Slater 1995: 166–168); there may, however, have been some conflict between the two (again, it is impossible to be specific); for brief discussion, see Olson 2002: xxx (with additional bibliography).

⁵⁰Lind 1990: 249–278; Rosenbloom (2004: 78) speaks of a “faction” of new politicians (e.g., Hyperbolus, Cleophon, etc.) that developed around their “tribal affiliation, socio-economic background, ideological resistance to their leadership expressed through a kind of comic ridicule specific to them, and shared political aims as protectors of the *demos* against subversion and as rivals of Alcibiades” (2004: 84). Wives of these prominent (popular) politicians were also mocked: see Henderson 2000: 141.

⁵¹For the theme of old vs. new in Eupolis, see Storey 2003: 344–348. Such characteristics of the demagogues were “part of a popular prejudice reflected in Old Comedy” (Storey 1977: 199; see also Lind 1990: 238–251, *nouveaux riches*: 248); cf. also the unnamed demagogue (possibly Hyperbolus) of Eupolis fr. 99.23–34, on which see Storey 2003: 149–160.

⁵²On the new sources of personal wealth, see Davies 1981: 38–72. The opposition between *poneroi* and *chrestoi* in Athens was also part of a moral system that ideologically allowed for a *chrestos* who was not wealthy: see Rosenbloom 2004: 64 and 2002: 300–312; see also Wohl 2002: 41–124. Ober

contentious and hostile struggles for legitimacy in our sources suggest that the elite in Athens was divided between progressive and conservative leaders.⁵³ Old Comedy focused on the leaders of the *demos* as this struggle was a central and topical political issue. But comedy's response to the new politicians points to their ambiguous reception among a divided audience in Athens.⁵⁴

Aristophanes' *Clouds* provides valuable testimony about the comic targeting of demagogues in Old Comedy. In his attack on other poets in the revised parabasis, Aristophanes suggests that he led the way with the "demagogue comedy" (549–559):⁵⁵

ὃς μέγιστον ὄντα Κλέων' ἔπαισ' εἰς τὴν γαστέρα
 κοῦκ ἐτόλμησ' αὐθις ἐπεμπηδῆσ' αὐτῷ κειμένῳ.
 οὗτοι δ', ὡς ἅπαξ παρέδωκεν λαβὴν Ὑπέρβολος,
 τοῦτον δεῖλαιον κολετρῶσ' ἀεὶ καὶ τὴν μητέρα.
 Εὐπολὶς μὲν τὸν Μαρικᾶν πρότιστον παρεῖλκυσε
 ἐκστέψας τοὺς ἡμετέρους Ἰππέας κακὸς κακῶς,
 προσθεὶς αὐτῷ γραῦν μεθύσιν τοῦ κόρδακος οὐνεχ', ἦν
 Φρύνιχος πάλαι πεποίηχ', ἦν τὸ κῆτος ἥσθιεν.
 εἴθ' Ἑρμιππος αὐθις ἐποίησεν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
 ἄλλοι τ' ἤδη πάντες ἐρείδουσιν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
 τὰς εἰκὸς τῶν ἐγγέλεων τὰς ἐμὰς μιμούμενοι.

(1989: 11–17, 248–270) discusses some of the criteria for the older, traditional elite in Athens; see also Griffith 1995: 64, n. 8.

⁵³ See now Rosenbloom 2002 and 2004 (with additional bibliography); Wohl 2002: 37–40.

⁵⁴ Rosenbloom (2004: 86) argues that the "culture (as opposed to economy, politics, and society) of late fifth-century Athens is reactionary, for it refuses to validate their [i.e. the new politicians'] leadership"; nevertheless, there was economic, political, and social validation of the progressive leaders of the *demos*, but its validation of these leaders was ambiguous. It is interesting to note that the *demos'* reactionary stance is limited to the sphere of culture (i.e., it enjoyed the other advantages that it recognized in the *poneroi*). Somewhat differently, Carey (1994: 76–77) argues that in light of the radical changes in the political world in Athens during the years of the radical democracy, "The comic theater in addressing these issues allows anxiety to surface in a humorous context and to be laughed away temporarily" (77). Yet the effect of this laughter could last longer than the performance. Since not all Athenians in the theater would (presumably) have held the same beliefs and values on all issues, there is room here for some Athenians to modulate their opinions based on the comic production; cf. Halliwell 1993: 335–340. It is, however, questionable whether comedy only reflects the values of the theater audience (e.g., Carey 1994: 81: the "poet seeks to harness (rather than change) existing public opinion"; Connor 1971: 171; Dover 1972: 97). Ruffell (2000: 498, n. 35) suggests that the audience would not show "class solidarity" with demagogues represented as engaged in trade. I see no reason to exclude this identification for some members of the audience. Others may indeed have felt that the new politicians were "morally" inferior than an earlier (idealized) generation of leaders; yet they kept voting for such demagogues in surprising numbers for there not to have been some identification with them.

⁵⁵ MacDowell 1995: 134; translation adapted from Henderson 1998. Eupolis' *Golden Race* also mocked Cleon (fr. 316) and may possibly have been produced prior to Aristophanes' *Knights*: see Storey 2003: 266.

I am the one who hit almighty Cleon in the gut,
 but I wasn't so bold as to jump upon him again when he was down.
 But those poets, since they got a hold on Hyperbolus,
 are forever trampling on the poor man and his mother.
 Eupolis was the first to drag his *Maricas* onto the stage,
 having turned our *Knights* wretchedly inside out, the lout,
 attaching to it for the sake of the *kordax* the drunken old lady,
 which Phrynichos long ago staged, the one the sea-monster tried to eat.
 And then Hermippus attacked Hyperbolus,
 and now all the others are laying into Hyperbolus,
 copying my own similes about the eels.

Aristophanes here constructs a somewhat tendentious history of the comic stage, presenting a lineage in terms of demagogic targets of comic abuse.⁵⁶ After Cleon, Hyperbolus became the main comic target, but in these subsequent plays not only was the demagogue mocked on stage but his mother as well. Although Aristophanes' remark that "all the others" were attacking Hyperbolus remains difficult to interpret precisely because of the fragmentary remains of Old Comedy, there is good evidence that attacks on populist leaders became a popular comic plot.

Hermippus' *Breadsellers* (*Artopolides*, ca 421–416) seems to have mocked the demagogue Hyperbolus and also caricatured his mother.⁵⁷ In one fragment (fr. 9), she seems to be described as worn out, a whore, and a wild-sow. Eupolis likewise attacked Hyperbolus in *Maricas* (421),⁵⁸ presenting him as a foreigner—a Persian, as evidenced by his name in the play, *Maricas*.⁵⁹ His mother was introduced onstage and seems to have been associated with a bread-seller's tray (fr. 209).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Sommerstein 2000 (with additional bibliography). Before *Knights*, Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* had mocked Pericles: see Schwarze 1971. Lind (1990: 235) notes that comic attacks on Pericles centered on his *Privatleben*, while the demagogues were singled out for their dubious ancestry and (thus lower) social position. Aristophanes' complaint that other poets are imitating his "eel similes" refers to *Knights* 864–870. In light of the frequency with which demagogues are presented in conjunction with the market, these "eel similes" in the rival poets may have suggested Hyperbolus' "vulgarity" through the familiar topos of the market-woman or huckster.

⁵⁷ Frs. 8, 9. The play may not in fact have centered on the demagogue; the scholia (*ad Clouds* 557) state that his mother was caricatured and that some things were said against the demagogue in the play. For references to Hyperbolus in Old Comedy, see Sommerstein 1996b: 344; Lind 1990: 241; and Storey 2003: 149–160. For recent discussion of Hermippus, see Gilula 2000. According to Plutarch (*Per.* 32), Hermippus attacked Aspasia for impiety and accused her of taking freeborn Athenian women into her house for Pericles; see Henry 1995 for stories about Aspasia as a means to attack Pericles.

⁵⁸ Discussion of *Maricas*: Storey 1993 and 2003: 197–214; Heath 1990.

⁵⁹ For allegations of Hyperbolus' foreign status, see Cassio 1985; Morgan 1986; Storey 2003: 198–205. Polyzelos fr. 5 refers to Hyperbolus as "Phrygian."

⁶⁰ Schol. *ad Clouds* 555. Storey (2003: 204) suggests that "If she was portrayed as a bread-seller (compare the *artopolis* who appears at *Wasps* 1388–1414), this may explain the appropriateness of the

Clouds 555 implies that she danced the *kordax* at the end of the play in a riotous and outrageous manner.⁶¹ Maricas' undistinguished background (hanging out in barber-shops: fr. 194) and lack of intelligence (he knows only the alphabet: fr. 208) characterize him as typical of the allegedly degenerate "new politicians."⁶² The presence of two semi-choruses—one of *plousioi*, one of *penetes*—is also instructive: Maricas seems to have been supported by a semi-chorus of the poor.⁶³ In Platon's *Hyperbolus* (ca 420–416) much is also made of the demagogue's alleged roguishness (fr. 182), foreign birth (frs. 182, 185), and bad Greek (fr. 183).⁶⁴ Although a *komodoumenos* prior to Cleon's death (422), thereafter Hyperbolus seems to have become a more popular target in comedy as one of the leaders of the radical democracy in Athens (Storey 2003: 198–202). A fragment from Andocides (fr. 4) accuses Hyperbolus' father of being a branded slave working in the silver mines and calls Hyperbolus a "barbarian" who makes lamps.⁶⁵ Around 416/15 he was ostracized as a result of a short-lived alliance between Nicias and Alcibiades.⁶⁶ According to Thucydides, he was killed in 411 on Samos by Athenian and Samian oligarchic supporters as a demonstration of their newly found anti-democratic sympathies (8.73.3).

Platon's *Cleophon* (405) also seems to have made much of that demagogue's mother. The play mocked the demagogue's Thracian ancestry on his mother's side (fr. 61; cf. *Frogs* 681); it also represented him as abusing his mother (fr. 57) and being a thief (fr. 58) and a prostitute (fr. 60).⁶⁷ There are also references

telia and also indicate where Hermippos got the idea for his chorus of *artopolides* in his comedy of that name which caricatured Hyperbolus to some extent."

⁶¹ Storey 2003: 204; cf. Sommerstein 2000: 440–442, giving the mother a more prominent role.

⁶² On Hyperbolus in comedy, see Storey 2003: 201, 343. Other demagogues were also singled out for their foreign or poor origins: Hagnon (Cratinus fr. 171.66–76), Lycourgos (Cratinus fr. 32); see also Eupolis fr. 262.

⁶³ Storey 2003: 206–210. A fragmentary commentary on *Maricas* (P.Oxy. 2741) provides evidence for the divided chorus. The play seems to have ended with the downfall of Maricas, much like *Knights*: see Storey 2003: 202–204.

⁶⁴ For linguistic realism in Old Comedy, see Colvin 1999: esp. 264–308. Csapo (2002: 142) notes that "sociolect, which was freely used to (mis)represent specific (elite) individuals, was avoided in the linguistic representation of social groups within the polis."

⁶⁵ For references to Hyperbolus as a lamp-seller/maker, see Rosenbloom 2004: 59, n. 11.

⁶⁶ For documents and commentary on Hyperbolus' ostracism, see Siewert 2001: 55, T 12–14. Platon (fr. 203) laments that the ostracism was used on such an unworthy individual. For discussion of the ostracism, see Rosenbloom 2002 and 2004 (with additional bibliography).

⁶⁷ For Cleophon's (Thracian) language, see Colvin 2000: 283, 292; for recent discussion of the play, see Sommerstein 2000. MacDowell (1993) discusses the representation of foreign birth in Aristophanes and concludes (371) that "jokes about foreign ancestry need not all have the same basis. To say that a man had barbarian ancestors was a good topic for raising a laugh against someone, but a laugh would result *only if* there was something about the man which made imputation of foreign ancestry *appropriate*, and it is these particular facts which are likely to have differed in different cases" (my italics). Yet if such slander had become a dramatic convention, there is little sense in trying to

to his ownership of a lyre workshop.⁶⁸ Just as in the case of allegations of foreign ancestry, male prostitution and abuse of one's parents could serve to disqualify citizens from speaking in the Assembly (Sommerstein 2000: 443). Cleophon was a prominent politician after the democratic restoration in 410. He opposed any proposals for peace and instituted a daily dole of two obols (*diobelia*) to destitute citizens (*Ath. Pol.* 28.3).⁶⁹ There is evidence that he attacked the oligarch Critias and claimed that his family was notorious for licentiousness (Arist. *Rhet.* 1375b32).⁷⁰ In 404 when the oligarchic forces were gaining power in Athens, Cleophon was tried on trumped-up charges of military desertion and executed.⁷¹

Hyperbolus and Cleophon as well as Cleon were all ridiculed in Old Comedy.⁷² Indeed, it seems that a new genre, the "demagogue comedy," arose to meet a demand in the theater. Their ancestry was frequently attacked, apparently in order to present them as foreigners (with the implication of servile origins) impersonating Athenian citizens. It is noteworthy that comic poets often articulated this attack on the citizen status of the demagogues through their mothers. After Pericles' citizenship law of 451/50, which restricted citizenship status to the children of parents who were both freeborn and native Athenians, mothers became important for the conferral of citizenship on their sons.⁷³ Yet

determine the "facts" that would have enabled the joke; the comic production would have created its own comic facts. In the case of Cleophon's ancestry MacDowell (1993: 370) admits "*aporia*" as to why comedy engaged in such slander.

⁶⁸ See schol. *ad Ar. Thesm.* 805 and *ad Frogs* 681; Andocides 1.146; *Ath. Pol.* 28.3. Wankel (1974: 91) notes that the use of a profession in place of a patronymic refers to a political judgment about a radical democrat. For references to Cleophon in Old Comedy, see Rosenbloom 2002: 307 and 2004: 81–82; Sommerstein 1996b: 344.

⁶⁹ For the connection between *diobelia* and *to poneron*, cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1267b1.

⁷⁰ See Wilson 2003: 201, n. 33 for the suggestion that Critias referred to Cleophon as a "string-seller" (χορδοπώλης).

⁷¹ For the life of Cleophon, see Swoboda 1921; Wankel 1974: 89–91; and Rosenbloom 2004: 81–83. Lysias (13.12) paints a favorable picture of Cleophon as a victim of the Thirty. According to the scholiast *ad Orestes* 903, 904 the speaker in the Assembly was understood as portraying Cleophon: see Willink 1986: 231. Sommerstein (1993) argues that the reperformance of *Frogs* was motivated by oligarchic hostility to Cleophon.

⁷² Cic. *Rep.* 4.11: [*comedia*] *populares homines inprobos, in re publica seditiosos, Cleonem Cleophontem Hyperbolum laesit*. Other demagogue comedies remain obscure because of the fragmentary remains; also known are Theopompus' *Teisamenos* and Archippos' *Rhinon*. See Sommerstein 2000: 449, n. 38 for other possible candidates. Prominent (non-demagogic) individuals caricatured in Old Comedy include Alcibiades (Eupolis' *Baptai*) and Theramenes (Philonides' *Kotbornoi*); see further Storey 1977: 179 and 2003: 101–105 (on *Baptai*).

⁷³ On Pericles' citizenship law, see ps.-Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 26.4 and Plut. *Per.* 37.2–4; for discussion of the law, see Boegehold 1994; E. Cohen 2000: 49–78; Connor 1994; Osborne 1997; Patterson 1981; Podlecki 1998: 159–162; Rhodes 1981: 331. For the significance of the mother in establishing the son's rights as a citizen, see, for example, Eur. *Hipp.* 419–430 and *Ion* 589–620, 669–675. For the reputation of women as reflecting upon the image of men, see Hunter 1994.

Hunter notes that the choice of mothers as targets “was probably based on the fact that such slander against a woman was difficult to refute.”⁷⁴ Since women were not inscribed on the list of Athenian citizens, their status was confirmed by their proper observance of rites of passage in the city. Confirmation of their participation in these rituals depended on witnesses, not written records.⁷⁵

As these politicians were likewise all extremely popular with the radical democratic majority in Athens, the comic poets were in effect promoting a comic image of *populist leaders*.⁷⁶ Comic abuse of their mothers was designed to cast doubt on their citizenship status, thereby marking them as unfit to manage the affairs of the polis. The comparison, often explicit, was with a previous generation of political and military leaders (e.g., *Knights* 1325–28; Eupolis *Demes* fr. 104).⁷⁷ Such abuse formed part of a broader set of attitudes in Athens. In Demosthenes’ *Against Eubulides*, Euxitheus defends himself against charges of not being a citizen. His status was challenged by allegations that his mother was a foreigner, as she sold ribbons in the marketplace and was a wet nurse. The speaker asks the Athenians not to consider those who work in the market for a living to be foreigners (57.32).⁷⁸ For the comic poets, attacking the mothers of demagogues

⁷⁴Hunter 1994: 112; she argues that “slander of a man’s mother was an effective form of attack, planting seeds of doubt in a jury’s mind and forcing an opponent to spend valuable time refuting the charges.”

⁷⁵Gould 2001: 117; Hunter 1994: 112.

⁷⁶See, for example, Connor 1971; Sommerstein 1996b; Wohl 2002. Cf. *Ath. Pol.* 28.3, which contrasts Cleon, leader of the *demos*, with Nicias, of the elite.

⁷⁷But notably *not* the progressive Themistocles (Eupolis *Demes* fr. 126): see Braun 2000 and Storey 2003: 132. The topos of generational conflict was also used in *Clouds* (e.g., in the *agon* between the Stronger and Weaker Arguments) as well as in *Frogs*, where Aeschylus is presented as a symbol of the older “Marathonomakhoi” generation; he is also hostile to the new politicians, and refers to them as “buffooning people’s monkeys” (1085). Yet as Dover (1993: 23) notes, the contest between Euripides and Aeschylus was also one between two styles of contemporaneous relevance. On the topos, see Storey 2003: 344–348.

⁷⁸The speaker thus fights against the public perception that equates poverty with a loss of civic status. In this speech (ca 345, before the people’s court) reference is also made to a law against reproaching anyone—male or female—with working in the marketplace. The law is highly suggestive. It points to the fact that Athenians harbored resentment against the working classes in the market, yet the prohibition worked to counteract such prejudice: see Ober 1989: 275–277. On slander of mothers in the cases of Demosthenes and Aeschines, see Harris 1995: 21–29 and Ober 1989: 268–270. Demosthenes’ alleged Scythian ancestry received much attention: Aeschines 2.22, 75, 94, 180, 183; 3.171–173; Dinarchus 1.15. Its truth is questionable. As Davies (1971: 121–124) points out, Kepoi (where Gelon—Demosthenes’ maternal grandfather—relocated) was a Milesian colony and Demosthenes’ mother may very well have been Greek if not Athenian. To understand the nature of such slander, the composition of the jury needs to be taken into account. Jury pay was introduced ca 450 at 2 obols, raised to 3 in 425. It remained at this level throughout the fourth century. Assembly pay did not exist in the fifth but was introduced in the fourth century in the 390s at 1 obol, raised to 2 then 3 in the next decade; by 330 it was 6 obols (9 for long sessions). On this basis, Jones (1958: 124) argues that the juries became predominantly “middle or upper class” in the fourth century;

became part of Old Comedy's political critique in the late fifth-century theater.⁷⁹ It was effective for the production of meaning before an Athenian audience—both in the theater and the courts. The attacks on Euripides' mother can be shown to function in the same way.

MOM, STYLE, AND *SKANDLIX*

Produced in 425 at the Lenaia, *Acharnians* concerns an Athenian, Dicaeopolis, who is disgusted with the war between Sparta and Athens as well as with politics as usual and seeks his own private treaty with Sparta during the Peloponnesian War. This private peace gets him into trouble with the residents of Acharnae—located about 8 miles north of the city and one of the first areas to have been ravaged by the Spartans in the war. The Acharnians are incensed at Dicaeopolis and threaten to kill him. In order to reconcile the Acharnians to his intentions and his plan, Dicaeopolis visits Euripides to borrow some rags from one of Euripides' tragic characters so that he might be most pitifully costumed for his big speech to the Acharnians pleading for his life. What follows is a catalogue of Euripides' lame heroes (Bellerophon, Philoctetes, and Phoenix). It is Telephus, however, whom Dicaeopolis means.

Euripides' *Telephus* was produced in 438 and survives only in fragments.⁸⁰ It presented the King of Mysia, Telephus, in disguise as a beggar, attempting to heal the wound that he received from Achilles' spear in an abortive attack on Mysia (when the Greeks mistook it for Troy). Telephus was told by an oracle to seek healing from what wounded him and to lead the Greeks' second, successful attack on Troy. He therefore went to Agamemnon's palace in Argos to get Agamemnon's help to persuade Achilles to heal him.

Euripides' *Telephus* seems to have made a lasting impression, for Aristophanes often adapted the Euripidean material for his own plays (Rau 1967). Aristophanes' parody of Euripides' king-in-rags involves many layers in *Acharnians*, including the comic poet (Aristophanes), his character Dicaeopolis, and Euripides' tragedy *Telephus*. Dressed as a beggar in Euripides' play, Telephus had no recognizable right to speak since he appeared as both a beggar and a barbarian.⁸¹ So too Dicaeopolis is maltreated by the Acharnians, denied the right to speak, and willingly dressed as a beggar, thus marking his inferior status. Yet at the same time, Dicaeopolis also speaks of his altercation with and "wounding" by Cleon

contra Markle 1985. Todd (1990) argues that the juries were comprised mostly of farmers (but not craftsmen)—both peasant and rich.

⁷⁹ Lind 1990: 238; Storey 1977: 200.

⁸⁰ For text of and commentary on Euripides' *Telephus*, see Collard *et al.* 1995 and Preiser 2000.

⁸¹ Dobrov (2001: 50) notes the change of internal audience from the leaders of the Greeks in *Telephus* to the Acharnians and argues that "[Aristophanes] exposes fissures in the ideological fabric of the polis by positioning himself between factions for war and peace, between city and country, between social 'classes,' even between inland demes." This process, for Dobrov (2001: 51), serves as evidence for comedy's "uniquely pan-demotic appeal."

(377–382). This conflict between the hero and Cleon has much to do with Aristophanes' comic persona, as does the concern in the play to show that even the less grand genre of comedy has something important to say to the community just like Dicaeopolis and Telephus before him (after all the Greeks were victorious at Troy on their second attempt).⁸² Scholars have noted extensive parodies from Euripides' *Telephus* throughout *Acharnians*.⁸³ Indeed the structure of *Acharnians* is in some ways modeled on Euripides' tragedy. It is difficult to construe this simply as outright criticism of Euripides.⁸⁴

To judge from their reception in Aristophanes, Euripides' kings-in-rags were topical. Menelaos in rags from *Helen* is parodied in *Thesmophoriazusae*. This parody is also striking for what it suggests about the reception of such scenes. The Old Woman who is invited to participate in the "reperformance" of *Helen* soundly rejects the theatrical ruse of the Kinsman and Euripides. Keeping in mind Euripides' remark in *Frogs* that he introduced the things of everyday life into his plays so that the audience could better judge them for themselves (959–961), the Old Woman's refusal to recognize the drama of *Helen* ironically serves to demonstrate the perceived debasement of the image of the heroic world of the play.⁸⁵ That is, in *Frogs* Euripides praises his brand of verisimilitude, but in *Thesmophoriazusae* such theatrical realism fails to register as an acceptable tragic convention. Euripidean kings-in-rags are interpreted as scenes from daily life, not the stage, the loftier and easily distinguished world of tragedy.⁸⁶

These beggarly kings could also be viewed as a type of "class therapy." A comic fragment of Timocles' *Women at the Dionysia* from the mid-fourth century

⁸² On the fusion of different voices in the play, see Foley 1988; Goldhill 1991: 186–196; Hubbard 1991: 45; Mastromarco 1993; McGlew 2002; Slater 2002: 42–58; Ste Croix 1972: 363.

⁸³ Olson 2002: lix: "Aristophanes presents Telephos as the fast-talking Euripidean beggar-king *par excellence* (esp. 428–429), and Aristophanes puts his tragic exemplar to very sophisticated use, not only adapting the arguments made by Euripides' hero in favor of the Mysians to fit the point Dikaiopolis wants to make about the Spartans (497–556) but using Telephos' difficult situation in Argos as a template for constructing his image of Dikaiopolis—and himself as poet—in contemporary Athens." See Rau 1967: 19–42 for discussion of Aristophanes' parody of Euripides in *Acharnians*.

⁸⁴ See now Schwinge 2002: 18 for discussion of Aristophanes' at times "respectful" engagement with Euripides. After noting that Aristophanes often presents Euripides as the *Intrigendichter*, he remarks that (2002: 27) "Vor allem hat er [Aristophanes] selbst verschiedentlich eigene Stücke . . . motivisch wie dramatisch-strukturell ganz als Intrigenstücke konzipiert, also, völlig im Sinn der in den *Thesmophoriazusen* szenisch entfalteten 'Lehre,' ins Phantastisch-Komische übersetzt, was Euripides im Medium der Tragödie realisiert hat."

⁸⁵ Heracles' remarks in *Frogs* 71–106 concerning other tragic poets and especially Euripides (106: *παμπόνηρα*) are answered by Dionysus' retort: stick to feasting! Dover (1993: 204, *ad loc.*) suggests that Heracles means "public recognition of the minor poets as useless"; yet Sommerstein (1996a: 166, *ad loc.*) argues that it is only Heracles' own opinion that is voiced here (see also van Leeuwen 1968: 26, *ad loc.*). The association of Euripides with *kobala* (104) by Heracles points to similar comments later at 1015, where Aeschylus argues for the corrupt state of the members of the *polis*. According to the logic of the play, is the public then not getting exactly what they want in Euripides? On the evaluation of other poets in comedy, see Kaimio and Nykopp 1997 and Silk 2000a.

⁸⁶ Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1464b10–11; Csapo 2002: 133.

relates how tragedy benefits everyone through witnessing the greater misfortunes of tragic heroes. Tragedy serves as a consolation (παραψυχή, fr. 6.4) for the suffering of individuals in the audience (fr. 6.8–19):

τοὺς γὰρ τραγῳδοὺς πρῶτον, εἰ βούλει, σκόπει,
ὥς ὠφελούσι πάντας· ὁ μὲν ὦν γὰρ πένης
πτωχότερον αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν τὸν Τήλεφον
γενόμενον ἤδη τὴν πενίαν ῥᾶον φέρει.

...

ἅπαντα γὰρ τὰ μείζον' ἢ πέπονθέ τις
ἀτυχίματ' ἄλλοις γεγονότ' ἐννοούμενος
τὰς αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ συμφορὰς ἦττον στένει.

Consider first, if you will, how the tragedians help everyone. For the man who is poor finds Telephus to be even more destitute than himself and so bears his own poverty more easily . . . Each one, who having learned that all the misfortunes others suffered are greater than his own, laments his own circumstances less.

Despite some obvious comic irony, tragic characters are here presented as models for social behavior. The notion that Telephus could help the poor is questionable at best. The assumption, however, that this character could be viewed as appealing to the poor is highly suggestive.

A fragment from Aristophanes' *Skenas Katalambanousai* (fr. 490) preserves a further tantalizing piece of evidence for such kings-in-rags: "Like Callippides I sit upon the ground on the floor-sweepings." The language is similar to Odysseus' "sitting on the ground at the hearth in the dust" (Hom. *Od.* 7.160). For Csapo, the fragment attests to a debate over the performance styles of actors in the fifth century: Odysseus' role as a helpless suppliant sitting in the dirt on the floor suggests a play in which Callippides acted the part of a (tragic) hero in similarly debased conditions.⁸⁷ Another fragment (fr. 488) provides additional evidence of Aristophanes' assimilation of Euripidean style, for here Aristophanes claims to imitate (χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ) *as well as* to mock Euripides' verbal style (τοὺς νοῦς δ' ἀγοραίους ἦττον ἢ 'κεῖνος ποιῶ). Indeed, the line itself seems to parody a Euripidean phrase, *agoraious nous* (*TrGF* fr. 1114). Cratinus seems to have picked up on this affinity between the two poets in his famous coinage εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων (fr. 342).⁸⁸ The reference

⁸⁷ Csapo (2002: 130) suggests that "Aristophanes ridicules Callippides for realistically portraying the degradation of a mythological hero which an older actor like Mynniskos would have shown, if at all, with genteel restraint." Yet Aristophanes may here also be incorporating popular culture into his own plays with the effect of raising the profile of his own production before the theater audience. On the rivalry between poets, see Heath 1990; Ruffell 2002; Sidwell 1993, 1994, 1995; Silk 2000a and 2000b; Storey 2003: 278–303. For elite critique of Callippides' acting style, see Arist. *Poet.* 1462b32–a14; Plut. *Ages.* 21.

⁸⁸ See also schol. *ad Pl. Apol.* 19c: Aristophanes at times mocked Euripides, at other times he imitated him. For Aristophanes' use of Euripidean women see Schmid and Stählin 1940: 418, 439;

to Callippides in *Skenas Katalambanousai* (with the play's suggestion of some kind of stage-business) may serve to mock the performance style of Euripidean lame heroes as indecorous in the eyes of conservative critics. Yet Aristophanes' imitation of Euripidean style develops the sense of scandal and outrage only to redirect it in favor of the comic production (as in *Acharnians*). The specific content of Aristophanes' parody of Euripides' style (i.e., kings-in-rags) again points to the debased world of beggars and helpless suppliants that Aristophanes portrays as something that was popular with the theater audience.⁸⁹ Aristophanes' "criticism" of Euripides would thus appear to be akin to imitation and all in the service of the comic competition.

In *Acharnians*, the conflation of the conflict between Aristophanes and Cleon with that between Dicaeopolis and the Acharnians—redirected and modulated through Euripides' *Telephus*—points to shared assumptions about Euripides' style and the tragic genre. Dicaeopolis wants Telephus' costume, since it is most pitiable. Dicaeopolis proceeds to ask for the hero's rags, a little basket, a cup, and a small pot. This prompts Euripides to claim that Dicaeopolis is stealing his "art of tragedy." Dicaeopolis then asks for some dried lettuce for his basket (469), the kind of discarded trimmings that beggars would pick to eat.⁹⁰ At this, Euripides exclaims that his plays are all gone. Finally, Dicaeopolis begs for one last little thing (478), some chervil which Euripides acquired from his mother, the very thing on which all of his fortunes depend.⁹¹ In this scene Aristophanes makes fun of Euripidean heroes for their lower class demeanor—their beggarly appearance—and suggests that Euripides' mother is likewise lower class.⁹² Slander of Euripides' mother works in tandem with the criticism of Euripides' art of tragedy, and the narrative form of this criticism similarly works, as we have seen, to denigrate populist leaders by attacking their mothers.

As a vegetable-seller, Euripides' mother evokes the debased and lower class world of the marketplace. The things that Dicaeopolis requests from Euripides' plays all undermine the grandeur that befits tragedy—these household items are

Taaffe 1993: 74–102 (although I find problematic the latter's restriction of the functionality of female characters strictly to gender issues). On the class designation of *agoraios*, see Rosenbloom 2002: 305.

⁸⁹ Halliwell (1984, 1993) argues for the portrayal of popular figures in Old Comedy as in part a product of Old Comedy itself. Yet as I argue below, there are aspects exterior to Old Comedy that also support Aristophanes' critique of Euripides as ideologically related to the mundane, lower class world of Athens.

⁹⁰ See Olson 2002: 195, *ad Ach.* 466–469.

⁹¹ Euripides' response (quoted above, 7) suggests one way in which this comment is to be received: he claims that Dicaeopolis commits *hybris*—that is, a deliberate attack on his social status. On *hybris*, see Fisher 1992. Schwinge (2002: 10–14) discusses this scene in terms of its ironic portrayal of Euripides.

⁹² Rau (1967: 30) notes the comic effect of comparing *Lumpenkleide* with tragedy; he suggests that the scene serves as a polemic against Euripides' *Realismus*—i.e., what does not belong to tragedy. On criticism and discussion of Euripides' unheroic characters in the scholia, see Elsperger 1906: 33–42 and Roemer 1906: 50–55.

in fact more at home in comedy.⁹³ In a scene that revolves around criticism of Euripidean tragic heroes as beggarly kings, the fact that Euripides' tragedies are "all gone" because Dicaeopolis takes his household items also aligns "the stuff" of Euripidean drama with the mundane world of the lower classes.⁹⁴ The parody of Euripides' tragic heroes suggests a deviation from tragic norms that the audience is expected to perceive in order for the joke (or parody) to work.⁹⁵ At the same time, Aristophanes' own use of Euripides' *Telephus* as a narrative model for his comedy (in a competition where his production was trying to win first prize) is evidence for the expectation that the audience would *appreciate* Euripides' kings-in-rags. Criticism of Euripides' tragic style and his heroes involves a complex parody of stylistic features that were assumed to be popular with the theater audience. His vegetable-hawking mom was an expression of this popularity.

When we turn to *Frogs*, we find a more explicit condemnation of Euripidean drama as deviating from the standards of tragic decorum. Nonetheless, these differences are presented as appealing to lower class members of the theater audience. Produced in 405 at the Lenaia, *Frogs* deals with the travels of Dionysus down to Hades in order to bring back his beloved Euripides. Once there, however, a contest ensues between Aeschylus and Euripides for the Chair of Tragedy in Hades. In the end, Dionysus decides to bring back Aeschylus. Central to the comedy is the extended contest between the tragic poets and the playful staging of the audience's perceptions of different tragic styles.⁹⁶ In relation to Aeschylus, the character of Euripides comes off as "democratic" (951): he is supported by the *demos*, which in Hades comprises clothes-snatchers, father-beaters, and the like (770–778). His poetry is figured in the language of craftsmanship—that is, of menial laborers (*banausoi*); he is thus called the "mouth-worker" and associated with mechanical instruments (956–958, 799–801).⁹⁷ Certainly the productions of his plays were associated with a more "realistic" style of acting.⁹⁸ The character of Aeschylus, on the other hand, is presented as a poet who produces poetry through inspiration; he is the "mighty-thunderer" with a "terrible wrath within him" (814). Unlike Euripides, Aeschylus is favored by the elite in Hades (783); his

⁹³ Slater (2002: 55) observes that Aristophanes presents Euripides as someone who "depreciated the value of certain accepted symbols" (like costumes and the *khoregia*). Yet the apparent criticism could also serve to align this particular characterization of Euripides with the mass theater audience before whom Aristophanes was competing.

⁹⁴ Schwinge (2002: 13) rightly notes that the scene suggests "dass seine Tragödien nicht anderes sind als naturalistische Äusserlichkeiten der banalsten Alltagswirklichkeit."

⁹⁵ See Reinhardt 1960 for Euripidean tragedy as radically different from that of earlier poets.

⁹⁶ See Csapo 2002; Dover 1993; O'Sullivan 1992; see also Lada-Richards 1999 on Dionysus and ritual in the *Frogs*.

⁹⁷ For the attribution of these lines to Aeschylus, see Dover 1993: 373–376. On the language of criticism in Old Comedy, see O'Sullivan 1992 and Willi 2003: 87–95.

⁹⁸ Csapo and Slater 1995: 256–274; Csapo 2002: 132–133. On the style of Euripides as represented by Aristophanes, see Taillardat 1965: 294–295, 442–445.

political advice is favorable to the exiled oligarchs and hostile to the demagogues (1446–50; cf. 727–733).⁹⁹

Closely related to this portrayal of Euripides is the caricature of Agathon in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*.¹⁰⁰ Although Agathon validates his transvestism through the examples of the aristocratic lyric poets of a by-gone age (Ibycus, Anacreon, and Alcaeus all "minced and wore *mitrai* in Ionian fashion" [162–163]), and thereby forges a connection between the vestimentary style of his poetic practices and the iconography of the Anacreontic "Booners,"¹⁰¹ the "craftsman" quality of his music is emphasized. Agathon is introduced as *kalliepes* (49) and his servant (52–57) speaks of him as setting up stocks (*druoxoi*) and "bending" (*kamptei*) verbal timbers into shape, "chiseling" (*torneuei*) and gluing them together, melting wax all around, and casting them in a mold.¹⁰² Agathon's *poiesis* is here figured as ship-building, carpentry, and metalwork—all in the context of "minting ideas" (*gnomotupeî*) and creating metaphors, both terms of literary criticism.¹⁰³ The ideological affinity between Agathon and Euripides was common knowledge in Athens. In some anecdotes, Euripides and Agathon are described as lovers at Archelaus' court in Macedonia.¹⁰⁴

When Euripides and Aeschylus come onto the stage in *Frogs*, Aeschylus is silent—brooding over Euripides' claim to *his* "Chair of Tragedy." After Euripides mocks Aeschylus for his pompous language, uncivilized composition, bombast, and incontinent mouth, Aeschylus finally speaks (840–843):

ἄληθες, ὦ παῖ τῆς ἀρουραίας θεοῦ:
σὺ δὲ με ταῦτ', ὦ στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδῃ

⁹⁹ On social values embodied by the tragic characters in the play, see Csapo 2002: 131–133 and Lada-Richards 1999: 283–293.

¹⁰⁰ Muecke 1982; Taillardat 1965: 442–445.

¹⁰¹ For ἐχόμεσαν (162) as "minced" and the reference to Ionian style as indicative of luxury, see Sommerstein 1993: 169, *ad loc.* Further discussion of Ionian *habrosyne* and the "Booners" can be found in Kurke 1992; Kurtz and Boardman 1986; Miller 1999 (all with additional bibliography). Agathon's *auleis* in one account is further assailed for its "softness" (*TrGF* 39T 11, 12, 20).

¹⁰² Cf. Muecke 1982 and Taillardat 1965: 442. See Pl. *Symp.* 198b for a similar description of the poet.

¹⁰³ There are two ideological strands of this criticism. First, there are the disparaging allusions to rhetors. For Plato, verbs like *kollan* and *apotoreuein* depict deceptive rhetoric: in the *Symposium*, Agathon's speech reminds Socrates of Gorgias (198c); cf. Pl. *Phaedr.* 278e, 234e and see also Del Corno 1997: 247. Muecke (1982: 45) emphasizes the sophistic element in the parody. The criticisms leveled against the New Music included emotionality, effeminacy, and professionalism (as it was played for the most part by lower class and foreign musicians)—precisely the charges brought out by Aristophanes. See now Csapo 2004 for the social and political implications of the New Music. Second, the terms used by Agathon's slave were used by critics to describe the "New Music" in late fifth-century Athens. The aristocratically-minded Better Argument in the *Clouds* explains how in the good old days boys who introduced new "twists" (*kampeien tina kampen*, 969) in the songs would be lashed. See further below, 34.

¹⁰⁴ *TrGF* T 79a–80.

καὶ πτωχοποιὲ καὶ ῥακιοσυρραπτάδῃ;
ἀλλ' οὐ τι χαίρων αὐτ' ἐρεῖς.

What, oh son of the plowland goddess? *You* say that of *me*, you scraper-together of idle chatter, you creator of beggars, you stitcher-together of rags? You're going to regret saying it!

What is striking here again is the assimilation of Euripides' mother and her lower class occupation with Euripidean characters who talk much too colloquially and appear to be poor beggars like Telephus. Indeed Euripides' plays exhibit a much freer use of colloquialisms than Aeschylus', and more importantly they serve to reduce heroes to the level of messengers and slaves: there is less distinction between elite characters and their servants.¹⁰⁵ The adjective, "plowland," ἀρουραῖος, comes from ἄρουρα, which refers to tilled land; the adjective often occurs in reference to mice.¹⁰⁶ It also appears in Demosthenes' attack on Aeschines' ape-like dramatic performances (18.242).¹⁰⁷ In the comic abuse of his mother, the suggestion of rodents underscores Euripides' perceived lack of tragic grandeur. The ideological distance between Euripidean and Aeschylean tragic style is likewise suggested by the apparent parody of a line from Euripides: "son of the plowland goddess" parodies a Euripidean fragment "Oh son of the sea-goddess" (ὦ παῖ τῆς θαλασσίας θεοῦ, fr. 885), a line that was likely addressed to Achilles, son of Thetis.¹⁰⁸ Instead of the epic Achilles—and by extension Aeschylus' aristocratic style—we have a common, market-variety Euripides. Comic criticism of Euripidean tragic style is interwoven with slander directed at his mother.

Another passing jibe at Euripides' mother comes a little later in *Frogs*. In this passage, Euripides is explaining the art of his tragedy: having inherited Aeschylus' bombastic and swollen art, Euripides boiled it down to size and brought it down to earth (945–947):

Euripides εἶτ' οὐκ ἐλήρουν ὅ τι τύχοιμ' οὐδ' ἐμπεσὼν ἔφυρον,
ἀλλ' οὐξίων πρότιστα μὲν μοι τὸ γένος εἶπ' ἄν εὐθὺς
τοῦ δράματος—

Dionysus κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν σοι, νῆ Δί', ἢ τὸ σαυτοῦ.

Euripides And then I didn't speak foolishly about anything I happened upon,
or charge blindly in and mix everything up; rather the first character

¹⁰⁵ Stevens 1937, 1945, 1972; Csapo 2002: 140. For colloquialisms in Aeschylus, see Griffith 1995: 80; Sommerstein 2002; West 1990. Seidensticker (1982) discusses "comic" elements in drama, most of which serve not only to mark a different stylistic register but also as a dramatic means to incorporate (and mark) different (i.e., lower) classes in tragedy (e.g., the Guard in Sophocles' *Antigone*: see Griffith 1999: 57).

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle (*Hist. anim.* 580b14–29) explains how before the harvest these "field mice" gathered in great numbers and had to be smoked out of the fields lest they destroy the harvest.

¹⁰⁷ For discussion of the role of acting in this exchange, see Easterling 1999.

¹⁰⁸ From an unknown production: see schol. *ad Frogs* 840.

who walked out on stage would immediately explain the origin (*genos*) of my play—

Dionysus Because it was better, by Zeus, than yours!

This remark is interesting for its use of the term *genos*, for it can mean race, stock, offspring, species, and type. It was also a key concept in traditional elite self-presentation.¹⁰⁹ Here *genos* works in two registers. First, *genos* refers to the antecedents of the drama (the “type” of drama it is) which have led to the current situation—both in terms of the characters’ personal history as well as in terms of the narrative of prior theatrical and literary treatments. Second, *genos* refers to the “stock” of Euripides. It refers to his *own style* that he is in the middle of explaining, namely his changes to the art of tragedy as inherited from Aeschylus. But *genos* would also suggest the “stock” or “family” of Euripides himself—namely, his alleged origins from a market woman. Dionysus combines the last two senses in his comment on its inferiority—“it was better, by Zeus, than yours!” Biography and tragic style are conflated in the term *genos*.

In a comedy that represents the poets by their plays and, in turn, the plays through the poets, the conflation of Euripidean drama with Euripides does not surprise. Indeed, a similar comic logic can be found in *Acharnians*: when Dicaeopolis finds Euripides wearing rags, he reasons that this is why Euripides makes his heroes beggars (410–417). Likewise, in *Thesmophoriazousae*, the Garland-Seller, complaining about her dire financial situation, claims that Euripides has committed the most savage injuries against women, and reasons that such is to be expected as he was brought up among savage (uncultivated) herbs (455–456).¹¹⁰ Dionysus’ jibe at Euripides’ *genos* in *Frogs* thus revolves around the common conflation of the poet and his plays, connecting the lower class *genos* of Euripidean drama with his alleged lower class origins. This is standard practice in the *Lives* of the poets where the plays and the poet’s biography are frequently used as evidence for one another (Arrighetti 1987). Later writers interested in Euripides’ life seized on

¹⁰⁹ Bourriot 1976; Roussel 1976; Schneider 1991–92. Again, by “traditional” I mean to emphasize the factions among the elite in Athens in the fifth century. Such traditional, or conservative, elite ideals as espoused by Damon, Critias, and Plato stood in stark contrast to the somewhat more progressive ideals of Pericles or Cleon. For example, the issue of jury pay could be presented either as Cleon’s attempt to buy the *demos* (*com. adespota*, fr. 740) or as an institution to be defended in *Wasps*; see Wood 1988: 5–41 for conservative elite criticism of such programs. See Sommerstein 1997: 68, n. 36 for a discussion of the theater audience as made up of a left wing and a right wing faction; Scullion (2002: 129) similarly refers to Plato’s ideology as right wing and completely opposed to *theatrokratia*. As a group, the *hippeis* seem to have been more conservative than radical politicians like Cleon: see Bugh 1988: 39 and Spence 1993: 164–230, esp. 212–215.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Aristophanes fr. 178, where charges of effeminacy are leveled at Agathon, while other sources attribute this to his *auleis*—neatly confusing the poet with the music of the production.

this slander as biographic information divorced from its performative context in the theater. Old Comedy was somehow read as evidence for social reality.¹¹¹

Yet this slander of Euripides' mother in the fifth-century Attic theater speaks to contemporaneous practices of abuse in Old Comedy and in the courts. Tragic style could be represented through the poet's "character" or comic persona.¹¹² Such is the point of the opening of Aristophanes' *Knights* (11–19):

1st Slave τί κινυρόμεθ' ἄλλως; οὐκ ἔχρην ζητεῖν τινα
σωτηρίαν νῶν, ἀλλὰ μὴ κλάειν ἔτι:

2nd Slave τίς οὖν γένοιτ' ἄν:

1st Slave λέγε σύ.

2nd Slave σὺ μὲν οὖν μοι λέγε,
ἵνα μὴ μάχωμαι.

1st Slave μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω γὰρ μὲν οὐ.
ἀλλ' εἰπὲ θαρρῶν, εἴτα κἀγὼ σοι φράσω.

2nd Slave ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔνι μοι τὸ θρέττε. πῶς ἂν οὖν ποτε
εἴπομ' ἂν αὐτὸ δῆτα κομψευριτικῶς;
"πῶς ἂν σύ μοι λέξεις ἀμὲρ χρὴ λέγειν:"

1st Slave μὴ μοιγε, μὴ μοί, μὴ διασκανδικίσσης.
ἀλλ' εὐρέε τιν' ἀπόκινον ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσπότη.

1st Slave Why are we wailing in vain? Shouldn't we be looking for some way
out of this, instead of going on and on lamenting?

2nd Slave What way can there be?

1st Slave You tell me.

2nd Slave No, you tell me. I don't want to fight about it.

1st Slave By Apollo, I won't say. Be brave, speak, and then I'll tell
you.

2nd Slave I haven't got the guts in me. How can I possibly express that in
a smart Euripidean way? "Would that you could say for me what I
must say!"

1st Slave No, no—don't chervil me over! But find some way of dancing off
away from the master.

Here the two slaves commiserate over their sad plight and endeavor to find some escape.¹¹³ When one of them admits that he is too afraid to utter a plan, he expresses it in a "smart Euripidean way." His fellow slave tells him not to "chervil

¹¹¹See Lefkowitz 1978 and 1981 for discussion of the process through which the poet's work becomes associated with the poet himself.

¹¹²See also Aristophanes fr. 694. Arrighetti (1987) discusses the biographic method in ancient Greece (as exemplified in Chamaeleon of Heraclea) to suggest that "facts" provided by comedy as well as the author's own works are used to reconstruct the persona of the poet.

¹¹³These two slaves were identified from ancient times respectively as Demosthenes (see *Knights* 54–57) and Nicias: see Mastromarco 1983: 30; Sommerstein 1980a and 1981: 3; *contra* Dover 1959.

me over.”¹¹⁴ Chervil, Euripides’ mother, and the perceptions of Euripidean style in Old Comedy again align themselves to articulate the reception of Euripides in the theater. And we should not forget that it was this theater audience—comprised of citizens, foreigners, metics, the rich, poor, slaves, and perhaps women—that (elite) critics assailed.

This stylistic criticism of Euripides also formed part of a broader social discourse. The Old Oligarch, for example, complains of the *demos*’ enjoyment of comic ridicule of “the rich, noble, powerful . . . and those anxious to rise above the *demos*” (2.18).¹¹⁵ Plato criticizes the theater crowd for thinking itself capable of judging performances: instead of an aristocracy of the best, there was an evil theatrocracy (*Laws* 700a–701b); the present custom of the theater left it to the mass audience to decide the victors and this had corrupted the poets themselves, who now pandered to the base crowds (*Laws* 659b–c; cf. *Gorgias* 501e–2c). Aristotle claims that the actors came to dominate the productions because of the degenerate theater audience (*Rhet.* 1403b31–35); musicians likewise became vulgar, influenced as they were by the vulgar theater audience (*Pol.* 1341b14–19)—after all, theater music catered to the base needs of the audience of craftsmen (*Pol.* 1342a18–27). Abuse of Euripides’ mom as a huckster of vegetables could thus serve to allegorize the mass (demotic) appeal of his dramas. It is as if Aristophanes delivers to the audience a poet who is represented (in his comedies) as coming from and appealing to the majority of the theater audience—the working poor.¹¹⁶

PERFORMANCE STYLES: POLITICS, ACTING, AND MUSIC

As a type of dramatic performance popular with the theater audience in Athens, Euripidean tragedy seems to have developed the interests of the very audiences that conservative elite critics such as Plato castigated. Yet this contentious playwright provided Aristophanes with a symbol with which to capture the hearts and minds of the heterogeneous and divided theater audience before which he was competing. Aristophanes may pick up and develop strands in this elitist criticism, but his own plays also put to use what he seems to be criticizing. In this section, I explore some of the implications of Euripides’ demotic appeal in terms of the receptivity of his tragedy to different performance styles.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Telecleides fr. 40: διεσκανδικίσαι. Frs. 41 and 42 refer to Euripides, and it is not impossible that in this context fr. 40 may offer another picture of Euripides’ humble birth. Although all three fragments are from unknown plays, frs. 41 and 42 emphasize the poet’s philosophico-sophistic borrowings (see Egli 2003) and suggest the idea of collaboration (and possible specialization in the theater).

¹¹⁵ For discussion of comic ridicule and the audience, see Halliwell 1993; Henderson 1998; Mastromarco 2002; Csapo 2000.

¹¹⁶ On the explosion in the ranks of the *thetes* in late fifth-century Athens, see Raaflaub 1998. Elite critics of the theater (e.g., Plato *Laws* 700a–701c) likewise attest to a growing sense of alienation from the demotic appeal of dramatic productions: see Csapo 2000, 2002; Wallace 1997. Elitist criticism of the navy similarly referred to the sailors as an unruly mob (see, e.g., Thuc. 8.72.2; Eur. *Hecuba* 607; Pl. *Laws* 706c–7b), not unlike the characterizations of the theater audience: see Csapo 2004: 239.

But first, let us recur to Cleon and demagogic performance styles. Another sphere of ideological overlap between Euripidean theater and the demagogues can be observed in the similar reception of their style of performance. The criticism of the performance style of the demagogues, particularly Cleon, deriving as it does from hostile and elite sources, points to a perceived ideological shift in the practice of politics in Athens.¹¹⁷ In the *Athenaion Politeia* (28.3) we read that Cleon “seems to have corrupted the demos most by his impulsiveness; he was first to have screamed from the podium and yelled insults and addressed the Assembly all girded up, while the other speakers maintained decorum.”¹¹⁸ Plutarch preserves a similar tradition about Cleon who “robbed the speaker’s stand of its decorum . . . he was the first to . . . pull off his cloak and strike his thigh and to rush around while he was speaking” (*Nic.* 8.3). In *Knights*, Cleon is presented as the “Paphlagon,” an epithet which refers both to his seething oratorical style and his alleged servile origins (Storey 2003: 198). Cleon is also frequently depicted as “screeching” and with a voice like a whirling torrent (e.g., *Knights* 137, 256, 304, 664, 919, 1018, 1403; Wohl 2002: 80, note 15). The notion that there was a significant change in the decorum of rhetorical performances—and that demagogues like Cleon were ultimately to blame for this cultural revolution—was commonplace in the fourth century. Thus Aeschines’ speech *Against Timarchus* (25) contrasts the decadent and shameful military performance of Timarchus in the nude with the self-control of the older generation of politicians—like Solon and Pericles—who were ashamed to speak with their arms outside their cloaks.¹¹⁹

Cleon has, for the most part, been disdainfully received (Wohl 2002: 72–123). In Old Comedy he is assailed as a huckster, a foreigner, a tanner, a criminal, and a slanderer, while his oratorical style is depicted as ushering in the demise of Athenian civilization. Thucydides provides another hostile critique of Cleon’s style. The demagogue is famously introduced as the most violent of the politicians and most persuasive of the *demos* (Thuc. 3.36.6, 4.21.3). When Nicias resigned the command against Pylos, Cleon reluctantly accepted it as the crowd (*okhlos*) clamored for him to take it; the sensible (*sophrosi*) recognized that they would either be free of Cleon—which they rather hoped—or of the Spartans (4.28.3–5).¹²⁰ Thucydides seems to support the “sensible” men in this regard. The historian’s dislike of the politician has masked, however, the latter’s popularity and demotic appeal. As Connor (1971: 95) has noted, Thucydides himself (3.37.4) represents Cleon as “the spokesman for those Athenians without intellectual or other pretensions, for the *phauloi*.” Cleon’s speech exemplifies a rhetorical style that is indicative of his demagogic character as viewed by hostile (elite) critics

¹¹⁷ Connor 1971; Wohl 2002.

¹¹⁸ See also Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 92; Halliwell 1990: 76.

¹¹⁹ Connor 1971: 32–34, 48–49, 132–136; Ford 1999: 247. See *Frogs* 680 for a description of the “terribly roaring Thracian swallows” on Cleophon’s lips. For reception of performance styles of orators and their oratorical delivery, see Easterling 1999; Hall 1995.

¹²⁰ Note also that the divided response of the Assembly suggests strong factional opposition.

like Thucydides.¹²¹ Despite his claim to denounce rhetorical flourishes, Cleon's speech famously employs many (Gorgianic) rhetorical tropes.¹²² Most striking is Cleon's use of theatrical language to depict the Athenian Assembly. He refers to the *demos* as *kritai* (3.37.4), *agonothetai* (3.38.4), and *theatai* (3.38.5). As he upbraids the lazy *demos* for being cajoled by clever speeches, his criticism conflates the theatrical with the political and places the *demos* in the position of an arbiter. It is not unlikely that this rhetoric suggests Thucydides' (elitist) view of the (mass) theater audience. In contrast with the typically negative views of Cleon in classical scholarship, Victoria Wohl (2002: 96) has recently argued that "by making the citizens *agonothetai* he not only extends to them the privileges usually enjoyed by an elite few. He makes them responsible for their own political culture, as sponsors, judges, and critical spectators." Cleon's rhetoric can thus be seen to empower the *demos*. Is this another reason why Thucydides exhibits such hatred for him?

At any rate, what interests me here about this critique of Cleon is its relationship with the contest played out in Aristophanes' *Frogs* between Aeschylus and Euripides. For the elite Aeschylus, Euripides has debased the tragic art that he inherited. A prime example of this is the verisimilitude of Euripidean drama. Euripides claims to have taught the audience how to "consider all things thoroughly" (*Frogs* 958–962):

περινοεῖν ἅπαντα . . .
οἰκεῖα πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς ξύνεσμεν,
ἐξ ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην· ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὐτοί
ἤλεγχον ἂν μου τὴν τέχνην· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκομπολάκου
ἀπὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἀποσπᾶσαις . . .

to consider all things thoroughly . . .
by bringing everyday things on stage, things we are used to and know,
about which I could be refuted; for these people, knowing these things,
could have cross-examined my art. I didn't make pretentious speeches,
tearing them away from intellectual thought . . .

In addition to the craftsmen-like (i.e., banausic) "subtle rulers" and "squaring off of words" (956), Euripides emphasizes that his style is one that empowers the audience as arbiters through its ability to relate his dramas to their daily life.¹²³ If Thucydides' hostility to Cleon stems in part from the latter's closeness to, and success with, the radical *demos* through a political style sharply contrasted with

¹²¹ On Cleon's style, see Connor 1971: 94–98, 132–136, 196–198. Carey (1994: 80) notes that "style" was primarily at issue in Cleon's case, as he "could not be made an *agathos*. But he could in theory be made to behave better."

¹²² Hesk 2000; Wohl 2002: 93–98; Yunis 1996: 87–92.

¹²³ Csapo 2002; Dover 1993: 35, *ad loc.*; Muecke 1982 (on Agathon in *Thesmophoriazusae*); Taillardat 1965: 442.

Pericles' (2.65; *Ath. Pol.* 28.4), Aristophanes presents the older, more conservative poet, Aeschylus, in the *Frogs* as condemning Euripides for debasing the art of tragedy and leveling tragic decorum with the theater audience. Euripides' "realistic" style is thus to be measured by its difference from Aeschylean bombast and decorum.

Reconstructing the performance styles of tragedy is a difficult enterprise. Vase-painting and terracotta figurines as well as passing literary references to performances provide some evidence for how plays would have been performed in the fifth century.¹²⁴ Depictions of tragic scenes on vase-painting attest to different styles of comportment and acting. It is particularly in the case of female characters that we can observe some differences—between those with their gaze lowered and arms at their sides, on the one hand, and those crouching on the stage, hair exposed and arms spread outwards, on the other hand.¹²⁵ For some members of the elite, such expressive gestures would have violated traditional decorum. Sophocles' *Thyestes* (fr. 257) presents a character suggesting, "Let us proceed now quickly, for there is no way that censure will attach to just haste." Yet Aristotle's "great-souled man" is one who both walks slowly and talks calmly (*EN* 4.1125a12–4); Plutarch praises the "gentleness" of Pericles' gait (5.1); and Plato's Charmides defines *sophrosyne* as behaving in an orderly and quiet fashion—like walking in the street (*Charm.* 159a–b).¹²⁶ Quiet gestures would have accompanied these "proper" techniques of composure to judge from a fragment of Alexis (fr. 265): it is the mark of the lower class man to walk ungracefully (i.e., out of measure), when it could be done nobly.¹²⁷

Various aspects of the reception of Euripidean drama are also hinted at in anecdotes concerning performances, actors, and audience responses. Aristophanes' *Frogs*, for example, preserves evidence for contrasting theatrical styles in the plays of Aeschylus and Euripides.¹²⁸ Aristotle, in a discussion of the value of speaking

¹²⁴ See Csapo 1993 and 2002; Easterling 2002; Green 1994, 1997, 2002; Neeindam 1992; Valakas 2002 (all with additional bibliography).

¹²⁵ See now Green 2002. Most of the evidence comes from non-Athenian pots, but as Taplin (1993 and 1999) has argued, much of Attic drama was exported and disseminated throughout the Greek world beginning in the late fifth century and increasing steadily throughout the fourth century. A Sicilian red-figure calyx-krater from a little after the middle of the fourth century (Webster 1967: 126 SV 2; Green 2002: 110, fig. 20) depicts three women and a messenger; the women's highly expressive gestures might also be productively viewed in the context of the development in acting styles as evidenced in Arist. *Poet.* 1461b26–62a14 (on Callippides, see Csapo 2002 for discussion).

¹²⁶ Bremmer 1991; Hunter 2002; see also Neumann 1965.

¹²⁷ The fragment continues: "For this nobody exacts any toll from us, and one need not bestow any honor in order to receive it again from others. Rather to them who walk with dignity comes full meed of honor, while they who see it have pleasure and life has its grace. What man who pretends to have any sense would not win for himself such a reward?" See further Arnott 1996: 741 for additional references.

¹²⁸ Csapo 2002; Valakas 2002. See also O'Sullivan 1992 for discussion of the different rhetorical styles embodied by the characters of Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs*.

naturally and not artificially, attests to Euripidean vocabulary as “chosen from normal conversation” (*Rhet.* 1404b18–25). As we saw earlier, Euripides prefers (by comparison with Sophocles and Aeschylus) colloquialisms from the Assembly, Council, and courts as well as from the “everyday conversation” represented in Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle.¹²⁹ This linguistic realism is suggested by the description in Aristophanes’ *Peace* of Euripides as a composer of “little forensic expressions” (532). In *Frogs* it is the *demos* of criminals, of course, that supports Euripides (770–774); Aeschylus apparently would not allow the Athenians to judge his poetry since most of them were villains and rubbish “when it comes to deciding on the natures of the poets” (807–810). Lest we misjudge the identity of the infernal audience, Pluto’s slave reminds us that the *demos* in Hades is just like the one here in Athens (783).

Such sentiments were part of a broader social discourse in Athens concerning the role of the elite in cultural production. The Old Oligarch specifically points to the corruption of competitions of athletics and *mousike* by the *demos* which does not think them honorable and cannot do such things themselves (1.13). No longer a testament to the cultural prowess of the elite, festival and maritime liturgies have become a means for the poor to siphon money away from the wealthy.¹³⁰ The popularity and demotic appeal of Euripides can be best assessed by the perceived threats from the *demos* and their radical (progressive) leaders (like Cleon, Hyperbolus, Cleophon) to the cultural and political hegemony of a more traditional elite in the eyes of such critics as the Old Oligarch, Damon, Critias, and Plato.¹³¹ The new politicians are lampooned for their lower class origins, thus rendering them perhaps too much *like* the majority of the theater audience and very much *unlike* the politicians of the “good old days,” who did not pander, or redistribute public money, to the people. But they were not poor. The father of Cleon, for example, is attested as a *khoregos* (*IG* II² 2318).¹³² For the Old Oligarch, the mass theater audience is represented as the ultimate source of this cultural revolution (Wilson 2000: 12–14).

¹²⁹ Stevens 1937, 1945, 1976; Csapo 2002: 140–143; Colvin 1999: 74–89.

¹³⁰ On liturgies, see Christ 1990; Gabrielsen 1994; Ober 1989: 199–214; Wilson 2000. *Frogs* 1063–65 suggests that wealthy citizens learned to disguise their wealth (and thus not spend on liturgies) through the model provided by Euripides’ kings-in-rags (like Telephus).

¹³¹ For the role of such elite critics as the Old Oligarch, Plato, and Aristotle, see Csapo 2000; Ober 1998; Wallace 1997. For Critias, see Bultrighini 1999; Iannucci 2002; Wilson 2003. For Damon, see Csapo 2004: 230–232, 245–246; Wallace 2004. Alcibiades’ political style of extravagant personal spending owed much to Cimonian tactics (*Ath. Pol.* 27.3; Gribble 1999: 60–68, 133–137); yet his elitism was tempered by his perceived “populist appeal” (Wohl 2002: 137). Aristophanes nonetheless associates him with the exiled oligarchs: *Frogs* 692–705, 1442–50, 1454–60; see Dover 1993: 373–376, *ad* 1435–66. For discussion of elite leadership style, see Davies 1981: 96–105; Ober 1989: 84–89; Rosenbloom 2004: 79; Wilson 2000: 109–143.

¹³² Rosenbloom (2004: 79, n. 98) suggests that Hyperbolus may have served as a trierarch. Eupolis fr. 207, based on Aesch. *Pers.* 65–66, evokes an image of Maricas as the “royal army” sacking cities: see Storey 2004: 329.

But not all questions of “realism” revolved around negative assessments. Gorgias’ famous dictum on tragedy that “he who deceives is more honest than he who does not deceive, and he who is deceived is wiser than he who is not deceived” (DK 82 B 83) can be viewed alongside Aristotle’s remark concerning the clever concealment of artifice. This can be achieved when a speaker chooses his words from “ordinary speech” and arranges them like Euripides, “who was the first to show the way.” By concealing his art and having his characters “speak naturally,” Euripides was able to persuade his audience and make them less suspicious (*Rhet.* 1404b).¹³³ The *Dissoi Logoi* also preserves evidence of praise for “realism.” For in the comparison of tragic composition and painting, “whoever deceives most by making things similar to reality, that one is best” (DK 90.3.10).¹³⁴ In terracottas, reliefs, and vase painting we still find scenes from the life of the working poor in the late fifth century.¹³⁵ Looking beyond the disgruntled evaluations of hostile elite critics (such as Aristotle, Plato, and the Old Oligarch), we can also catch a glimpse of oppositional tastes that may have responded favorably to such “realism” in the theater.

Discussion of acting styles in the fifth century further attests to a crisis between the tastes of the elite and the mass theater audiences. Callippides is perhaps the best known of the “bad boy” professional actors, associated with the decadent Alcibiades, mocked by Aristophanes and Strattis, insulted by the Spartan King Agesilaus, and criticized by Aristotle. His fault seems to have been his highly mimetic style of acting.¹³⁶ Aristotle (*Poet.* 1461b26–62a14) censures Callippides for his imitation of the gestures of lower class women; he also censures subsequent actors for similar “déclassé” performances in imitation of the *phauloi* (Csapo 2002). Callippides was famous for the novelty of his acting style.¹³⁷ Much of what we know about him is preserved in anecdotes that confuse the actor with his acting style—precisely the same dynamic I have been tracing in the case of Euripides on stage, where the poet and his plays are confused in stories that reveal assumptions held in Athens about the theater.¹³⁸ In one anecdote preserved by Duris of Samos

¹³³ Euripides did not always exhibit such cleverness, for Aristotle goes on (1405a) to criticize Euripides for the inappropriate use of ἀνάσσειν in *Telephus*, which allows for the artifice to be seen.

¹³⁴ Willi (2002) compares Euripidean realism with that of Old Comedy, suggesting that the trend towards “realism” in the theater favored Comedy (e.g., *Clouds* 537–544) and that Aristophanes developed his plays according to this principle. Csapo (2002: 146) argues that such “realism” tended to favor a homogeneous picture of the citizen body; their “other” was “an outsider, a foreigner, or possibly a woman.”

¹³⁵ Himmelmann 1971, 1994; McNiven 2000; Pipili 2000.

¹³⁶ See Braund 2002 and Csapo 2002. On the rise of star actors, see Easterling 2002; Ghiron-Bistagne 1976; Wallace 1995.

¹³⁷ He won the actor’s prize at the Lenaia in 418 (*IG* II² 2319): see Csapo and Slater 1995: 136, 227 for the victory lists and discussion. Callippides may also have won at the Lenaia in 424; only the last three letters of the name can be read for 425: see Ghiron-Bistagne 1976: 53 on *IG* II² 2325. Wallace (1995) emphasizes the star quality of actors like Callippides.

¹³⁸ For anecdotes about actors and their significance for our understanding of the history of the theater, see Csapo 2002 and Easterling 2002.

(*FGrH* 76 F70), Alcibiades is reported to have returned to Athens in 407 on a trireme with purple sails, accompanied not only by an aulos player, Chrysogonus, as cockswain but also by Callippides decked out in tragic costume giving orders.¹³⁹ The presence of Callippides both highlights the actor's notoriety and perhaps also reflects the commentary or "buzz" surrounding his own transgressiveness in the theater.

In some anecdotes Callippides also emerges as a fitting actor for Euripides. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3.11) Callippides appears as consumed with vanity on account of his ability to fill the seats of the theater with an audience that weeps—a description that seems to parallel Euripides' portrayal as τραγικώτατος in the eyes of Aristotle (1453a29).¹⁴⁰ Whatever the truth of these anecdotes, they illustrate commonly held assumptions about the style and character of this actor. They also point to a particular history of the Athenian theater. In one story, Callippides sent Sophocles a bunch of grapes after a performance in *Opus*. According to Sophocles' *Vita*, an unripe grape in the bunch caused the aged Sophocles to choke and die (14).¹⁴¹ The mimetic style of Callippides—implicated as it is for Aristotle in the *mimesis* of the lower classes (*phauloi*)—finds itself most at home in Euripidean drama and effectively kills off Sophoclean tragedy with its more restrained *mimesis* of the world. Evidence from the fourth century attests to the widespread popularity of Euripides (but not Sophocles).¹⁴²

Despite elite anxiety over the staging of unacceptable gestures in tragedy, the demotic appeal of Callippides' acting style apparently caught on (hence Aristotle's censure of contemporaneous actors performing à la Callippides). This development in acting styles went hand in glove with a musical revolution in Athens. The "New Music"—or "theater music"—profoundly affected the shape and sound of tragedy.¹⁴³ In addition to its strictly "musical" innovations, the New

¹³⁹ Gribble (1999: 40) comments on how the sources present Alcibiades' return as an "outrageous display of *truphe*"; cf. Ath. 12.535d. Wilson (1996: 330, n. 48) notes the anecdote's connection "between this famously transgressive individual [Alcibiades] and tragedy." It is perhaps worth mentioning that a victory ode celebrating the victory of Alcibiades at the Olympic games has traditionally been ascribed to Euripides; for discussion, see Gribble 1999: 66.

¹⁴⁰ Lucas (1968: 147, *ad loc.*) interprets this as a reference to Euripides' skill in arousing pity and fear as suggested by the context in the *Poetics*. The famous actor Theodorus was also known for his skill to make the audience tearful (Plut. *Mor.* 545). On the professional aims of the actor, see Lada-Richards 2002: 412.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Braund 2000; Ghiron-Bistagne 1976.

¹⁴² See above, 1, n. 2 for references.

¹⁴³ See Csapo and Slater 1995: 331–348; Csapo 1999–2000 and 2004; Scullion 2002: 126–131; Wallace 1995, 2003; Wilson 1999, 1999–2000, and 2004. It was the New Music (and its effect on the theater audience) that prompted Plato's famous remark on the transformation of the "aristocracy of music" to a "degenerate theatrocracy" (*Law*s 700c–701a); ps.-Plut. *De mus.* 1140d–f; Ath. 632a–b. For "dithyrambic" stasima, see Kranz 1933; for dithyrambic elements in tragedy, see Zimmermann 1992. On the popularity of the New Music, see Csapo 2004: 207–216, 235; Wilson 2004: 284–287.

Music was highly emotive and mimetic.¹⁴⁴ Under its influence, tragic songs also became more mimetic and “realistic”—thus for example an actor’s references to whirling and clacking in their monodies would resonate with the music and dance. Such is the point of the parody in *Frogs* (1305–22) of the recent production of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*.¹⁴⁵ In her monody, the former queen of Lemnos, Hypsipyle, reduced now to a slave, dances and plays the castanets as she tries to soothe the infant Opheltes. She sings of the “clapping waves” circling around Lemnos, as she plays the castanets in a circular dance. Not only is Hypsipyle an example of the “riches to rags” characters typical of Euripides—his royalty in rags such as Telephus, Menelaus, and Electra come to mind here—but she plays what is decidedly “down-market” music in a scene from the mundane (non-heroic, non-elite) world of maids.¹⁴⁶ As a result of the demands placed on the theater by the New Musical professionals, the musical role of the chorus too decreased by contrast with that of the new professional actors—like Callippides—who were better trained to display the technological innovations of the New Music in actor’s monodies.¹⁴⁷

It is precisely this style of acting that Demetrius (*On Style* 195) asserts is necessary for the actor in Euripides’ *Ion* (154–182). The actor playing the role of Ion as he attempted to drive off the swan defecating on the statues is said to have required “much movement . . . by running for the bow and arrows and looking up in the air while the character converses with the swan, and doing all the other posturing demanded of the actor.” The effects of New Music on Euripidean drama resulted in new and different styles of acting that employed highly mimetic gestures and dance—precisely those gestural effects that such critics as Aristotle and Plato found so offensive to conservative elite tastes.¹⁴⁸ For the New Music was a demotic form, a popular style of music that appealed to the mass theater audience. Euripides’ adoption of this music is further evidence of the demotic appeal of his tragic style.¹⁴⁹ The fact that elite critics assailed New Music for its professionalism—i.e., the involvement of banausic labor—as well

¹⁴⁴ On the New Music, see West 1992: 356–372 (mimetic aspects of citharodic nomos and effects on [a]strophic form, 363; body movement, 106); Csapo 1999–2000 and 2004 (both with additional bibliography); Barker 1984: 1.93; Wilson 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* was infamous for its (new) musical innovations: see Borthwick 1994 and Csapo 1999–2000: 419. For discussion of the play, see Bond 1963 and Cropp 2003. For the connection between dithyrambic soloists and actors’ arias, see Pl. *Rep.* 394c and ps.-Arist. *Pr.* 19.15. Csapo (2003) discusses New Musical mimetic aspects in Euripides’ *Electra* and in particular the significance of Nereids and dolphins in New Musical song.

¹⁴⁶ Dover 1993: 351, *ad Frogs* 1305.

¹⁴⁷ See Csapo 1999–2000 for statistics and discussion; cf. Scullion 2002: 124–127.

¹⁴⁸ On dance, see Lonsdale 1993. West (1992: 354) claims that Aristophanes’ critique of Euripides’ music in *Frogs* reflects the growing influence of citharodic and dithyrambic music.

¹⁴⁹ The caricature of Agathon in *Thesmophoriazusae* provides some striking similarities: he is lampooned for his effeminacy (130–138); other sources critique his *auleis* for its “softness” (see above, 24, n. 101). Some have taken this as referring to his *own* effeminacy or to his emasculated art: see Muecke 1982: 54 and Taaffe 1993: 82; cf. Arrighetti (1987), who rightly notes how the image of Agathon is derived from perceptions of his poetry. Yet the criticisms leveled at the New Music are

as its effeminacy, foreignness, and general moral corruption coheres with both Aristophanes' parody of Euripidean New Music and his slander of Euripides' mother as a vegetable-seller, a lower-class laborer *par excellence*. The ideological overlap is clear: Euripides' mass appeal was represented in Old Comedy both through some of the very criticisms leveled at practitioners of popular culture in Athens (e.g., the New Musicians) and through its association (or ideological affinities) with some of the very lower-class members of the mass theater audience who helped make Euripides' style so popular (e.g., market-sellers).¹⁵⁰

CONCLUSION: A DEMOTIC EURIPIDES?

Interestingly, the beginning of the *Vita* of Sophocles asserts that his father was *not* a bronze-smith or a dagger-maker (as Aristoxenos fr. 115 Wehrli and Istros *FrGH* 334 F33 claimed): he was rather the *owner* of slave bronze-smiths.¹⁵¹ There was clearly some confusion surrounding the matter. What is striking is the impulse to remove Sophocles from the very social milieu that became the orthodox background of Euripides' family. While Aristophanes makes much of Euripides' mom, we hear hardly anything about either Sophocles' family or Sophoclean style for that matter.¹⁵² Other comic poets also made much of

noteworthy not only for their denigration of the professionalization associated with the New Musical culture—and these critiques are developed in terms of the banausic origins of the musicians—but also for the music's effeminacy and lack of control. Such criticism of Agathon may thus have much to do with the reception of his tragic productions in Athens. For gendered criticism of New Music, see Csapo 2004: 230–232; Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi 1995. Wilson (1999 and 2002) discusses the status of the *aulos* and *auletai* (see esp. 52 on the wages of *auletai*). On charges of professionalism, see Csapo 2004: 236–238, 245; Wilson 2004: 282–292. Agathon's twistings and warblings—as described by the Kinsman in *Thesmophoriazusae* (100)—combined with his effeminacy point to the poet's use and endorsement of New Music. Csapo (2004: 232) notes that Aristophanes may be drawing on “Damonian theory” in his portrayal of Agathon; on Damon of Oa, see below, 37, n. 154.

¹⁵⁰The Nurse in the *Medea* provides an example of a character in Euripides making reference to such trends. She critiques *traditional* music and its inability to cure the ills of society and claims that no one has discovered how to put an end to mortals' bitter pains with music and many-toned (*polykhordos*, 196) songs. The term *polykhordos* was a shibboleth of the New Music (critical terminology and references: Csapo 2004: 229). It appears in Plato's *Republic* (399c; see also *Larus* 812d), where the deleterious effects of the New Music are discussed and the *aulos* (the most *polykhordos* instrument of all) is banned. The term appears also in Eur. *Rhes*. 548 and Plut. *Mor.* 2.827b, describing *demokratia*. In the first stasimon of *Medea*, the chorus of Corinthian women looks forward to a time when honor will come to women and the poetry of ancient bards will cease to hymn their faithlessness. The new music or song that they look forward to may in fact be the “New Music” as suggested by the Nurse's use of the ideologically loaded term *polykhordos*: New Music, the “everyday world,” and female characters converge in the Nurse's critique of traditional *mousike*.

¹⁵¹Lefkowitz 1981: 160. Was this (banausic) family business mentioned in a comedy? At any rate, the *Lives* neatly schematize the two poets: the genteel Sophocles and the demotic Euripides.

¹⁵²References to Sophocles in Old Comedy: Ar. *Peace* 531, 695–699; *Birds* 100; *Frogs* 76–81, 786–794, 1516–19; fr. 595, 598; Eupolis fr. 268.7; Cratinus fr. 17; Phrynichus fr. 32; *adesp.* fr. 480. The one remark in Old Comedy about Sophocles that is not apparently flattering appears at *Peace* 695–699, where Sophocles comes off as a profit seeker like Simonides: see Olson 1998: 211, *ad* 698. On the parody of Sophocles in Eupolis, see Storey 2003: 328. Although there are more fifth-century

Euripides. Strattis' *Phoenissae* seems to have been an outright parody of Euripides' play. Aristophanes at *Wasps* 61 suggests that abuse of Euripides in the theater was something of a commonplace. The increase in references to "realism" in criticism of Euripidean tragedy suggest a disgruntled elite struggling to maintain their cultural hegemony against the perceived threat of (mass) popular culture in the theater. Such "realism" was also (positively) evaluated in Athens as a popular mode of representation. The increase of New Musical elements in drama can be viewed as a sign of the times: New Music was part of fifth-century Athenian pop culture and Euripidean tragedy capitalized on it (Csapo 1999–2000).

When Aristophanes presents Euripides' mother as a vegetable-seller, he provides a particular version of Euripidean drama that addresses fifth-century concerns. The mass theater audience comprised first and foremost fans of Euripidean drama. Aristophanes' plays were produced in a competition before a mass (and divided) theater audience and he had to win the sympathy and support of that motley crew.¹⁵³ Critics of fifth-century musical innovations (such as Damon) were well known, but their view that changes in the forms of music greatly disturb the constitution of the *polis* was not accepted by everyone.¹⁵⁴ a fragment of the Hibe sophist (?Alcidamas) makes clear that opposition existed to such elitist sensibilities as Damon's.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the famous fragment (fr. 115) from Pherecrates' *Cheiron*, in which Mousike complains of the musical and sexual abuse that she has been subject to at the hands of Melanippides, Philoxenus, and Timotheus, makes fun of the (elite) criticism leveled at the popular New Music before an audience, the majority of which was expected to be sympathetic to the new cultural (musical) trends.¹⁵⁶

So what does Aristophanes expect to gain by assimilating Euripides and his mom to lower-class market people? The incongruity of the expectations of the (elite) world of the poet and that of the *agora* clearly drives some of the humor. There are thus some laughs to be had simply in the vision of the great tragic heroes like Telephus reduced now to penury or elite poets like Euripides having their origins in the *agora*, as Rau (1967) has argued. Like the demagogues, Euripides

vases with likely Sophoclean influence, the monuments of Athenian tragedy (when taken together with the evidence from his tragic style and developments discussed here) suggest that beginning around the late fifth century Euripidean drama had broad demotic appeal for the (mass) theater audience and became increasingly popular throughout the fourth century: over 238 monuments have a Euripidean context, while for Sophocles there are ninety-three: see Webster 1967; Trendall and Webster 1971. On the popularity of Euripides, see above, 1–3, nn. 2, 3, 9.

¹⁵³ On New Music in Aristophanes, see Borthwick 1994; Barker 2004; Dunbar 1995: 209, *ad Birds* 227 and *passim*; Dover 1993: 362, *ad Frogs* 1331. On dithyrambic (as well as New Musical) elements in later comedy, see Nesselrath 1990: 241–280.

¹⁵⁴ On the political and musical theory of Damon of Oa, see Wallace 2004. On Damon's role in Plato's musical theory, see Barker 1984: 1.168, 184, n. 6.

¹⁵⁵ West 1992: 246–253; Csapo and Slater 1995: 345; Barker 1984: 1.183.

¹⁵⁶ For discussion of the fragment, see Borthwick 1968; Csapo 2004: 238; Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi 1995 (all with additional bibliography).

was represented as being close to the *demos* and the attacks on his mother in Aristophanes serve to highlight the poet's tragic style as more in tune with Athenian popular culture. The demands of the mass theater audience and their changing tastes for different tragic styles played a perhaps not insignificant role in these developments. Such comic "attacks" can also be seen as flipping such (elite) criticism on its head and presenting a popular Euripides ideologically situated on the side of the fullers, cobblers, smiths, farmers, and merchants—the very people that Xenophon claims composed the majority of the Assembly (*Mem.* 3.7.6).¹⁵⁷ Yet the criticism of Euripides' tragic style would also have resonated in conservative corners of the audience. Before a heterogeneous audience composed of partisans of both conservative and progressive politicians Aristophanes could offer criticism of Euripides couched in a conservative idiom while at the same time lavish upon the mass audience the stylistic trends of a popular (and contentious) dramatist. Comedy thereby harnesses two popular views of Euripides for its own competitive advantage. Aristophanes crafts a Euripidean *persona* that addresses fifth-century concerns in the theater, a (Euripidean) *persona* that violates conservative ideals of tragic decorum to appear as a natural (and rightful) product of the masses—a kind of (tragic) demagogue.¹⁵⁸

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¹⁵⁷ For specialization in the labor force in Athens (literary and epigraphic sources attest to hundreds of different types of laborers), see Harris 2002. Sommerstein (1993) argues that the reperformance of *Frogs* was arranged by anti-democratic forces as a means to bring about the demise of Cleophon. Yet, if this were the case, why not reperform Platon's *Cleophon* (which came in third, as we learn from the *Hypothesis* to *Frogs*)? Platon's comedy *may* not have been that successful, but as I have argued the demagogue comedies did not serve to mold public opinion *against* the popular leaders of the *demos*. They rather served to emphasize the popularity of these individuals; certainly the theater audience during the years of the radical democracy seems not to have acted on such criticisms of their tragic and political demagogues. Sommerstein (2000), however, suggests that the demagogue comedy fizzled out after the democratic restoration due to the perceived influence of the genre on the rise of the oligarchs; cf. Csapo 2000.

¹⁵⁸ See Wilson 2004: 297–299 for a similar case in his discussion of *Wasps* 957 and the unmusical man as a "critique from below": such references can be viewed as "pricking the pretensions of the lyre-playing class rather than mocking the *amousoi*"; yet before a mixed (democratic audience) they could also serve to forestall suspicions of elite privilege and to "generate a sense of shared underprivilege or exclusion." The criticisms leveled at the New Music were also parodied in performance: Barker (1984: 1.100) notes that Aristophanes' *Clouds* 635–655 is likely a parody of Damon's ideas; Csapo (2004: 239) suggests that references to *eunomia* (a shibboleth of elite cultural hegemony) in Euripides and Timotheus are "taunting their critics" and (2004: 247) that critics' (of New Music) claims "probably even enhanced New Music's allure for the masses by articulating its democratic values."

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