Aristophanes' Apprenticeship Again

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THE TWO passages in *Acharnians* where Dicaeopolis suddenly seems to become Aristophanes himself (at lines 377ff and 497ff) have evoked considerable interest recently.[1] In both places Dicaeopolis refers to "his" troubles with Cleon in a way that makes it clear that he is speaking not as the character but as the poet:

αὐτὸς τ' ἐμαυτὸν ὑπὸ Κλέωνος ἄπαθον
ἐπίσταμαι διὰ τὴν πέρυσι κωμῳδίαν.
εἰσελκύσας γάρ μ' εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον
διέβαλλε καὶ ψευδῆ κατεγλώττιζέ μου
κἀκυκλοβόρει κἄπλυνεν, ὥστ' ὀλίγου πάνυ
ἀπωλόμην μολυνοπραγμονούμενος.
νῦν οὖν με πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν ἐάσατε
ἐνσκευάσασθαί μ' οἷον ἀθλιώτατον.

μή μοι φθονήσητ', ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυγῳδίαν ποιῶν.
τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῳδία.
ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μέν, δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω.
αὐτοὶ γάρ ἐσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ ἀγών.
κοὔπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
ἥκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι.

D. F. Sutton, in the context of an analysis of the metatheatrical

[1] They are the focus of Dana Ferrin SUTTON, "Dicaeopolis as Aristophanes, Aristophanes as Dicaeopolis," *LCM* 13 (1988: hereafter 'Sutton') 105–08, and E. L. Bowie, "Who is Dicaeopolis?" *JHS* 108 (1988) 183–85; see also H. P. Foley, "Tragedy and Politics in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," *JHS* 108 (1988) 33–47.

nature[2] of *Acharnians* and the problem of these lines, has (independently) revived the suggestion of Cyril Bailey that the poet himself played Dicaeopolis.[3] Bailey's analysis apparently did not win general endorsement, for it is rarely cited; but at least one of his points deserves to be brought back into the discussion in support of Sutton's argument, which relies on the self-referential play with the nature and the boundaries of the drama elsewhere in *Acharnians*. The result will add an important dimension to the picture of Aristophanes' early career that Halliwell has delineated.[4] We should also then have a better view of the conditions of comic production at the time of *Acharnians*.

The two moments when Dicaeopolis speaks as or for the poet are unique in the extant comedies, as Sommerstein notes; normally, only the chorus in the parabases so represents the views of the poet directly.[5] Sutton points out one possible parallel in trimeters in the fragments of Aristophanes (fr.482 Kassel/Austin, from the *Skenas Katalambanousae*):

[2] Metatheatre is best defined as theatrically self-conscious drama, plays that display awareness of themselves and their own form as works in the theatre.

[3] C. Bailey, "Who Played Dicaeopolis?" in *Greek Poetry and Life*, ed. Bailey *et al.* (Oxford 1936) 231–40. Bailey notes similar but undeveloped suggestions in the previous editions of *Acharnians* by both Murray and Rennie.

[4] S. HALLIWELL, "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship," *CQ* N.S. 30 (1980: hereafter 'Halliwell') 33–45; roughly the same conclusions were reached independently by G. Mastromarco, "L'esordio 'segreto' di Aristofane," *Quad Stor* 10 (1979) 153–96. Mastromarco offers a condensed version of this discussion, with more recent references, in *Commedie di Aristofane* I (Turin 1983) 45–59. D. M. McDowell, "Aristophanes and Kallistratos," *CQ* N.S. 32 (1982) 21–26, has attempted to answer Halliwell and Mastromarco but not, I think, convincingly. The basic objection remains this: how could at least three successive plays (including two first-prize winners) written completely by Aristophanes have passed as the work of their producers? The notion that the "general public neither knew nor cared" (25) who wrote these plays is refuted by the opening of *Acharnians* itself. MacDowell never squarely answers the question: did the archon know that Aristophanes was actually the author of the plays Callistratus produced for him, and did it matter if he did? If the archon could know, there is no reason to believe that the city did not know. If this information was in fact concealed from him, it is very hard to see how, once Aristophanes had become known as a comic poet, he and Philonides succeeded in pulling the wool over the archon's (and the city's) eyes in 422, with the simultaneous production of *Proagon* and *Wasps*.

[5] A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, *Aristophanes, Acharnians* (Warminster 1980 [hereafter 'Sommerstein']) *ad* 377.

χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ,
τοὺς νοῦς δ' ἀγοραίους ἧττον ἢ 'κεῖνος ποιῶ.

We know from the scholium to Plato' *Apology*, in which this is preserved, that the speaker here is talking about Euripides, and the scholiast interprets the passage as though Aristophanes were speaking in his own person. Kaibel thought this was a tragic poet portrayed as a character speaking about Euripides, since "suo enim nomine non loquitur comicus trimetris usus."[6] But this is only an assumption based on the practice of the surviving plays.

It is worth noting that the other fragments of the *Skenas Katalambanousae* display a notable degree of self-referentiality. We cannot be sure just what sort of performance the women have staked out places to see, but it is clear that they are spectators. Thus, while we cannot be sure that we have a play-within-the-play (the essential characteristic of metatheatre), we certainly have some situation of performance and audience represented within the fiction of the play. Fr.487 K./A. discusses the little comforts one brings along to a performance (συνθεάτριαν):

λήκυθον
τὴν ἑπτακότυλον, τὴν χυτρεᾶν, τὴν ἀγκύλην,
ἣν ἐφερόμην, ἵν' ἔχοιμι συνθεάτριαν.

The text of fr.490 K./A. is controversial, but whether it refers to the actor Callipides himself or to an eponymous play about the actor (as Kassel/Austin take it, I think rightly), it too is suggestive of a metatheatrical theme in this play. In isolation we would make little of the διδασκάλου in fr.495 or the τριτοστάτις of fr.503, but the concentration of such theatrical vocabulary in the fragments of one play is notable. It is tempting to suggest that such explicit concentration on the performance as performance is a feature of Aristophanes' early work, but unfortunately we have no idea of the date of *Skenas Katalambanousae*.[7]

[6] Cited in Kassel/Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* III.2 (Berlin/New York 1984) 259.

[7] See the discussion of date in T. Gelzer, *RE* Suppl. 12 (1970) 1392–1569 *s.v.* "Aristophanes (12)" at 1411. He cites Schmid, who took the speeches we here discuss for indications of an early date but properly concludes that at present the play is undatable. It is tempting but ultimately not helpful to try to use the

Bailey cites another possible parallel for the poet speaking directly to the audience in trimeters (Plato fr.107 K., from *Perialges*): ὃς πρῶτα μὲν Κλέωνι πόλεμον ἠράμην. Again, this could be a character or the chorus-leader speaking,[8] but as with fr.488 of *Skenas Katalambanousae*, this could also be the poet speaking for himself. We simply know too little in the case of Plato Comicus to speculate.

The theatrical self-consciousness shown in the fragments of the *Skenas Katalambanousae* supports the general thrust of Sutton's argument, then, but the fact that the two passages of *Acharnians* may not be unique may work against the notion that we must see Aristophanes himself as actor stepping out of character here. The answer to our problem lies in a more detailed analysis of the nature of metatheatre in *Acharnians*.

Bailey argues that many of the comments on other poets (*e.g.* in the opening sixteen lines) will be more amusing if the audience knows Aristophanes himself is speaking under the character mask. By itself, this argument is not decisive; loath as we may be to admit it, Aristophanes may not always have been as funny as we see he could be. Perhaps line 461 deserves mention—though, as Bailey notes, it seems to have confused the scholiasts somewhat. Euripides complains in 460 that Dicaeopolis is ὀχληρός, to which Dicaeopolis replies: οὔπω μὰ Δί' οἶσθ' οἷ' αὐτὸς ἐργάζει κακά. Bailey notes that the line should not be punctuated as Hall and Geldart do but as given here, which is also Sommerstein's text. In his note Sommerstein translates this quite rightly as "you don't yet realize what sort of

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reference to Callipides to date the play. His first certain victory as an actor was in 418 (*IG* II^2 2319), but he was presumably active earlier than that (even though his career extended into the fourth century). If one wishes to date the *Skenas Katalambanousae* near *Acharnians*, one ought to consider the Lenaea of 426. See Halliwell 44f in favor of the production of a lost play of Aristophanes at the festival that year.

[8] It is so taken by J. M. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy* I (Leiden 1957) 524f. This would still seem to be rather unusual, given the parabatic form in which the chorus usually speaks for the poet in Aristophanes. With regard to this fragment see also G. Sifakis, *Parabasis and Animal Chorus* (London 1971) 51, who dates *Perialges* ca 420. We might weigh here too the claim of M. Kaimio, *The Chorus of Greek Drama within the Light of the Person and Number Used* (Helsinki 1971) 161: "The chorus leader cannot in his iambic lines utter such reflections as the chorus in the choral parts."

harm you do," but glosses this in his facing translation as "how vexatious you are," referring back to ὀχληρός of 460. He deprecates the notion (of van Leeuwen and others) that Dicaeopolis/Aristophanes here refers to the corrupting influence of Euripidean tragedy, but I do not follow his reasoning. Sommerstein shifts the grounds of Dicaeopolis' criticism from the moral/political to the aesthetic (from "harmful" to "boring"), but in either case the level of the joke/insult has changed significantly from the tone in the preceding lines. Dicaeopolis has been alternately parodying *Telephus* and making routinely offensive jokes about Euripides' mother. Now he makes a general judgment (on either translation) about the 'Rezeption' of Euripidean tragedy. In either case we have a judgment that has very little to do with the character of Dicaeopolis but comes rather directly from Aristophanes. Bailey is quite right to suggest that this line in particular has far greater comic impact, indeed makes far more sense if Aristophanes himself is playing Dicaeopolis here.

Bailey's attempt to find in the name of Δικαιόπολις a proof that Aristophanes himself is behind the mask must be firmly rejected and indeed probably does more than anything else to damage his case. He suggests that this term is borrowed from Pindar, *Pyth.* 8.31, where it refers to Aegina, and then infers, on the basis of the anonymous *Life* of Aristophanes (which reports that the poet had an estate on Aegina), that Aristophanes is here signalling his identity. The statement in the *Life*, however, is an inference from line 654 of the play; there is no independent proof that Aristophanes was ever connected with Aegina.[9] It is also doubtful that this sort of poetic allusiveness operates in the theatre in performance.

The case to this point can be summarized thus. In *Acharnians* 377ff and 497ff Aristophanes does something he does nowhere else in the extant plays: he speaks directly through one of the players on stage. The hypothesis that Aristophanes is himself playing Dicaeopolis explains these passages better than any other alternative offered so far. We are nonetheless left wondering why Aristophanes never repeated this trick. If it was a good joke here, why did he not use a variation of it in *Knights*, where

[9] Noted by K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (London 1972) 14 n.5. See also Sommerstein *ad* 654 and Halliwell 35 n.11.

Sutton (108) also believes Aristophanes played the part of the Sausage-seller? To say that *Acharnians* is a particularly metatheatrical play is not enough. And although Taplin suggests that "Aristophanes is probably the most metatheatrical playwright before Pirandello,"[10] Aristophanes still operates within certain patterns; overstepping of boundaries requires a notion of boundaries, and the pattern of the poet speaking through the chorus in the parabasis and not in the first person otherwise is clearly established. What makes this particular overstepping of the boundaries such a good joke?

We must look again at the context of these two remarks. The two passages (377ff and 497ff) form a ring surrounding the scene in which Dicaeopolis goes to Euripides and begs for a sufficiently pitiable costume in which to win over the chorus. The *Telephus* parody has already commenced (with Dicaeopolis' threat to slaughter the basket of charcoal, 331ff) before Dicaeopolis first speaks as Aristophanes, but Dicaeopolis does not make this explicit. We should remember that *Telephus* itself lies some fourteen years in the past for the audience of *Acharnians*. Not all the audience, perhaps much less than a majority, will recognize the parody of Euripides immediately. Dicaeopolis' manipulation of theatrical parody works, in that he at least wins a hearing from the chorus. He brings out the chopping block upon which he has agreed to place his head while speaking and commences by citing how gullible the citizens in the assembly are (especially those from the country) and how dangerous are the predominantly old men of Athenian juries (367–76). There are three ways in which the body of Athenian citizens gathered together: in the assembly, in the juries (the large juries of Athens were considered fully representative of the citizen body)—and in the theatre. Dicaeopolis cites the problems and dangers of speaking in the first two situations as preparation for speaking in the third and thereby prepares the way for testing the boundaries of the dramatic illusion here.

It is at this point that Dicaeopolis first speaks as Aristophanes. He tells how he was dragged to the *bouleuterion* by Cleon.[11]

[10] O. Taplin, "Fifth-Century Tragedy and Comedy: a *Synkrisis*," *JHS* 106 (1986) 164.

[11] I take it as settled that this was Aristophanes himself and not Callistratus, his producer. See Halliwell 34ff. We also have a fragmentary commentary on *Acharnians* preserved in a third-century A.D. papyrus (*P.Oxy.* VI 856). Line 27

The precise details of Cleon's action remain unclear but are not material to our purpose for the moment. The *boule* too, of course, was a representative of the whole citizen body, though it was the smallest and therefore perhaps more easily bullied by a popular politician like Cleon. Halliwell (35 n.11) suggests, I think rightly, that Aristophanes was probably forced to make some sort of concession or apology for whatever he had said in *Babylonians* about Cleon in order to settle the matter.

Dicaeopolis' first speech as Aristophanes is surprisingly short: only lines 377–82 must be attributed to the persona of Aristophanes. The whole abortive beginning of his attempt to win over the chorus, *i.e.*, from the point when Dicaeopolis enters with the chopping-block until he goes to Euripides' door, proceeds very rapidly. The sequence is (1) 'I will speak in favor of the Lacedaemonians', but (2) 'I have reason to fear: (a) witness the gullibility of the assembly and (b) the ferocity of jurors'. Then the persona shifts: 'I also have reason to fear, because of what I experienced from Cleon. Therefore I need to equip myself [384: ἐνσκευάσασθαι, is definitely theatrical in its connotations but is not limited to costumes] as pitiably as possible'. Dicaeopolis/Aristophanes probably needs all the following chorus lines (385–92) to cover his movement from the chopping block to the door in the *skene*, which represents Euripides' house. Aristophanes in effect takes off the mask of Dicaeopolis[12] but then short-circuits much of this astonishing effect by his sudden movement and commencement of the sequence with Euripides.

The scene between this now rôle-less actor and Euripides is one of the most fascinating examples of metatheatre in the Aristophanic corpus and deserves detailed discussion on its own. For our purposes here we need only note a few points. The actor, having shed the character of Dicaeopolis, now needs to find a new mask and costume to wear. He assembles the trappings of his new character piece by piece; he also begins to try out phrases and gestures appropriate to his new rôle as Tele-

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reads [.....ὐ]πὸ Κλέωνος δίκην ἔφυ[γε. The subject is clearly Aristophanes; I take this to be evidence that Aristophanes, by whatever means, escaped Cleon's charge.

[12] A modern production would doubtless use precisely this effect, but one cannot of course prove that Aristophanes did so in the original production.

phus. In the course of the scene the actor speaks only one line that could with any plausibility be ascribed to the character of Dicaeopolis, and that follows one of Aristophanes' most explicit metatheatrical touches. Just before he and Euripides begin running through the list of ragged heroes to see whose costume might be suitable, the actor explains why he needs the costume (416f):[13]

> δεῖ γάρ με λέξαι τῷ χορῷ ῥῆσιν μακράν·
> αὕτη δὲ θάνατον, ἢν κακῶς λέξω, φέρει.

The first line is clearly spoken as an actor, outside any illusionistic space. By naming the chorus he expresses his superiority to it; they remain within the space of the play and therefore can be manipulated by such theatrical means as a ῥῆσις. The second line seems to participate in the illusion, but the question is, which illusion? It envisions the penalty the character, not the actor, will suffer if his theatrical manipulations fail. This could as easily be Telephus speaking as Dicaeopolis, and we noted above that the process of assuming the character of Telephus really began with the threat against the basket of coal.

Particularly interesting for the question of who played Dicaeopolis is the following statement (442ff):

> τοὺς μὲν θεατὰς εἰδέναι μ' ὅς εἰμ' ἐγώ,
> τοὺς δ' αὖ χορευτὰς ἠλιθίους παρεστάναι,
> ὅπως ἂν αὐτοὺς ῥηματίοις σκιμαλίσω.

The general sense of this is perfectly clear: parody relies on the superior knowledge of the audience. They must know what is really going on, while the chorus must be deceived. So the passage is usually taken, but it demands rather more. Surely neither Aristophanes nor Dicaeopolis (if he comes into question here at all) thought the audience would truly be deceived into thinking that Telephus was really speaking in the story. The joke, for the purposes of the parody, lies simply in knowing that the performer is not the person the chorus take him for, that a success-

[13] Euripides does something similar with the entire history of Attic tragedy in *Orestes*, at the end of his career: see F. Zeitlin, "The Closet of Masks: Role-Playing and Myth-Making in the *Orestes* of Euripides," *Ramus* 9 (1980) 51–77.

ful theatrical deception is being pulled off. Line 442 makes a much more explicit demand—more explicit than is required for the dynamics of the parody: the audience must know who the actor is—and that, I submit, is not Dicaeopolis but Aristophanes himself.[14]

The actor, having plundered the Euripidean rag and bone shop of all the tragic implements it had to offer, is still not quite ready to return to the chorus and to his task of persuasion. It requires a final soliloquy, addressed to his θυμός and his καρδία, before the new rôle is firmly in place (480).

And then Aristophanes confounds the audience again, for, having begun a speech that is a thoroughgoing parody of the title character's speech in *Telephus*, the actor suddenly drops that character for a moment and again speaks as Aristophanes. He asserts that Cleon will not be able to charge him with slandering the city in front of foreigners again, for it is the festival of the Lenaea and no foreigners are present in the audience (οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ' ἀγών, κοὔπω ξένοι πάρεισιν, 504f). He then proceeds to give his justly famous and hilariously distorted account of the Megarian decree and the origins of the Peloponnesian War. This account he then in effect signs "Telephus" with his mention of the name at the very end of his account (555f):

> αὖτ' οἶδ' ὅτι ἂν ἐδρᾶτε· τὸν δὲ Τήλεφον
> οὐκ οἰόμεσθα; νοῦς ἄρ' ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνι.

It is therefore by no means so clear as Sommerstein would have it that the actor ceases to speak as Aristophanes at line 509 and thereafter consistently speaks as Dicaeopolis (see his note *ad* 509). No element of this speech is explicable only if it is seen to proceed from the character of Dicaeopolis as we have come to know it. The account is of course comic and exaggerated, but that is hardly proof that it must be based in the persona of Dicaeopolis. I suspect that Aristophanes, by wrapping himself in the parody of *Telephus*, and at the same time deliberately signalling

[14] The *Telephus* parody adds a resonance. As noted by E. W. Handley and J. Rea, *The Telephus of Euripides* (=*BICS* Suppl. 5 [London 1957]) 32f: "To fulfill his mission, Telephus had not only to be recognized, but to be recognized as a Greek." The audience must know that the player speaking here not only is not who he claims to be (Telephus), but is in fact the actor behind the mask (Aristophanes). Only then does the joke have its full effect.

that he is speaking behind the mask (which is the whole point of 442ff, a clear yet unprosecutable signal of authorship), is in effect giving, not the chorus, but Cleon the finger.

The political status of Old Comedy has long been the subject of dispute. Caricatures of Aristophanes as a rabid conservative, fiercely opposed to any change in the status quo in Athens, have long since been discarded. The romantic view that Aristophanes was a light-hearted comedian who, though he chose to write on political topics, harbored no political convictions deeper than those held by all 'true artists' (*e.g.* peace is better than war, the underdog deserves our sympathy) has also had its day. We have come to see what the Greeks themselves acknowledged, that comedy had a vital political rôle within the polis and could be just as much a realm of political competition as the assembly and the law courts.[15] That Aristophanes himself considered his work political is clear from his references to Cleon: his enmity was certainly not merely personal. An unprejudiced reading of Cleon's actions after the production of *Babylonians* (though the details of course are vague) suggests that Cleon as well took Aristophanes seriously as a political threat.

We move into the realms of speculation at this point, but the expedient is, I think, justified. Halliwell (35 n.11) interprets the chorus' remarks at *Wasps* 1284–91 (spoken in the person of Aristophanes again) to imply that Aristophanes made some sort of concession to head off Cleon's legal attack after *Babylonians* but then subsequently broke whatever commitment he had made. The key lines are 1284 (εἰσί τινες οἳ μ' ἔλεγον ὡς καταδιηλλάγην) and especially 1291 (εἶτα νῦν ἐξηπάτησεν ἡ χάραξ τὴν ἄμπελον), with its emphasis on deception (ἐξηπάτησεν). Halliwell takes the deception to be the production of *Knights*: Aristophanes promised not to attack Cleon personally anymore and then broke this promise spectacularly. This may well be right and certainly is a key part of the picture, but the development may be a bit more complex. The verb 'deceive' seems a little odd here. *Knights* itself is hardly a deception, but rather a straightforward, all-out attack on Cleon. Did the deception then lie a little earlier, when Aristophanes persuaded the archon basileus to give him a chorus for a play attacking Cleon? One sus-

[15] See especially Jeffrey Henderson's forthcoming discussion of the "Old Oligarch" and the consequent picture of political comedy at Athens in the fifth century.

pects that the general theme of a play became public knowledge as soon as the archon granted a chorus. While the playwright may not have offered a complete and unalterable text at this point, he certainly provided a full enough 'treatment' for the archon to form an idea. Cleon then would have known almost immediately that he was going to be attacked again. I suspect that the real deception lies one year back, in the passages from *Acharnians* under discussion.[16] The metatheatricality in this scene and these references in particular then makes political as well as artistic sense. Precisely what Aristophanes promised (not to attack Cleon by name? not to advocate that the city make peace with Sparta?) of course remains unclear. Yet there is very much a sense that Aristophanes is testing the waters here. The references to Cleon by name are brief and inorganic to the extent that, were they not transmitted, we would not likely postulate a lacuna: 383f seem abrupt, whether 377–82 precede them or not, and 502–08 could easily be omitted without disturbing the flow of the speech. Since they are spoken by one actor and do not affect the cue lines for the chorus,[17] they need not even have been spoken at the final rehearsal but could have been introduced for the first time at the performance—to what effect, if Aristophanes' promise were well known, we can only guess (though the first place that *Acharnians* won is suggestive).[18] Certainly the archon need never have heard these lines

[16] Much depends on whether we take the aorist tense of ἐξηπάτησεν to imply that a single deception (and therefore a single play) is intended. Also critical is the meaning of νῦν in the line. Halliwell argues (35 n.11) that *Wasps* itself cannot be the deception, since the reference is to a past event, and takes νῦν to mean "after all." Once one admits that νῦν can (indeed must) refer to a past event, however, the description fits Aristophanes' behavior in *Acharnians* much better than that in *Knights*. The imagery is another, although not direct, connection. Just as the vine-pole (Aristophanes) in *Wasps* deceives the vine (Cleon), so in *Acharnians* did Lamachus (who clearly functions as a metonym for Cleon, whom Aristophanes is not quite ready to attack so directly again) trip and fall victim to a vine-pole (χάρακι, 1178). *Acharnians* then is the real deception of Cleon.

[17] We cannot be certain, of course, but the practice of the Elizabethan theatre (and that of any amateur theatre today) suggests that other performers 'waited for their cues'. The addition of a few lines within a speech would not threaten the orderly flow of the production.

[18] It would then be possible that Aristophanes did not even tell Callistratus that he would introduce the lines about Cleon. It seems worth noting that Aristophanes had to produce *Knights* the next year on his own, whereas he

before granting a chorus. If Aristophanes had promised not to advocate peace with Sparta as a city policy, he can claim (1) that Dicaeopolis makes only a personal peace and/or (2) that not he but Dicaeopolis/Telephus has advocated peace, thereby wrapping himself in the protective layers of parody and rôle-playing—but having slipped a wink at the audience with lines 442ff.[19]

To sum up our discussion of *Acharnians*: the suggestion of Bailey and Sutton that Aristophanes himself played Dicaeopolis is attractive in itself. Sutton finds the reason Aristophanes chose to speak directly through the character he was playing in the general metatheatricality of the play, one more thematization of the idea of rôle-playing that "completes the circle of possibilities" (108). The argument adduced here attempts to explain why Aristophanes chose to do this in this play only, at precisely the points he did, and to relate this surprising development to what we otherwise know of Aristophanes' early career. Nothing short of a new didascalic notice telling us the place Aristophanes achieved in the actors' competition will constitute iron-clad proof of the point; the thesis nonetheless explains the anomalies better than any alternative and can be seen to be paricularly appropriate to this play at this point in Aristophanes' career.

We turn now to the light shed on the conditions of produc-

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had heretofore always relied on the services of a producer. Does his independent production of *Knights* indicate a rift with Callistratus? That he still preferred the help of a producer is shown by the fact that he enlisted the services of Philonides for the production of *Wasps*.

[19] We might further consider the problem of the play that Aristophanes apparently produced at the Lenaea of 426. Its existence is inferred by Halliwell (44f, convincingly against the view of K. J. Dover, "Notes on Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," *Maia* 15 [1963] 23) from *Acharnians* 1150–55:

'Αντίμαχον τὸν Ψακάδος, τὸν ξυγγραφέα, τῶν μελέων ποιητήν,
ὡς μὲν ἁπλῷ λόγῳ κακῶς ἐξολέσειεν ὁ Ζεύς·
ὅς γ' ἐμὲ τὸν τλήμονα Λήναια χορηγῶν ἀπέλυσ' ἄδειπνον.

It is a reasonable further inference that this lost play did not win first prize and that Aristophanes (not just his choristers) felt badly treated by Antimachus' *choregia*. One curious question is why Aristophanes chose to change producers; he had had two plays produced by Callistratus already. Clearly, though, despite Cleon's attack, the lesson of *Babylonians*, possibly reinforced by a failure at the Lenaea of 426, was that political comedy brought success.

tion at the time of *Acharnians* by our contention that Aristophanes played Dicaeopolis. Sutton's claim (107) that "it was normal for playwrights to act in their own plays" needs to be qualified. The evidence suggests a development away from this norm over time.[20] While Aeschylus certainly did act in his own plays, the *Life* of Sophocles reports that he gave up acting because of his weak voice. Whether or not we accept the specific reason given there, it seems highly likely that tragic acting became sufficiently specialized during Sophocles' career and important enough for the success of the piece that tragic poets ceased to act in their own plays. No reliable evidence suggests that Euripides ever appeared in one of his own plays.

The situation for comedy is different. It is worth remembering that Aristophanes was a member of only the second generation of Athenian comic poets who wrote plays with what we would recognize as plots.[21] Magnes was part of the first generation, and it seems highly likely that he acted in his own plays; it has been suggested, on the basis of *Knights* 518–25, that he was famous in his day for his animal imitations.[22] A scholium on *Knights* 537 suggests that Crates began his career by acting in the plays of Cratinus: οὗτος κωμῳδίας ποιητής, ὃς πρῶτον ὑπεκρίνατο ⟨τὰ⟩ Κρατίνου, καὶ αὐτὸς ποιητὴς ὕστερον ἐγένετο. This tradition is on its face quite reasonable: the poets of comedy will most likely have required more experience with and understanding of the practicalities of the theatre than did the tragedians. The audiences of Old Comedy, as Aristophanes hastens to point out to us, demanded constant innovation, and not merely in plot; the playwright of comedy was required as much to be an impresario as a poet in our modern sense. The demands placed upon the chorus in terms of dance and movement are far greater than those typical in tragedy (especially the

[20] I summarize here a longer discussion that will appear in my "The Idea of the Actor," in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*, edd. F. Zeitlin and J. Winkler (Princeton, forthcoming).

[21] Equally to be remembered is the fact that Aristophanes was part of a new generation of writers of comedy. Gelzer (*supra* n.7: 1407) argues that Aristophanes' *Babylonians* won the first prize at the City Dionysia of 426; he thereby became the first new poet to do so since Hermippus in 435. Indeed since 458, a group of about twelve poets had dominated the festival.

[22] E. S. Spyropoulos, *Hellenika* 28 (1975) 247–74, cited in Sommerstein.

tragedy contemporary with Aristophanes).[23] Experience as an actor must have been valuable preparation for writing comedies and especially putting them into production. It is no wonder then that Aristophanes at the beginning of his career sought the help of someone experienced in production.[24]

It might then be a mistake to view the notion of comic playwrights appearing in their own work as an 'archaic' or somehow 'primitive' element in the late fifth-century comic theatre. While it is indeed extremely unlikely that any tragic poet in 425 played in his own work, the distinction between the poet of and the participant in the comic *komoi* may not have been sharply drawn (and Sutton indeed offers some evidence of comic playwright/actors in the next century).[25] We nonetheless have rea-

[23] The reasons behind the different institutional developments of tragedy and comedy in the fifth century are of course enormously complex. It seems worth remarking, however, that the simple physical demands upon the chorus of comedy would likely have prevented any development towards longer or more complex forms such as the trilogy was for tragedy. The same chorus certainly danced all three plays of a tragic trilogy (and probably the satyr play as well), but a comic chorus probably had about as much work within a single play.

[24] Anachronistic analogies are always dangerous. Nonetheless, one suspects that creating an Old Comedy was more like staging *The Golddiggers of 1932* or *The Coconuts* than writing a Feydeau farce. A certain amount of plot was required, but if one could bring on a specialty act to grab the audience's attention (be it the dancing of Carcinus and his sons in *Wasps* or Harpo performing on his harp), considerations of plot line need not get in the way. The *komoi* that the new plotted (or partially plotted) comedies began to replace about 450 may have resembled variety performances—which also required skillful management to sustain. It has often been noted that we have no reason to believe that Callistratus was himself a poet (but see the testimonia *s.v.* in *PCG* IV). Yet clearly he had some skill that made him valuable to Aristophanes. He may have been an impresario surviving from the previous generation, with no interest in writing himself but with precisely those skills a young poet and/or actor needed to turn songs and sketches into winning performances.

[25] The prosopography of the Attic theatre is a most complex subject. Essential sources here are: J. B. O'Connor, *Chapters in the History of Actors and Acting in Ancient Greece* (Chicago 1908); C. Austin, "Catalogus Comicorum Graecorum," *ZPE* 14 (1974) 201–25; P. Ghiron-Bistagne, *Recherches sur les acteurs dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1976); H. J. Mette, *Urkunden dramatischer Aufführungen in Griechenland* (Berlin/New York 1977); and the ongoing volumes of *PCG*. D. F. Sutton, "The Theatrical Families of Athens," *AJP* 108 (1987) 9–26, suggests that two playwrights after the fifth century were also actors: Diodorus II (=No. 141 O'Connor, No. 92 Austin, p.320 Ghiron-Bistagne, p.23 Sutton) and Callipus (No. 60a Austin, based on the only

son to believe that the situation was rapidly changing by the last quarter of the century.

The agent of that change was in all likelihood the development of actors' contests, the importance of which after the middle of the fifth century cannot be overemphasized. Sutton (108) mentions the existence of the contests as proof that the audience would know who the actors were, and this is certainly true. More important, however, is the fact that the establishment of the contests shows that acting has become a separate entity, independent of the whole of the dramatic performance. One might say that actors did not exist at the beginning of the fifth century; conceptually they were an undifferentiated part of the class "performers at the Dionysia." By the time the city establishes contests for actors apart from the overall play competitions, actors do exist as a separate category.

The process began in tragedy. A contest for tragic actors was probably established at the City Dionysia in 449, at the Lenaea in 442. The competitions for comic actors seem to have followed. Pickard-Cambridge suggests 442 for the institution of a comic actors' competition at the Lenaea.[26] Certainly by the time of the performance of *Acharnians* at the Lenaea in 425 a comic actors' contest existed there.

The existence of the comic actors' contests will have put some pressure on those writers of comedy who chose to perform as well. The anecdote about Crates indicates clearly the

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known citation, Ath. 15.688c; p.24 Sutton). Kassel/Austin give the testimonia for Diodorus in *PCG* V but conclude that one cannot be certain if poet and actor are the same person. From the fourth to the third centuries B.C. there were three comic actors named Callipus, presumably in a direct line of descent (see Sutton), and it is tempting but by no means certain to identify the poet with one of them. A much stronger case can be made for Nausicrates (=No. 355 O'Connor, p. 344 Ghiron-Bistagne), who is known from *IG* II^2 2325 frr. x and mn (see Mette 175, 179), as both a comic poet and actor of *ca* 350. Other possibilities are Pherecrates (=No. 473 O'Connor, p.359 Ghiron-Bistagne), Phrynichus (p. 363 Ghiron-Bistagne), and Nicomachus (p.346 Ghiron-Bistagne). It is thus not impossible to believe that some comic poets acted well into the fourth century.

[26] A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*^{2} (Oxford 1968) 93f. Against the present *communis opinio* (which holds that this did not occur until the fourth century), I argue for the establishment of a comic actors' competition, though perhaps in some sense "unofficial," about this time at the City Dionysia as well; see my "Problems in the Hypotheses to Aristophanes' Peace," *ZPE* 74 (1988) 43–57.

hierarchy that we would naturally assume: the move from actor to poet is a move up. Winning the traditional contest for poets clearly carried more prestige than winning the actors' contest. The poet who chose also to act ran a considerable risk: he then needed to win both contests for his victory to be complete.[27] And in the atmosphere of jealousy that prevailed in democratic Athens it may be have seemed increasingly self-aggrandizing for a poet/actor to try to win two first prizes. On the other hand, an established playwright could probably get away with it. Aristophanes' set-to with Cratinus may be instructive. In *Knights* Aristophanes made the mistake of referring to Cratinus as an old drunk who had lost his creative powers. Cratinus secured his revenge the next year with an openly autobiographical play called *Wineflask*, in which he included himself and his mistress of the title as characters. I suspect that on this occasion Cratinus played himself as well, which will only have increased his audience's sympathy for himself and for his piece. The third place earned by *Clouds* may have a more complex explanation than that the audience did not know what to make of an attack on Socrates and sophistry.

Aristophanes probably did not continue to perform as an actor throughout his career. McLeish suggests that the demands made upon the actor playing Dicaeopolis and the Sausage-seller in *Knights* (considerable oratorical skills on the one hand, but limited physical business on the other) are so similar that the same actor probably played both parts.[28] Sutton takes this actor to be Aristophanes himself, a suggestion I would certainly endorse. It is impossible to say, given the reworking of *Clouds*, whether the part of Strepsiades, for example, was originally designed with the same talents and limitations in mind. It does seem likely however, that after the failure of *Clouds* Aristophanes continued to compete only as a playwright.[29]

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[27] We know that victory of play and protagonist did not always go together. In 418 the famous actor Callipides won the tragic actors' contest, although the play in which he appeared lost. See *IG* II² 2319.

[28] K. McLeish, *Aristophanic Comedy* (London 1980) 122f.

[29] The above was written while enjoying the remarkable hospitality of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the University of Konstanz. I am also grateful to Bernhard Zimmermann and an anonymous referee for their most helpful comments.