

The Ionian at Aristophanes *Peace* 46

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IN THE OPENING SCENE of the *Peace*, the servant of Trygaeus introduces an Ionian to explain to an Athenian why a dung beetle is on stage (43–48):

οὐκοῦν ἄν ἤδη τῶν θεατῶν τις λέγοι
νεανίας δοκησίσοφος, “τόδε πράγμα τί;
ὁ κάνθαρος δὲ πρὸς τί;” κᾶτ’ αὐτῷ γ’ ἀνὴρ
Ἴωνικός τις φησι παρακαθήμενος·
“δοκέω μὲν, ἐς Κλέωνα τοῦτ’ αἰνίσσεται,
ὡς κείνος ἀναιδέως τὴν σπατίλην ἐσθίει.”

Scholars have often wondered why an Ionian in particular should be brought on for this purpose. Of the various solutions offered, none has appeared to be adequate. Platnauer, in his edition of the play, concludes in *aporia*: “The *Peace* was produced at the City Dionysia, on which occasion foreigners were admitted into the theatre; otherwise there seems to be no particular reason for making this interlocutor an Ionian.”¹ As Platnauer no doubt realized, the mere fact that foreigners were admitted to the City Dionysia hardly explains why an Ionian is specified at this point.

Sharpley, in his edition, offers what at first glance seems a plausible explanation: “sitting cheek by jowl . . . with the Athenian exquisite is an oracular philosopher from over the sea.”² Although he elaborates no further, he evidently felt that the passage played on the contrast between an Athenian *δοκησίσοφος* (one who thinks he is *σοφός*) and an Ionian *φιλόσοφος*. Cassio shares this view and explains that in the passage “è adombrato un collegamento popolare tra intellettualità (o pretese d’intellettualità) e presenza di Ioni ad Atene.”³ On this interpretation, the servant implies that it takes an Ionian—*i.e.* a philosopher ‘by nature’— to appreciate the symbolism of the dung beetle. 44–47, then, would function as a parody of philosophical explanation, since (1) the Ionian’s rationalization degenerates into a scatological

¹ M. Platnauer, *Aristophanes’ Peace* (Oxford 1964) 71 *ad* 46–48; on this point he echoes F. Blaydes, *Aristophanis Pax* (Halle 1883) *ad* 46.

² H. Sharpley, *The Peace of Aristophanes* (Edinburgh 1905) 62 *ad* 46.

³ A. C. Cassio, “Attico ‘volgare’ e Ioni in Atene,” *Aion* 3 (1981) 91.

joke, and (2) the explanation is incorrect, for the dung beetle, as Aristophanes makes clear later on, is *not* on stage primarily to ridicule Cleon (127ff, on which see *infra*). Yet this approach seems only partially to explain the passage. It may be that the Ionian is meant to represent a typical intellectual,⁴ but the details of his remarks at 46f seem intended to reveal a more specific characterization than this.

Van Leeuwen's comment that the Ionian represents a "provincialis aliqui homo,"⁵ though surely mistaken, nevertheless points to a better understanding of the passage. Van Leeuwen apparently felt that the Ionian's scatological joke (*σπατίλην ἐσθίει*) could only come from a crude and ill-bred individual. Although this contradicts the stereotypes of Ionians at the time, the premise that the obscenity is meant to seem appropriate to the Ionian's character is sound.⁶ If we then ask what the connection is between scatological obscenity and Ionia, the answer is clear: the Ionian *iambos*.⁷ Because the prologue as a whole is designed to exploit the comic potential of the dung beetle's scatophagous habits, it seems likely that an Ionian is introduced at 46 precisely because of his presumed familiarity with this kind of humor. If Aristophanes associated (and expected his audience to associate) Ionia with the sexual and scatological *aischrologia* of the *iambos*, then the scatological joke in the mouth of an Ionian at 46 becomes eminently appropriate.⁸

⁴ The popular conception of Ionians at Athens was that they were emasculated by their luxurious lifestyle. The references in comedy are almost unanimous on this; cf. for example Callias fr.5 K., Ar. *Pax* 929–36. While I can find no passage in extant fifth-century literature referring explicitly to Ionians as philosophers, Cassio (*supra* n.3) rightly points out that Ionian intellectualism was seen in Athens to be a consequence of their proverbial 'softness'. See especially Ar. *Eq.* 1375–80, where a sophistic discussion is imagined taking place in a perfume shop.

⁵ J. van Leeuwen, *Aristophanis Pax* (Leiden 1906) 16 *ad* 46.

⁶ The fact that the servant quotes the Ionian in dialect suggests that he is concerned with verisimilitude of character. H. van Herwerden, *Aristophanous Eirene* II (Leiden 1897) 8 *ad* 45ff, compares the Ionian's function to that of the Megarians and Boeotians in *Acharnians* who also speak in dialect, but concludes that in each instance the joke is simply that "plebeculae Atticae iocularis videbatur sermo hominum paullo aliter quam ipsi loquentium."

⁷ By *iambos* I mean the entire literary genre, not merely poems composed in iambs. True *iamboi* could be composed (*e.g.*) in trochaic tetrameters or epodic meters as well. Cf. M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin/New York 1974) 22f.

⁸ Cf. *Eccl.* 883, where the old woman, in a hymnic parody, invokes the Muses for her "Ionian song" (*μελύδριον . . . τῶν Ἴωνικῶν*), which, as is clear from the ensuing amoebian song (900–23), implies *aischrologia*; cf. R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford 1973) 196. On *aischrologia* in the iambographers see West (*supra* n.7) 25 and J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven 1975) 17–29. Although the *iambos* was not a thriving literary genre in the fifth century, the greatest iambographers of the past, Archilochus and Hipponax, were certainly widely known. The references to Hipponax in Aristophanes (*Lys.* 360f, *Ran.* 660f) imply a familiarity with that author, and

The fact that the Ionian's obscene explanation of the dung beetle amounts to an attack on Cleon, moreover, strengthens his connection with the *iambos*, since, as is well known, iambographic *aischrologia* often served invective purposes. Archilochus shows this, for example, in several of the fragments directed against the daughters of Lycambes (frr.30–47 W., especially 42 and 43); and Hipponax, whose invective seems to have relied on the obscene even more than Archilochus', exhibits this penchant in such passages as 70.7–8 and 114a W. (69, 133 Degani):

τὸν θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸν τοῦτον, ὃς κατευδούσης
τῆς μητρὸς ἐσκύλευε τὸν βρύσσον.

†ἐξ† τίλλοι τις αὐτοῦ τὴν τράμιν †ὑποργάσαι†.

Although the joke at *Peace* 46 exists solely for its attack on Cleon (εἰς Κλέωνα αἰνίσσεται), part of its humor lies in the fact that, as noted above, the dung beetle does not function as a cipher for a scatophagous Cleon in the context of the play as a whole. As Trygaeus states (129f), he chose the beetle because of its ability to fly to the gods, a notion he found ἐν τοῖσιν Αἰσώπου λόγοις. Therefore, as it is not Aristophanes' main purpose to ridicule Cleon through an allegorical dung beetle (as the Ionian supposes), the suggestion that an Ionian would nevertheless interpret the beetle along these lines parodies the willingness of an Ionian to see invective in anything.⁹

That the Ionian is meant to be seen as drawing on his knowledge of his native literary traditions is further exemplified by the fact that he is made to interpret the dung beetle as one would interpret an Ionian animal fable. That is, when he says the the beetle "is a riddle for/alludes to" (αἰνίσσεται) Cleon's alleged scatophagy,¹⁰ it seems that Aristophanes had in mind the derivation of the verb from the noun αἶνος, 'animal fable'.¹¹ Thus αἰνίσσεται expresses the senti-

the various fifth-century allusions to Archilochus (e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.52ff; Plato [reflecting a fifth-century context] *Ion* 531A–32A, *Resp.* 365C; for others see A. von Blumenthal, *Die Schätzung des Archilochos im Altertume* [Stuttgart 1922] 1–8) indicate that he was considered a poet of major stature, despite occasional misgivings about the acerbity of his *iamboi* (e.g. Critias 88B44 D.-K.). For the Archilochean quotations in Aristophanes see A. Hauvette, *Archiloque* (Paris 1905) 95. We should note also that Cratinus composed a play called the *Archilochoi* (ca 449 B.C.) which seems to have pitted the iambographers against the epic poets (frr.1–16 K.-A.).

⁹ It does also afford Aristophanes a fleeting attack on Cleon; but we must remember that Cleon had died the year before, and an extended diatribe against him (as in *Eq.* or *Vesp.*) would now have little point (as Trygaeus points out at 648–57).

¹⁰ For jokes involving scatophagy in Aristophanes see Henderson (*supra* n.8) 192f.

¹¹ On the semantics of αἶνος see G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 237–40. Although the verb αἰνίσσομαι occurs in a variety of contexts, its predominant

ment that the dung beetle is an *αἶνος* for Cleon. This becomes evident later in the prologue when Aristophanes explicitly acknowledges that he arrived at the idea of a dung beetle from Aesop (127–30):

SLAVE τίς δ' ἡ 'πίνοιά σουστὶν ὥστε κἀνθαρὸν
ζεύξαντ' ἐλαύνειν ἐς θεούς, ὦ πάππια;
TR. ἐν τοῖσιν Αἰσώπου λόγοις ἐξηυρέθη
μόνος πετηνῶν ἐς θεοὺς ἀφιγμένος.

As Trygaeus explains (on Aristophanes' behalf) at 133f, he had in mind specifically the fable of the Eagle and the Dung Beetle, and he refers to the part of the story where the beetle drops a ball of dung into Zeus' lap in an effort to dislodge the eagle's eggs that are lying there:¹² ἦλθεν κατ' ἔχθραν αἰετοῦ πάλαι ποτέ, ᾧ ἐκκυλίνδων κἀντι-
τιμωρούμενος. Since, as this passage makes clear, the animal fable was represented in the fifth century most coherently by the distinctly Ionian Aesopic tradition,¹³ it is especially appropriate at *Peace* 46 for an Ionian to see a fable allegory in the dung beetle.

That the *ainos* could be incorporated into the *iambos* as a vehicle for invective (just as the Ionian of *Peace* views the dung beetle—an *ainos* “against Cleon”) is shown by the fragments of the iambographer Archilochus. Thus fr.174 W. begins:¹⁴

αἶνός τις ἀνθρώπων ὄδε,
ὡς ἄρ' ἀλώπηξ καίετος ξυνωνίην
ἔμειξαν,

meaning of ‘saying one thing by means of another’ seems to be derived from an original association with the Ionian *ainos*. Often the verb takes on an almost technical meaning involving the riddling of oracles (cf. Hdt. 5.56; Ar. *Eq.* 196, *Av.* 970; Pl. *Ap.* 21b3). It is curious that all but the last of these passages involve animals in some way, perhaps preserving the original connection between *αἰνίσσομαι* and *αἶνος* as animal fable. On the interconnection of *αἶνος/αἰνίγμα/αἰνίσσομαι* see Nagy 240.

¹² See Ben E. Perry, *Aesopica* I (Urbana 1952) 322 no. 3: ὁ κἀνθαρος . . . κόπρον σφαῖραν ποιήσας ἀνέπτῃ καὶ γενόμενος κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ Διὸς κόλπους ἐνταῦθα καθῆκεν. ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς ἀποσεύσασθαι τὴν κόπρον βουλόμενος, ὡς διανέστη, ἔλαθεν τὰ ἂν ἀπορρίψας. Dung beetles also appear in no. 84 (“The Two Dung Beetles”) and no. 112 (“The Ant and the Dung Beetle”).

¹³ On the animal fable as an originally Ionian genre cf. Hausrath, *RE* 6 (1909) 1704–07 s.v. “Fabel.” On the Oriental origins of the fable tradition see B. E. Perry's Loeb edition of Babrius and Phaedrus (Cambridge [Mass.] 1965) xix–xxxiv. Aesop came (according to the most reliable accounts) from the Ionian island of Samos, where he would no doubt have come into contact with Eastern fable traditions; on Aesop's life cf. Perry xxxv ff.

¹⁴ For the fragments associated with *ainoi* see M. L. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* 1 (Oxford 1972) frs.172–81, 185–87, with p.64 for ancient testimony about Archilochus' use of the animal fable. See also A. P. Burnett, *Three Archaic Poets* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1983) 60–66.

and if editors are right to place it among the Lycambes poems (172–81 W.), this fragment helps to fulfill the poet's promise of 172 W.: *πάτερ Λυκάμβη . . . νῦν δὲ δὴ πολὺς ἀστοῖσι φαίνεαι γέλως*. Elsewhere (185 W.) Archilochus employed in a similar fashion¹⁵ the fable of the fox and the monkey:

ἐρέω τιν' ὑμῖν αἶνον, ὦ Κηρυκίδη,
 ἀχνυμένη σκυτάλη,
 πίθηκος ἦει θηρίων ἀποκριθεὶς
 μῦθος ἀν' ἐσχατιήν,
 τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἀλώπηξ κερδαλῆ συνήντετο,
 πυκνὸν ἔχουσα νόον.

The numerous testimonia concerning this fragment collected by West indicate that this particular treatment of the fable was well known in antiquity. In one of Plato's few references to Archilochus, Adeimantus alludes to the fable (*Resp.* 363c, *τὴν δὲ . . . Ἀρχιλόχου ἀλωπέκα . . . κερδαλέαν καὶ ποικίλην*), and it is likely that Pindar has it in the back of his mind at *Pyth.* 2.77f.¹⁶ This shows, therefore, that in the

¹⁵ As F. Lasserre points out (*Les épodes d'Archiloque* [Paris 1950] 131), the phrase ἐρέω + vocative implies that the fable is addressed to someone and that its lesson will be directed at that person. (His reconstruction of the details of the epode, however, is highly speculative.)

¹⁶ Pind. *Pyth.* 2.76–78:

ἄμαχον κακὸν ἀμφοτέροις διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες,
 ὄργαις ἀτενὲς ἀλωπέκων ἴκελοι.
 κέρδει δὲ τί μάλα τοῦτο κερδαλέον τελέθει;

That these lines allude to the Archilochean fable is suggested by the fact that the iambographer is given programmatic status earlier in the ode: see A. Miller, "Pindar, Archilochus and Hieron," *TAPA* 111 (1981) 140; Nagy (*supra* n.11) 250. At lines 52–56, that is, Pindar explicitly repudiated Archilochean *psogoi* and *kakagoria* as being antithetical to his own poetry of praise:

ἐμὲ δὲ χρεῶν
 φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν.
 εἶδον γὰρ ἑκάς ἔων τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ
 ψογερόν Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν
 παινόμενον.

In 76 the "insinuations of slander" (*διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες*) seem to recall the earlier expressions *βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν* and *δάκος κακαγοριᾶν*, and *ἄμαχον* may even be a pun on *ἀμαχανία* of the earlier passage (54). In 76–78, then, it seems probable that Pindar is thinking of the fable of the fox and the monkey (where Archilochus may have identified with the fox—see Lasserre [*supra* n.15] 126–35). When Pindar continues with *κέρδει δὲ τί μάλα κερδαλέον τελέθει*, the true sarcasm of the play on *κέρδος* can only emerge if the audience has in mind the Archilochean *ἀλώπηξ κερδαλῆ*. For *τοῦτο* in *μάλα τοῦτο κερδαλέον* must refer to something; perhaps it is the epithet of Archilochus' fox (*κερδαλῆ*) which we are to understand from the allusion in the previous line. It is even possible that the monkey of 73 calls to Pindar's mind the Archilochean fable, although F. Mezger is right to say that the fox and the monkey are *thematically* unrelated here (*Pindars Siegeslieder* [Leipzig 1880] 59f).

fifth century the *ainos* had become closely associated with the most prominent iambographer, and it helps to explain more fully why an Ionian is introduced in the *Peace* passage: someone from Ionia who would be sensitive to both the *iambos* and the *ainos* (and their apparent interaction) would quickly assume that the dung beetle on the stage, because of its scatophagous habits, must be intended as an allegorical attack on someone.

Two passages in Aristophanes' *Wasps* in fact indicate a fifth-century awareness of the use of the fable for invective. Having been advised by his son that quoting Aesop is a mark of social refinement (1259), Philocleon tries his hand at it with the baking woman. In a humorous misinterpretation of Bdelycleon's original advice—to tell something amusing from Aesop (*Αἰσωπικὸν γέλοιον*)—Philocleon begins to tell a story *about* Aesop. Nevertheless, he makes his story reflect the fact that Aesop was a fabulist, and it becomes a kind of fable in itself (1401–05):

Αἰσωπον ἀπὸ δείπνου βαδίζονθ' ἐσπέρας
θρασεῖα καὶ μεθύση τις ὑλάκτει κύων,
κᾶπειτ' ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν· “ὦ κύον κύον,
εἰ νῆ Δί' ἀντὶ τῆς κακῆς γλώττης ποθὲν
πυροὺς πρίαιο, σωφρονεῖν ἄν μοι δοκεῖς.”

It is clear that the story here is meant to refer to Philocleon and the baking woman, where Philocleon is Aesop and the baking woman is the barking dog. The baking woman realizes too that this 'Aesopic' story is directed against her, as her reply demonstrates: *καὶ καταγελᾷς μου;*

At 1446, Philocleon, still determined to take Bdelycleon's advice, begins another story about Aesop:

PH. Αἰσωπον οἱ Δελφοί ποτ' —
BD. ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.
PH. —φιάλην ἐπητιῶντο κλέψαι τοῦ θεοῦ.
ὁ δ' ἔλεξεν αὐτοῖς ὡς ὁ κάθαρός ποτε—

The story, preserved in the biographical tradition, was that Aesop was unjustly accused by the Delphians of stealing a sacred bowl and condemned to death;¹⁷ before his death, he told an *ainos* to the Delphians as a way of illustrating their folly. Some versions¹⁸ say that he told the fable of the Eagle and the Dung Beetle. Philocleon here makes Aesop use this fable as a pointed attack on the Delphians,

¹⁷ See A. Wiechers, *Aesop in Delphi* (Meisenheim am Glan 1961).

¹⁸ E.g. Vitae G/W 134–39; Perry (*supra* n.12) 76f, 106f.

which reveals his awareness that the fable is an appropriate vehicle for such a purpose.¹⁹ His use of the dung beetle, moreover, implies that the fifth-century Athenian would naturally associate this creature with Aesop, and it thus affirms further the Aesopic background of the dung beetle in the *Peace*.

If we can show next that Aristophanes himself was aware that the scatological humor of the entire *Peace* prologue was akin to, if not derived from, the conventions of the Ionian *iambos*, then our explanation of the Ionian's function at 46 becomes even more probable. To this end we may turn to a peculiar fragment of Hipponax:²⁰

ἦ τε κράδη με τοὔτέρωθ[εν
 ἄνωθεν ἐμπίπτουσα, κ[
 παραψιδάζων βολβίτῳ [
 ὤζεν δὲ λαύρη· κύνθαροι δὲ ροιζέοντες
 ἦλθον κατ' ὀδμήν· πλέονιες ἢ πεντήκοντα·
 τῶν οἱ μὲν ἐμπίπτοντε[ς
 κατέβαλον . . .

Henderson has remarked that the detail of “fifty dung beetles . . . swarming in a squadron over the latrines . . . distinctly foreshadows the prologue to *Peace*.”²¹ In particular, Trygaeus' paratragic speech at 149ff does seem to be a deliberate development of the comic ramifications of the Hipponactean scene. In Hipponax, the swarm of beetles apparently attacks the speaker, attracted to the smell of the βόλβιτος (ἦλθον κατ' ὀδμήν). At 151ff Trygaeus, riding on the back of one of these creatures, imagines a similar situation and pleads with the men at Athens:

μὴ βδεῖτε μηδὲ χέζεθ' ἡμερῶν τριῶν·
 ὡς εἰ μετέωρος οὔτος ὦν ὀσφρήσεται,
 κατωκάρῃ ρίψας με βουκολήσεται.

When the beetle begins to veer towards earth, Trygaeus says (157f): ποῖ παρακλίνεις τοὺς μυκτῆρας πρὸς τὰς λαύρας; We may compare line 10 of the Hipponax fragment, ὤζεν τὰς λαύρας.

It is true, as noted above, that Aristophanes claims to have derived the dung beetle from Aesop (127ff), and he certainly makes no mention of Hipponax in the prologue. Yet his *use* of the fable owes

¹⁹ For the Aesopic *ainos* as a vehicle for blame, see Nagy (*supra* n.11) 281–83.

²⁰ 92.7–13 W. (95 De.). For a discussion of the context of this fragment (probably a description of a ritual for retrieving someone's sexual virility) see K. Latte, “Hipponactium,” *Hermes* 64 (1929) 385–88 (*Kleine Schriften* [Munich 1968] 464–67), and O. Masson, *Les fragments du poète Hipponax* (Paris 1962) 150.

²¹ Henderson (*supra* n.8) 23.

much more, it seems, to the kind of scatological humor found in the Hipponax fragment (and other iambographic fragments) than to the original Aesopic version.²² It seems clear, therefore, that Aristophanes was conscious of the Ionian literary provenance of the scatological jokes concerned with the dung beetle,²³ and consequently it is easy to understand why at 46 an Ionian is chosen to engage in this sort of humor.

Finally, the expression *σπατίλην ἐσθίει* put into the mouth of the Ionian (47) also suggests that he is meant to be seen as drawing on his acquaintance with the *iambos*. For rather than a common word for excrement (such as *σκῶρ*, *βόλβιτος*, or *κόπρος*),²⁴ he chooses *σπατίλη* ('diarrhea'), a rare Ionic word which, apart from its comic usage here, appears only as a medical term.²⁵ Since it is readily apparent from the fragments that the iambographers were fond of this kind of technical or exotic vocabulary for comic purposes,²⁶ the use of the word *σπατίλη* at 47 would be appropriate for an Ionian trying to parade his familiarity with iambographic diction.²⁷

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²² For other scatological references in the iambographers cf. Henderson (*supra* n.8) 22. In the *Peace* prologue note the details of 99–101 (*κοπρώνες, λαύραι, πρωκτοῦς ἐπικλείειν*) and 162–65, which are more in the spirit of the Hipponax fragment than of Aesop.

²³ I have treated the influence of the iambographers on Old Comedy in my *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Diss. Harvard 1983).

²⁴ See Henderson (*supra* n.8) 192–94.

²⁵ As in the Hippocratic *Περὶ διαίτης ὀξέων* 28. For other instances see Herwerden (*supra* n.6) 9. Used of Cleon the term is a particularly clever choice, since, as Henderson points out (*supra* n.8: 192), it is a play on the leather (*σπάτος*) associated with his tanning profession and *τιλᾶν* ('to excrete'). This does not, of course, alter the fact that it would have a distinctly Ionian ring to the Athenian audience.

²⁶ In Hipponax 151b W. (202 De.), for example, the word *κοχώνη* ('buttocks'), although common in the comic poets and occurring in Herodas (7.48), seems originally to have been a medical term. Similarly, the word *τράμυς* ('perineum') attributed to Archilochus (283 W.) and Hipponax (114a W., 133 De.) by the Hippocratic commentator Erotian, would seem to derive from specialized vocabularies. The only non-lexicographic occurrence of *τράμυς* is in Ar. *Thesm.* 246, where it seems to mean simply *πρωκτός*; see E. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Rome 1962) 117. *Hapax* words such as *γρόμφις* ('old sow') at Hipponax 103.11 W. (106 De.) may not be strictly technical, but surely reflect a love of the *recherché*. In his edition, Degani lists 87 *hapax legomena* in the fragments (see p. xxviii). On technical vocabulary in Aristophanes see K. J. Dover, "Der Stil des Aristophanes," in *Aristophanes und die Alte Komödie* (Wege der Forschung [Darmstadt 1975]) 134f.

²⁷ I wish to thank Professor David Konstan for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.