



## A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman

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## A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG WOMAN\*

As an example of Aristophanic literary criticism the portrayal of Agathon in the prologue of the *Thesmophoriazusae* has been rather overshadowed by the poetry contest of the *Frogs*. This is largely because more can be said about parody when something substantial of the author parodied has survived.<sup>1</sup> Before many of the specific difficulties of the Agathon scenes we have no alternative but to confess our *ἀπορία*. On the other hand, we need not despair of understanding the general point of these scenes, and in this the most helpful method is that of identifying those Aristophanic techniques which shaped them. This method has already taken us a good way forward, so that there is no need now to argue for the structural integrity of these scenes<sup>2</sup> or their thematic relevance to the play.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, in this paper I will discuss the portrayal of Agathon in relation to typical Aristophanic techniques. My main concern, however, will be with the significance of the different conceptions of literature raised in the course of the parody, Agathon being satirized in turn as an inspired poet, a craftsman poet and an effeminate poet. I hope to show that, for Aristophanes, Agathon's effeminacy is as much a reflection of his art as of his personality.

The similarities between the Agathon scenes and the visit of Dicaeopolis to Euripides (*Ach.* 393–479) are well known. Not only is the sequence of events the same, with the visit to ask for help, the slave in the image of his master, and the fact that in both plays the result, if not the intention, of the visit is the 'dressing up' or 'disguising' which takes place on stage, but there are also similar assumptions underlying the presentation of the two tragic poets. Indeed, the more explicit expression of these assumptions in the *Thesmophoriazusae* has often been adduced in interpretations of the *Acharnians* scene.

The 'disguising' of Dicaeopolis in the *Acharnians* explicitly hits at Euripides' *Telephus*, and *Telephus* parody surfaces in the hostage scene of the *Thesmophoriazusae* (689–764),<sup>4</sup> which might suggest that the prologue scenes of the *Thesmophoriazusae*

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<sup>1</sup> On parody of Agathon see P. Rau, *Paratragodia* (München, 1967) = *Zetemata* 45, pp. 98 ff. and W. Rhys Roberts, 'Aristophanes and Agathon', *JHS* 20 (1900), 44 ff. On Agathon see P. Lévêque, *Agathon* (Paris, 1955). For testimonia and fragments Snell *TGF*, 155 ff. The question of Agathon's poetics has been treated by G. Stohn; *Spuren voraristotelischer Poetik in der alten attischen Komödie* (Diss. Berlin, 1955), pp. 82–106 (I owe this important reference to one of the *CQ* referees), and R. Cantarella, 'Agatone e il prologo delle *Tesmoforiazuse*' in *ΚΩΜΩΔΙΟ-ΤΡΑΓΗΜΑΤΑ* (Amsterdam, 1967), pp. 7 ff. = *Wege der Forschung* 265 ed. H.-J. Newiger (Darmstadt, 1975), pp. 324 ff. For a recent study of the play as a whole see H. Hansen, 'Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*: Theme, Structure and Production', *Philologus* 120 (1976), 165 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See W. Süß, 'Inkongruenzen in den Dramen des Aristophanes', *RhM* 97 (1954), 157 f.; C. F. Russo, *Aristofane: autore di teatro* (Firenze, 1962), p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, art. cit. 167 ff., 184–5.

<sup>4</sup> See E. W. Handley and J. Rea, *The Telephus of Euripides*, *BICS* Suppl. 5 (1957).

were also based on the *Telephus*.<sup>5</sup> In spite of this I would like to argue that the sequence of events in the prologue of our play is essentially a comic one.<sup>6</sup> This would not, of course, preclude paratragic treatment of particular moments in this sequence within the familiar comic framework. The action surrounding the entry of the servant may be a case in point, but before considering that let us look briefly at the parallel sequences of action in some other plays of Aristophanes.

With the opening of the *Thesmophoriazusae* we can compare the prologue of the *Frogs*, in which Dionysus and Xanthias are found travelling towards a dwelling whose occupant Dionysus 'intends to importune to secure a favour',<sup>7</sup> and that of the *Clouds*, where the difference is that Strepsiades does not manage to persuade his son Pheidippides to accompany him on the visit to learn something from Socrates. Similarly, the *Clouds* provides a parallel for Agathon's slave, for there the student, an enthusiastic disciple, prepares the way for Socrates by telling stories about his master's brilliant ideas. In the *Birds*, too, after much wandering about – itself discussed in such a way as to arouse the curiosity of the audience about the destination of the journey (compare *Birds* 1–6 with *Thesm.* 2)<sup>8</sup> – the travellers 'knock' on a rock at a place suggested by their bird-guides. A grotesquely costumed slave-bird appears and explains how he became a bird to follow his master Tereus, transformed into a hoopoe. The scene is thus set for the confrontation with the Epops himself.

In our play Euripides and the Old Man arrive at Agathon's door, their purpose in seeking him as yet undisclosed (26 ff.). Any initiative on their part is forestalled by the entry of the servant, and here, in fact, knocking on the door (as in *Frogs*, *Clouds* and even *Birds*) would not have served to motivate his entrance, for the servant's reason for coming out is quite independent of the visitors' arrival.<sup>9</sup> Certain features of the action at this point suggest parody of a tragic model, or at least of a tragic convention.<sup>10</sup> Euripides and the Old Man stand aside to let the servant perform his sacrifice (as at Aesch. *Cho.* 20 f.), signalling their withdrawal with words found elsewhere in similar cases of 'eavesdropping' (ἐκποδών cf. Aesch. loc. cit., πτήξωμεν cf. *Frogs* 315 ff.), while the servant's hymn is cast in lyric anapaests. The combination of these elements leads me to believe this scene closer to parody than the other analogous Aristophanic scenes (*Ach.* 239 f. and *Frogs* 315 ff., where the motive of eavesdropping is explicit; the withdrawal at *Peace* 233 ff. is prompted by fear: cf. *Eccl.* 28 f.), and an allusion to tragedy at this point would most aptly introduce the parody of Agathon.

The question has already been the subject of some debate. Fraenkel took *Thesm.* 36 ff. to be a comic adaptation of the eavesdropping scene of tragedy (Aesch. *Cho.* 20 f., Soph. *El.* 78 ff., *O.C.* 111 ff., Eur. *El.* 107 ff.), seeing in the use of the verb πτήσσω a sign of parody of the tragic motif.<sup>11</sup> Following him, Rau, discounting the connection

<sup>5</sup> H. W. Miller, 'Euripides' *Telephus* and the *Thesmophoriazusae* of Aristophanes', *CPh* 43 (1948), 174 ff., believes that 'the action and order of the scenes [of *Thesm.* to 1.765]... is extraordinarily similar to that of Euripides' tragedy' (175).

<sup>6</sup> cf. the beginnings of *Curculio* and *Pseudolus*.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, art. cit. p. 176.

<sup>8</sup> T. Gelzer, 'Some aspects of Aristophanes' dramatic art in the *Birds*', *BICS* 23 (1976), 2 f.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the specifically comic knocking on the door is deliberately avoided here. Cf. O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 340 f.

<sup>10</sup> The passage has recently been cited as an instance of parody of tragic convention (R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes*, *G&R*, New Surveys 13, p. 20).

<sup>11</sup> E. Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen zu Aristophanes* (Roma, 1962), pp. 22 ff. πτήσσω most commonly means 'cower in fear'. It is used of men crouching in ambush at Hom. *Od.* 14. 474, Eur. *Andr.* 753, Ar. *Thesm.* 36, *Frogs* 315. The obviously non-Attic forms in -σσ- are found

with a specific tragic model (common to *Ach.* 239 f.), accepts the idea that such a scene may be a technique taken from tragedy.<sup>12</sup> Bain sees no reason why comedy could not have invented this form of action independently, while allowing that there may be some allusion to the handling of such scenes in tragedy.<sup>13</sup> There is of course a basic similarity in all these scenes, since the 'realistic' motive of eavesdropping masks the dramatic necessity of postponing the expected communication with the new speaker, and at the same time focuses attention on his utterance.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore the treatment of the servant's entry makes one difference from the Euripides scene in the *Acharnians*. Another difference is that whereas in the *Acharnians* the disguise episode is the main vehicle of the parody of the dramatist,<sup>15</sup> here the dressing of the Old Man is pure farce, a pendant which moves the plot forward but adds little to the picture of Agathon. Rather than repeat exactly what he had done in the *Acharnians*, Aristophanes has expanded the beginning of the sequence, introducing what was only hinted at as a comic possibility in the *Acharnians*, the phenomenon of the poet in action. Agathon is ridiculed *qua* poet, through exploitation of the literary, theatrical and technological meanings of *ποιεῖν*.<sup>16</sup> The appeal of this view of him is not just to the inevitable human fascination with the mysteries of poetic creation; it may also reflect a certain pretentiousness in the historical Agathon's conception of his role as poet (cf. Pl. *Symp.* 175e, 194ab). Relevant here is Bain's suggestion that Agathon's use of the plural when speaking of himself (183, 196) combines stylistic affectation with the professional 'we' of the craftsman.<sup>17</sup> An added complication is that, as we shall see, the portrayal of Agathon as a whole suggests that his poetic professionalism is an elaborate cover-up for his effeminacy.

The mystification of Agathon's *ποίησις* begins with the appearance of his servant preparing to make a ritual offering, not simply 'on behalf' of his poetry, but as a necessary preliminary to his composing something.<sup>18</sup> The announcement *προθυσιμ-ενοσ . . . τῆς ποιήσεως* (38) leads the audience to expect to see some *ποίησις*, and this expectation is encouraged by lines 66–9. Using the elevated language of his master and very tragic anapaests, the slave calls for ritual silence, in a hymn which plays with the idea of the epiphany, but does not echo the form of the kletic hymn in any thoroughgoing way.<sup>19</sup> The closest parallel quoted by the commentators is Mesomedes Hymn 2.2, which similarly announces the arrival of the god, giving it as the reason for the preceding call for silence (cf. 1–6, esp. 5, *μέλλει γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς βαίνειν*). In our hymn this explanatory element is used twice, in both cases to introduce a description of Agathon the poet.<sup>20</sup>

in tragedy (Soph. *Fr.* 659.9 Pearson (= Radt), Eur. *Bacch.* 1035) but in Aristophanes only at *Wasps* 1490 as parody of Phrynichus (*Fr.* 17, potius adesp.] Snell, *ἔπτηξ' ἀλέκτωρ* (but see Rau, op. cit. pp. 155 f. and D. Bain, *Actors and Audience* (Oxford, 1977), p. 92 n. 4).

<sup>12</sup> Rau, op. cit. p. 100 n. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Bain, loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Fraenkel (op. cit. p. 23 n. 1) compares the way in which protagonists in New Comedy explain their withdrawal before the arrival of the chorus.

<sup>15</sup> See C. W. Macleod, 'Euripides' Rags', *ZPE* 15 (1974), 221 f. and *ZPE* 39 (1980), 6.

<sup>16</sup> See Taplin, op. cit. pp. 12–13 on the wide range of meaning of *ποιεῖν*.

<sup>17</sup> op. cit. p. 199 n. 1.

<sup>18</sup> cf. *Wasps* 860 ff., *Frogs* 871 ff. *προ-* combines the notions of 'before' and 'on behalf of'; cf. J. Casabona, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en grec* (Aix-en-Provence, 1966), pp. 103–8.

<sup>19</sup> See Rau, op. cit. pp. 100 f. and H. Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1937), p. 151 n. 1; and on the epiphany in general, 'Die Epiphanie des Demos in Aristophanes Rittern', *Hermes* 77 (1939), 58 ff. = *Wege der Forsch.*, pp. 144 ff.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Call. *Ap.* 7, *ὁ γὰρ θεὸς οὐκέτι μακρὰν* with F. Williams ad loc.

The Muses are in Agathon's house, composing. Though ἐπιδημείν is usually found in prose, it refers to a notion central to the epiphany, the residence of a deity at his shrine.<sup>21</sup> The residence of the Muses makes Agathon's house their shrine and is a hint of his assimilation to Apollo, Apollo μουσηγέτης, perhaps. The primary reference is to the divine inspiration of the poet through the Muses,<sup>22</sup> which is humorously turned in the typical Aristophanic fashion of taking literally clichés or formulaic phrases. Since poets usually invoke the Muses, calling on them to be present and furnish a song, here they are said to have come and taken over the task completely.<sup>23</sup> At lines 43 ff. the servant calls for all of nature to hold its breath in preparation for the epiphany (or poetic utterance) of Agathon. Such silence is often associated with the epiphany of Apollo, and Fraenkel thought that it originally belonged to the effects of Apollo's divine music (cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 1. 5 ff.) and was only later transferred to the epiphanies of other gods.<sup>24</sup> In the first part of the hymn, then, the idea of Agathon's inspiration is simultaneously magnified and deflated.

The transition to the description of Agathon at work is through the Homeric and poetic epithet καλλιεπής. This epithet corresponds nicely with Socrates' judgement of the Gorgiastic peroration of Agathon's speech in the *Symposium*, Socrates praising the κάλλος τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων (198b). In lines 165–6 Agathon states that the beauty of the poet is reflected in his works. Again, in the *Symposium* Agathon is shown to be 'very conscious of the beauty of his person and his art, for both of which he craves recognition and praise'.<sup>25</sup>

With the introduction of the craft metaphors the hymn of praise seems to take a radically different turn. But is the application of craft metaphor to the composition of tragedy simply comic, as incongruous and reductive, or is Aristophanes also satirizing a concern with τέχνη alive in contemporary literary criticism? This is the question I wish to enlarge on here.<sup>26</sup> In favour of the latter view is the importance given to such metaphors in the *Frogs*, where the whole foundation for the poetry contest is the weighing and measuring foreshadowed in lines 797–802 (cf. 956) of that play.<sup>27</sup> Yet, inevitably, parallels from other sources for the craft metaphors found in comedy are scarce, and this prompted Harriott's suggestion that craft metaphor used for the poet's activity is an innovation of the comic poets.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, for Taillardat the comic point lies in the application of these particular metaphors to Agathon's art, the idea of poetry as handiwork being incompatible with the conception of it as

<sup>21</sup> On ἐπιδημία see *RLAC* 1. 112 ff. s.v. Advent and Call. *Ap.* 13, τοῦ Φοίβου... ἐπιδημῆσαντος with F. Williams ad loc. Cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 10. 37, Μοῖσα δ' οὐκ ἀποδαμει, *Pyth.* 4. 5. οἰκεῖν is also used of gods, e.g. *Birds* 836, *Thesm.* 318, cf. *Knights* 1323, Herod. *Mim.* 4. 1. Cf. Kleinknecht, *Gebetsparodie*, p. 211.

<sup>22</sup> Kleinknecht, *Gebetsparodie*, pp. 103–16. On the poet and the Muses see W. Kranz, *NJb* 53 (1924), 64 ff. Cf. Call. *Fr.* 227 Pf., Ovid *Fast.* 6. 5, 'est deus in nobis'.

<sup>23</sup> cf. *Ar. Fr.* 334 K, μήτε Μούσας ἀνακαλεῖν ἑλικοβοστρύχους... ἐνθάδε γὰρ εἰσιν, ὧς φησιν ὁ διδάσκαλος. See also the story told by Aelian fr. 11 (*Suda* p. 328). the dream of Philemon.

<sup>24</sup> E. R. Dodds on Eur. *Bacch.* 1084 f.

<sup>25</sup> J. Penwill, 'Men in love: aspects of Plato's *Symposium*', *Ramus* 7 (1978), 143 ff., esp. 152. Cf. Kleinknecht, *Wege der Forsch.*, p. 149: 'Schönheit ist nicht nur überhaupt ein Merkmal der Götter, sondern des θεός ἐπιφανής insbesondere.' For Agathon's beauty see T 14 and 16 Snell.

<sup>26</sup> cf. Taplin, op. cit. p. 59: 'the Greeks thought of art in terms of τέχνη'. See also Stohn, op. cit. pp. 82–3.

<sup>27</sup> See Radermacher ad loc. and J. D. Denniston, 'Technical Terms in Aristophanes', *CQ* 21 (1927), 114.

<sup>28</sup> R. Harriott, *Poetry and Criticism before Plato* (London, 1969), p. 96, n. 3. No doubt they were the first to exploit its funny side.

divinely inspired. 'Agathon le Tragique n'est pas un génie bâtisseur, un τέκτων; il ne crée pas: il fabrique, il bricole.'<sup>29</sup>

But is it right to exclude from relevance here the poetic tradition to which Taillardat alludes in contrasting Agathon with the τέκτων?<sup>30</sup> If in the rather breathless string of activities listed in lines 52 ff. Agathon can be thought of as making anything in particular, lines 52–4 point to a ship and lines 56–7 to a bronze statue.<sup>31</sup> Δρύοχοι were the props or stocks on which the frame of a new ship was laid, and the verbs κάμπτει and τερνέει may carry on the ship-making idea.<sup>32</sup> It may be that Aristophanes is mocking, by making concrete, the image of the poet as sailor and the poem as ship found in Pindar (e.g. *Pyth.* 10. 51 ff., *Nem.* 5. 51).<sup>33</sup> Pindar, who stands out among the early Greek poets for his readiness to discuss the inspiration and progress of his own poems, does so using metaphors drawn from the other arts, such as architecture and sculpture. While the stress is primarily on the beauty of the finished artefact, there is at least one case where the use of the metaphor entails our thinking of the poet as actually making something. Verbs of building are prominent in the opening of *Olympian* 6, for example.<sup>34</sup> Other earlier uses also testify to a tradition in which the concept of the poet as maker was compatible with the inspiration theory.<sup>35</sup> Therefore I suggest that craft metaphor is not inappropriate *per se* but is made comic by the satirical choice of words and by the implied contrast with images familiar from elevated poetry.

We may be able to take the argument further, however. Taillardat notes that Plato used craft metaphor of rhetoricians (but not of poets) to denigrate (e.g. *Phdr.* 278e, κολλᾶν applied to composition).<sup>36</sup> The case most relevant to our passage is *Phdr.* 234e, where ἀποτερνέειν, which looks very much like a quotation of what might have been a term of praise in Sophistic circles, is used to poke fun at Phaedrus' enthusiasm for the rhetorical style of Lysias. This suggests that by using craft metaphor the comic poets were mocking the kind of literary criticism practised by the Sophists. That Aristophanes had Sophistic technical terminology in mind is confirmed by the appearance in the list of γνωμοτυπεί and ἀντονομάζει. Ἀντονομάζω is found later in rhetorical contexts, but γνωμοτυπῶ may be an Aristophanic coinage.<sup>37</sup> γνωμολογία, certainly, is satirized as a Sophistic coinage of Polus (from the more common γνωμολογῶ) at Plato *Phdr.* 267c. The reference is to the rhetorical figures Agathon is supposed to have employed, and there is a nice parallel in the *Symposium*, Socrates

<sup>29</sup> J. Taillardat, *Les images d' Aristophane* (Paris, 1962), pp. 442–3. For social prejudice against manual workers see Xen. *Mem.* 4. 2. 22, *Oec.* 4. 2–3.

<sup>30</sup> Taillardat, *op. cit.* pp. 438–9.

<sup>31</sup> Rogers *ad loc.* The poet as shipwright can be discerned at *Frogs* 824–5 (Harriott, *op. cit.* p. 104). With lines 56–7 compare Ar. *Fr.* 699 K (adduced by Taillardat, *op. cit.* p. 443) and *Knights* 461–71.

<sup>32</sup> cf. D. Page, *Folktales in Homer's Odyssey* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 130–2, Taillardat, *op. cit.* p. 442 n. 1, D. Müller, *Handwerk und Sprache* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1974), pp. 69 f.

<sup>33</sup> See D. Müller, 'Die Verspottung der metaphorischen Ausdrucksweise durch Aristophanes', in *Musa Iocosa* ed. U. Reinhardt and K. Sallmann (Hildesheim/New York, 1974), pp. 29 ff., esp. pp. 35 ff.

<sup>34</sup> I owe this reference to Miss M. E. Hubbard.

<sup>35</sup> On the antiquity of certain technical metaphors, with illuminating reference to our passage, see M. Durante, *Sulla preistoria della tradizione poetica greca*<sup>2</sup> (Roma, 1976), pp. 172 f.

<sup>36</sup> *op. cit.* p. 443 n. 2.

<sup>37</sup> The adjective γνωμοτύπος is more common (*Frogs* 877, *Clouds* 952, Arist. *Rh.* 1395<sup>a</sup> 7. Cf. γνωμοτυπικός *Knights* 1379, μελοτυπεῖν Aesch. *Ag.* 1153 with Fraenkel *ad loc.*). See D. Müller, *Handwerk*, p. 181 n. 846.

being reminded of Gorgias by Agathon's style (198c). Plato conveys this by a play on the name of Gorgias, on which Athenaeus provides the prosaic comment *χλευάζει τε τὰ ἰσόκωλα . . . καὶ τὰ ἀντίθετα* (5. 187c, cf. T 16 Snell). The whole passage, then, looks like a comic mixture of burlesque technical terminology satirizing contemporary critical discussions of rhetoric and poetry.

In the metaphors describing Agathon at work the ideas of bending, twisting and turning are prominent (*κάμπτει, ἀψίδας, τερνέει, γογγύλλει*) and in the dialogue immediately following the hymn the characterizing activity of *μελοποιία* is said to be *κατακάμπτει τὰς στροφάς* (67–8). The verb *κάμπτειν* and its derivatives are found elsewhere referring to modulations in the music of the 'modern' dithyramb, by which Agathon is thought to have been influenced (cf. Pherecr. *Fr.* 145 K, *Clouds* 969 ff.). Since this topic has been well treated recently I will not pursue details here.<sup>38</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that both the Pherecrates and the *Clouds* passages connect musical innovation with sexual corruption (playing on a sexual meaning of *κάμπτειν*), for this association is very relevant to Agathon. In the present context Aristophanes uses the words *κάμπτειν* and *κατακάμπτειν* differently, their primary reference being to handiwork. As the scholia suggest, *κατακάμπτειν* may refer to modelling in wax, recalling the statue-making of lines 59 f. In any case, even before Agathon begins to sing his music is put in its place by the catchphrase with which the Old Man reacts to the prelude, *μύρμηκος ἀτραπούς* (100), which reminds us of *ἐκτραπέλους μурμηγκίας* used of Timotheus by Pherecrates in the fragment mentioned above.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the designation of the lyre as 'Asiatic' links Agathon's music with that of Timotheus.<sup>40</sup>

The song begins with maidens preparing to sing and dance in praise of the gods, calling their anticipated hymn a *κῶμος* (cf. *Thesm.* 987 ff., *Eur. Hipp.* 55). Their leader asks them to take up the torch of the Chthonian goddesses, and they, somewhat unexpectedly, proceed to invoke Apollo, Artemis and Leto, deities who have no special connection with the Thesmophoria, though such a connection has been claimed in an attempt to give the song unity.<sup>41</sup> On the basis of lines 109–10 and 121 Bothe identified the chorus as Trojan girls, suggesting that the song parodies a choral passage from a play of Agathon on the fall of Troy.<sup>42</sup> 'Phrygian', however, can be explained as an epithet appropriate to the sub-text of Agathon's music and its performance, and then it is doubtful whether the reference to Apollo as builder of the walls of Troy in line 110 is sufficient to locate the whole piece. Parody of a text of Agathon himself cannot, of course, be ruled out, in view of Aristophanes' usual practice, though we have no independent evidence to prove it.

Even leaving aside the difficulties posed by the text, the nature of Agathon's song is hard to pin down. Remarks made earlier in the play have led us to expect that Agathon will be seen to compose, and since he is a tragic poet we expect a parody of a tragic choral ode or monody. Agathon's song is neither of these, but a dialogue in lyric metre between a female chorus and its leader.<sup>43</sup> There is no indication in the

<sup>38</sup> Rau, *op. cit.* pp. 103 ff., Lévêque, *op. cit.* pp. 142–51, Taillardat, *op. cit.* pp. 456 ff., I. Henderson in *New Oxford History of Music* i. (London, 1957), 387–95. On Pherecrates *Fr.* 145 K see E. K. Borthwick, 'Notes on the Plutarch de Musica and the Cheiron of Pherecrates', *Hermes* 96 (1968), 60–73.

<sup>39</sup> cf. Pherecr. *Fr.* 26 K and *A.P.* 11.78 with E. K. Borthwick, *art. cit.* pp. 69 f. and A. C. Cassio, *RFIC* 103 (1975), 141 f.

<sup>40</sup> T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London, 1967), p. 18 n. 25.

<sup>41</sup> Kleinknecht, *Gebetsparodie*, p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> *Aristophanis Comoediae*, 3 (Lipsiae, 1845), ad 1.101.

<sup>43</sup> Taplin (*op. cit.* p. 236 n. 2), comparing the song to *Eur. Hipp.* 54–71 etc., 'the parody of a lyric dialogue by Agathon at *Ar. Thesm.* 101 ff. might have one of these personal secondary choruses behind it, as Agathon apparently takes the parts of both the actor and the chorus'.

text to help us decide whether the leader of the chorus is a coryphaeus or a female character. In the scholia Agathon is said to take both parts, an idea which Fraenkel criticized as artificial and unnecessary, suggesting instead that the chorus sang their part without appearing, like the chorus of frogs in the *Frogs*.<sup>44</sup> The objection to this interpretation had already been stated by Mazon: the singing of an invisible chorus could not have been let pass without a comment from the Old Man.<sup>45</sup> Mazon offers similar objections to the visible embodiment of the chorus by a *παραχορήγημα* (nothing in the dialogue surrounding the song indicates their presence), besides pointing out the difficulties of staging that it would raise (could a chorus be brought on with Agathon on the *ἐκκύκλημα*?). More positively, the song is introduced, not as a finished composition, but as an example of poetry-making in progress. If we agree that Aristophanes wanted to show Agathon 'at work', it is hard to imagine how better he could have done this on stage than by making the poet play a multiplicity of roles in this artificial manner.<sup>46</sup>

To return to the form of the song, the parallels for a lyric dialogue in which the chorus receives a series of instructions from a leader all come from cult prayers, such as that represented at *Hippolytus* 58–71. There Hippolytus sings three lines urging a band of huntsmen to 'follow singing of the child of Zeus' and they respond with a simple hymn to Artemis. Similarly at *Frogs* 372–414 the chorus leader directs the chorus to sing first of Demeter (383 f.) and then of Iacchos (395 f.). Further, our song is very similar in content to the cult hymns found later in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (312–30,<sup>47</sup> 959–1000, 1136–59). In answer to the question why Aristophanes has used a cult hymn to illustrate Agathon's *μελοποιία*, Horn points to the fact that it allows Agathon to take both roles, thus giving the impression of improvised composition.<sup>48</sup> He also offers as a reason the ease with which a hymn not bound to a previous context could be inserted. Dearden regards the form of the song ('a rather individual type of lyric dialogue between a female character and a chorus') as precluding reference to Agathon's *ἐμβόλιμα*.<sup>49</sup> Yet, as we have seen, the dialogue form of this song may have been influenced by the special needs of this scene, and hymns in general would have made very suitable pieces for *ἐμβόλιμα* (cf. some of the prayers in late Euripides).

The content of Agathon's song also serves the needs of the play, for it is an occasional piece prompted by the festival of the day. In naturalistic terms an explanation might be that Agathon's sympathy for women leads him to identify with them to the extent of providing something for them to sing.<sup>50</sup> Hence the similarity to the *κῶμοι φιλόχοροι* of lines 959 ff., where the chorus of women at the Thesmophoria

<sup>44</sup> op. cit. p. 112 n. 1.

<sup>45</sup> P. Mazon, *Essai sur la composition des comédies d'Aristophane* (Paris, 1904), pp. 127 f. See also Russo, op. cit. p. 71 and H.-J. Newiger, *Gymnasium* 72 (1965), 252 ff. in a review of Fraenkel.

<sup>46</sup> At this period the 'poet' was often the 'producer' (see n. 16 above), and the correspondingly less rigid distinction between 'writing' and 'performing' is exploited in this scene.

<sup>47</sup> For an analysis of this song see J. A. Haldane, *Philologus* 109 (1965), 39 ff.

<sup>48</sup> W. Horn, *Gebet und Gebetsparodie in den Komödien des Aristophanes* (Nürnberg, 1970), p. 105.

<sup>49</sup> C. W. Dearden, *The Stage of Aristophanes* (London, 1976), pp. 103 ff. One of our few 'hard facts' about Agathon is that he 'began' the practice of inserting *ἐμβόλιμα* in tragedy (Arist. *Poet.* 1456<sup>a</sup>25 = T 18 Snell). Cf. G. F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 555: 'Aristotle's remark gives a valuable, if tantalizing, glimpse into the musical practice of the fourth century; a practice which the poets perhaps did not actually carry on themselves, but for which they made themselves indirectly responsible by composing odes which were so neutral in content that they could easily be lifted from one play to another.' Cf. now Taplin, *LCM* 1 (1976), 47 ff.

<sup>50</sup> cf. Hansen, art. cit. p. 168. But it would be more appropriate to see it as a result of the overlap of plot, festival and occasion of performance typical of Old Comedy.



celebrate a series of gods and goddesses beginning with Artemis and Apollo. There is, however, a difference between this song and the cult hymns of later in the play. This is the prominence given to the *κithára*, which is present not simply as an attribute of Apollo (cf. *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 131, Callim. *Ap.* 18 f., Hor. *Carm.* 1. 21. 11–12), but invoked as a god in its own right (*κίθαρίν τε ματέρ' ὕμνων* (124)),<sup>51</sup> as the deified personification of Agathon's *μελοποιία*. The personification and invocation of the lyre are both reminiscent of Pindar,<sup>52</sup> appropriately enough, since Agathon is portrayed primarily as a lyric poet. Further, C. W. Macleod suggests to me that the *κithára* is invoked at the end rather as Pindar invokes the *φόρμιγξ* at the beginning of *Pyth.* 1, as a kind of 'signature':<sup>53</sup> it announces that this is the poem of a self-conscious artist who prides himself on his art.

Given the difficulty of finding anything particularly funny in Agathon's song, we are forced to conclude that most of its effect came from the combination of its sensual musical accompaniment with a suggestive performance (of which there is a hint at 120 f.).<sup>54</sup> In comparison with the parodies of Euripides and Aeschylus in the *Frogs* and the *Andromeda* monody in this play, Agathon's song is very flat, and I do not think this is just because we cannot recognize any Agathon in it. Similarly, if placed beside one of Aristophanes' own 'autonomous lyrics' (e.g. *Thesm.* 959 ff.) it seems inept and uninteresting. If in comparison with that of other lyric hymns the diction is unexceptionable,<sup>55</sup> the poetic phrases 'glued together' amount to little. The real satiric point here, conveyed by the insistence on the lyre, is that the music has become so important that the words are immaterial. This is the implication of the terms in which the instrument is described, with the hint of the new dominance of music over words (124–5, cf. 120): *κίθαρίν τε ματέρ' ὕμνων | ἄρσενι βοᾷ δοκίμων*. Apart from the comic juxtaposition of *ματέρ'* and *ἄρσενι*, where the sexual contrast not only restores force to the metaphors but also underlines the irony of *ἄρσενι* taken literally,<sup>56</sup> the line suggests the hymns are now dependent on the musical accompaniment (*ἄρσενι βοᾷ*) for their favourable reception (*δοκίμων*).<sup>57</sup>

Like my search for humour, my search for *double entendre* has been largely unsuccessful. What prompts the reaction of the Old Man, voiced in lines 130 ff. in such enthusiastic terms? Again, in our explanation of why the Old Man finds this song so stirring we must resort to the music and the manner of Agathon's performance. Agathon's *αὔλησις* became proverbial for *μαλακία* (T 20 Snell), and his first sight of Agathon reminds the Old Man of a high-class prostitute, Cyrene (98).<sup>58</sup> The metre of Agathon's song is largely Ionic, appropriate not only for its association with Dionysus – the Old Man identifies Agathon as the Dionysus of the *Edonoi* (134 f.) – but also for its more general ethos of voluptuousness and effeminacy.<sup>59</sup> Agathon's Ionics

<sup>51</sup> Horn, op. cit. pp. 100–6. See Fraenkel (*Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie*, 1 (Roma, 1964), p. 361) on the 'stereotype Form der Anreihung' with *τε*.

<sup>52</sup> e.g. *Ol.* 8.1, *Μάτερ ὦ χρυσοστεφάνων ἀέθλων, Ὀλυμπία*. Haldane (art. cit. p. 43) makes a similar suggestion about the *χρυσέα φόρμιγξ* of line 327. There, however, it is not so much 'burlesque reminiscence' of Pindar as a serious part of the prayer (Rogers ad loc. and U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin, 1893), ii. 353 f., arguing for the reading *δέ* (Blaydes)).

<sup>53</sup> cf. *Ol.* 2.1, *Nem.* 4.44, Hor. *Carm.* 1.32 with Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.

<sup>54</sup> cf. Borthwick, art. cit. p. 67. The text is uncertain here. *διανεύματα* of the MSS fits the metre better than *διενύματα* (Bentley) and is supported by Luc. *Salt.* 64 (*LSJ* Suppl.).

<sup>55</sup> Rau, op. cit. pp. 104 f.

<sup>56</sup> cf. Horn, op. cit. p. 104.

<sup>57</sup> I owe this argument in support of *δοκίμων* (G. Schöne, *RhM* 5 (1847), 627 f. adducing Pind. *Nem.* 3. 11) to one of the *CQ* referees.

<sup>58</sup> cf. *Eccl.* 877 ff. The Old Woman, dressed in a *κροκωτός*, hums a tune to herself (cf. *Thesm.* 100) in preparation for singing *μελύδριον . . . τι τῶν Ἰωνικῶν*.

<sup>59</sup> A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama*<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge, 1968), p. 124.

are eccentric, using a lot of irrational substitution, resolution and anacalasis,<sup>60</sup> features that may be suggestive of *mollitia*. Therefore music and metre combine to give the song its strongly erotic tone.

Up to this point I have followed Aristophanes in his presentation of Agathon the artist, suggesting that the servant's entry is marked by parody of tragic action, an appropriate introduction to his parodic encomium of Agathon's art, and that this theme is continued in Agathon's song by the parodic deification of the lyre, the emblem of Agathon's lyric composition. In the rest of the paper I will deal with the question of the dress of Agathon, firstly considering what his dress might have been, and then examining his explanation of it for evidence of literary theory.

Evidence for costume in Old Comedy is limited, and textual evidence tends to occur in those passages where items of clothing become important for dramatic purposes. Here we have to remember that what is said may not always be a straight stage-direction: it has often enough been pointed out that descriptions of a character's appearance may be intended to supplement inadequacies in their representation on stage. The *communis opinio* that comic characters wore normal male and female Athenian dress depends largely on the accounts in the *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae* of clothes being changed for the purpose of disguise.<sup>61</sup> Agathon's case may not be as straightforward as these, however. As a tragic poet he might be expected to be wearing tragic costume,<sup>62</sup> and male tragic costume is not ruled out by any indication in the text. Female tragic dress is a possibility in view of the identification with Cyrene, who would have dressed splendidly. But this may simply mean that Agathon's female dress (if it is such) is expensive and stylish – not the everyday wear of the average Athenian woman but what she would wear on a festive occasion.

The Old Man's questioning of Agathon at lines 134 ff. need not be taken as a literal description of him. It has been shown that much more than the lemma in the scholia (*ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννης*;) is to be attributed to Aeschylus's *Edonoi*; in fact that the whole schema of the questioning, with its stress on incongruity and its sarcastic purpose, is to be derived from Aeschylus.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, just as it would be absurd to assume that Agathon has all the items which echo those with which Dionysus was equipped in the *Edonoi* (137–40), so we may also doubt whether Agathon's dress is as typically female as it is here said to be. Aristophanes exploits the theme of *ἀνόμοια* offered by the passage which is being parodied in order to exaggerate for comic effect the male/female incongruity in Agathon's appearance.<sup>64</sup> I will return later to the reason for this. Leaving aside for the moment Agathon's *apologia* I move on to the further references to Agathon's appearance at lines 191–2. In explicit contrast with the grey-haired and bearded Euripides, Agathon is described as good-looking, white-skinned, shaven, womanish in voice, soft and of pleasing appearance (*εὐπρεπής*, cf. 233).<sup>65</sup> While filling out the picture of the effeminate Agathon, this description does not help us with the question of how he looked on stage.

<sup>60</sup> Rau, op. cit. p. 106. It is relevant here to mention Toup's emendation of v. 163, *διεκλῶντ'* (cf. Luc. *Demon.* 18, Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 43). But as the contribution to poetry of the poets in question has already been mentioned in v. 162, I would prefer v. 163 to refer only to their style of life.

<sup>61</sup> Dearden, op. cit. pp. 114 ff.

<sup>62</sup> A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1968), p. 222. Tragic dress had some similarity to contemporary female dress.

<sup>63</sup> R. Kassel, *RhM* 109 (1966), 10–12. Cf. Rau, op. cit. pp. 109 ff.

<sup>64</sup> Dubious sexuality is a characteristic of effeminacy (see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 2. 5. 24).

<sup>65</sup> The immediate context (cf. *πῶγων' ἔχω*, line 190), as well as the shaving of the Old Man, shows that the traditional interpretation of *ἐξυρημένος* (cf. Ar. *Fr.* 326 K = T 16 Snell) as 'with the beard shaved off' is right, in spite of Dover's theory that it refers to shaving of the body

The dressing of the Old Man as a woman at lines 250 ff. may provide some evidence of Agathon's dress. The Old Man is dressed up in what seems to be a full set of female clothes. Are these garments simply brought on with Agathon (on the *κλιρίς* (261)?)<sup>66</sup> or does Agathon have to undress in order to provide them? In the *Acharnians* Euripides strenuously resists Dicaeopolis' ruining of his tragedies by his begging requests, but the only indication here that Agathon is denuded is his sudden disappearance at lines 264–5. The order in which the garments are mentioned may be significant, since Agathon would first have to remove his *ἰμάτιον* and *στρόφιον* (250–1), in order to take off the *κροκωτός*, the first thing the Old Man puts on (253).

The question of what Agathon wore on stage is central to an interpretation of the scene. Agathon's own discussion of his appearance is put in purely hypothetical terms (as A. C. Cassio points out to me, the male/female contrast in lines 151 ff. is introduced for the sake of example, for the most Agathon will concede is having made himself *καλός*), while the Old Man's crude misunderstandings of Agathon's *raisons d'être* may be simply that. A clue may lie in lines 161 ff., where Agathon defends his appearance by reference to Ibycus, Anacreon and Alcaeus. J. M. Snyder<sup>67</sup> has made a valuable contribution to this question by exploring the connection of Agathon's dress with that of Anacreon on a group of vases depicting, according to Beazley,<sup>68</sup> Anacreon and his boon companions in female disguise. The specifically female elements of the disguise are items such as ear-rings and parasols. The Anacreon figure wears the long flowing chiton normal for men in Ionian lands until the fifth century. After its abandonment in Athens (Thuc. 1. 6. 3) its similarity to the long dress of women could well have led to its being regarded there as womanish. Snyder's conclusion is that Agathon intended his dress to recall the costume of these figures, and his wearing of it is a further indication of his poetic pretentiousness. The Old Man, however, not seeing the sophisticated allusion in the old-fashioned Ionian dress, reacts to it simply as an indication of effeminacy.<sup>69</sup> There is no doubt that Agathon in his defence is referring to the tradition illustrated by the vases, on which Anacreon appears in female get-up at symposia, the setting in which he performed his poems and displayed himself as a poet.<sup>70</sup> Did Aristophanes then show Agathon as Anacreon or in modern female clothes? The former view adds subtlety and complexity to the scene, its major disadvantage being that it seems to eliminate the possibility of a visual assimilation of the poet to the female characters he is 'imitating' (see below). If Agathon's dress were that of a contemporary Athenian woman, this would more clearly show up his

(*Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978), p. 144). Cf. *RLAC* 4. 633 ff. s.v. *effeminatus*, *Ach.* 119, *πρωκτὸν ἐξυρημένε* and J. C. Bramble, *Persius and the Programmatic Satire* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 124–6.

<sup>66</sup> Russo, op. cit. p. 81 (cf. p. 89) points out the appositeness of the *κλιρίς*: 'il suo letticcio da lavoro (la scrivania, in pratica, del tempo)'.

<sup>67</sup> 'Aristophanes' Agathon as Anacreon', *Hermes* 102 (1974), 244 ff. Cf. H. Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra* (Münster, 1966), pp. 57, 86–8 and R. Tölle-Kastenbein, 'Zur Mitra in klassischer Zeit', *RA* (1977), 23 ff.

<sup>68</sup> Beazley-Caskey, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, part 2 (London/Boston, 1954), pp. 55 ff. See now W. J. Slater, 'Artemon and Anacreon', *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 185 ff.

<sup>69</sup> cf. Slater's interpretation of Anacreon 54 D as *φύλος* of a fellow symposiast for effeminacy. On the 'effeminacy' of old-fashioned dress see C. M. Bowra, 'Asius and the old-fashioned Samians', *Hermes* 85 (1957), 391 ff. = *On Greek Margins* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 122 ff.; and J. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (London, 1975), p. 219.

<sup>70</sup> cf. Slater, art. cit. pp. 188–9 on our passage: 'these poets were above all associated with sympotic songs and Aristophanes' audience, who knew Anacreon from his poetry and such vases as survived, associated him with the wearing of a mitra: that is they associated sympotic song with what would be for them transvestite garb'; and Brandenburg, op. cit. p. 57.

defence as intellectual humbug, the poetic theorizing disguising the essential effeminacy.

Apart from laying claim to a different kind of 'imitation', that of the literary model, the example of the lyric poets could be part of a sexual defence. Agathon never admits that he is effeminate, or even explicitly acknowledges that he has been accused of being it, apart from his comment on the *ψόγος* of the Old Man (146). While Ibycus, Anacreon and Alcaeus are cited primarily to lead into the maxim of correspondence between the poet's work and his life, it may also be relevant that they were all well known as erotic poets, and hence lovers, of the active not the passive kind.<sup>71</sup> Agathon's argument, then, is that they dressed 'like women' (*ἐμιτροφόρου*) and were therefore susceptible of the accusation of effeminacy, but that they did so for poetic reasons (as he does himself), not being effeminate at all. The tragic poet Phrynichus (cf. 166) is included in this category because of the famed sweetness of his *μελοποιία*.<sup>72</sup>

A decision for either of the views I have outlined involves a judgement of Aristophanes' strategy as a whole. Does he want to show Agathon as a pretentious poet whose aspirations are misunderstood by the common man, or as an effeminate poet exposed by the common man, who can see what is before his eyes?<sup>73</sup> The 'Anacreon' dress has the advantage of combining Asiatic and effeminate associations, while modern female garments as the visual symbol of his art would make a sharper criticism of Agathon. In either case the Old Man's stupidity allows him only to recognize Agathon's personal effeminacy, whereas Aristophanes is directing his satire at the effeminate style of Agathon's lyric composition.

This last point has brought us to Agathon's *apologia*. Like the Euripides scene in the *Acharnians* the portrayal of Agathon depends upon an assumption of interchangeability between the poet and his work. (In both cases the dress is the external indication of this.) In its crude form this is generally thought to be a 'popular' notion. Agathon's intellectualizing version of it is without known precedent (T 23 Snell); to what extent his theorizing depends on Sophistic rhetorical or poetical theory it is now difficult to say. It would be very unlikely that Aristophanes did not take this opportunity of hitting at modern intellectual movements.<sup>74</sup> In a recent article, however, Mary R. Lefkowitz, discussing the use of the first person by fifth-century poets, has shown how poets like Pindar created a kind of autobiographical fiction, how the premisses of this fiction were exploited in comedy and how in turn, taken literally, they became the foundation of the biographies of the poets.<sup>75</sup> In what follows I use several examples drawn from her article.

At *Acharnians* 410 ff. the audience sees Euripides wearing rags and unable to use his legs and Dicaeopolis concludes that this is the cause – or result – of his portrayal of beggars and cripples. It is interesting that the ambivalence between cause and effect played on by Aristophanes is resolved in the lives of the poets by a straight reversal.

<sup>71</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.33 groups them together as famous for *libidinosos... amores*. Cf. Schol. Pind. *Isthm.* 2. 1b: ταῦτα δὲ τείνει καὶ εἰς τοὺς περὶ Ἀλκαῖον καὶ Ἰβυκὸν καὶ Ἀνακρέοντα, καὶ εἴ τινες τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ δοκοῦσι περὶ τὰ παιδικὰ ἡσυχολῆσθαι.

<sup>72</sup> Phrynichus T 10 (c) (d) (g) (e) Snell.

<sup>73</sup> K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), p. 118: 'Aristophanes himself was concerned to over-simplify, exaggerate and parody both the new intellectual fashion and the traditionalist reaction to it.'

<sup>74</sup> Kassel, art. cit. p. 8; Stohn, op. cit. pp. 9 f., 82 ff. D. F. Sutton, 'The Apology of Euripides', *Hermes* 104 (1976), 241 ff. suggests that the debate on life-styles in the *Antiope* is an answer to accusations levelled against the artist in *Thesm.*

<sup>75</sup> 'The Poet as Hero: Fifth-century Autobiography and Subsequent Biographical Fiction', *CQ* n.s. 28 (1978), 459 ff.

For example, in the life of Euripides we are told that Euripides lived and worked in a cave looking out to sea at Salamis and that *therefore* most of his comparisons were taken from the sea, whereas the *aperçu* about his comparisons was itself the source of the story about the cave.<sup>76</sup> Immediately following this anecdote in the life a phrase was quoted from Aristophanes as a justification of this method of accumulating evidence for constructing a poet's biography. The phrase – 'as are his characters, so is the man' – was immediately connected with *Thesm.* 149–50 by Wilamowitz.<sup>77</sup> Needless to say Aristophanes was an important source for the life of Euripides.

The principle of identification of poet and work, based on the assumption that a work of art is an expression of the artist's own nature (cf. *Thesm.* 167), and which I have found referred to as 'the horticultural fallacy', that is, 'by their fruits ye shall know them',<sup>78</sup> is applied in a variety of ways in Aristophanes' staging of poets. The personality of a tragedian may reflect the character of his work, as do those of Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs*. Similarly, in our play Euripides' ingenuity of character (94) is derived from his employment of clever devices (*μηχαναί*) in the plots of his plays. Or identification may be with one character alone, as when Aeschylus at *Frogs* 992 is addressed as 'shining Achilles' (in a quotation from his *Myrmidons*).

The short-circuiting by which poets are characterized by the content of their writings can be illustrated by two more examples from Aristophanes. At *Frogs* 14–15 Phrynichus, Lycis and Ameipsias are said themselves 'to carry baggage each time in their comedies',<sup>79</sup> and in *Peace* the son of Cleonymus who recites Archilochus' epigram about the abandoned shield is rebuked for having disgraced his parents.

In the *Thesmophoriazusae* the Old Man threatens to apply 'the horticultural fallacy' to Agathon's song. When Agathon has finished singing the Old Man comments on the sexually arousing, femininely seductive effect the song has had on him. Dover compares the highly erotic language which describes the attraction of the charioteer to the eromenos at *Phdr.* 253e: ὅταν δ' ὄν ὁ ἡνίοχος ἰδὼν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ὄμμα, πᾶσαν αἰσθήσει διαθερμανθεὶς τὴν ψυχὴν, γαργαλισμοῦ τε καὶ πόθου πτερῶν ὑποπλησθῆ κτλ.<sup>80</sup> The Old Man then questions Agathon about his appearance, and, Agathon remaining silent, declares that he will judge his character from his μέλος, the question being if the song is that of a girl (or girls) what is the nature of the singer?

Agathon's reply is a defence of his dress on poetic grounds. He explains, hypothetically, that when necessary, that is, when composing a female part, he dresses as a woman for the sake of what Brink on Horace *Ars P.* 102–5 calls ὁμοπάθεια. Later oratory was familiar with the idea that to be convincingly expressed emotion must be felt.<sup>81</sup> For example, Quint. 6. 2. 26: nam et luctus et irae et indignationis aliquando etiam ridicula fuerit imitatio, si uerba uultumque tantum, non etiam animum accommodarimus (cf. Cic. *De Or.* 2. 189). Both Cicero and Quintilian compare the orator to the actor moved by the fictive emotions he is portraying, and Cicero (*De Or.* 2. 193–4) connects this phenomenon of emotional possession with Plato's poetic *μανία* (*Phdr.* 245a, *Ion* 533e–534b). In Plato's *Ion* the rhapsode identifies with the

<sup>76</sup> Lefkowitz, art. cit. p. 466.

<sup>77</sup> Ar. *Fr.* 59 Austin (*P. Oxy.* 1176): ὁ γοῦν Ἀριστοφάνης φησὶν ὡσπερ ἐπ' αὐτῶι τούτῳ κεκλημένος: οἷα μὲν ποιεῖ λέγειν τοίος ἐστίν.

<sup>78</sup> John Shearman, *TLS* (18 March 1977), 302.

<sup>79</sup> See Kiessling-Heinze on Hor. *Serm.* 1. 10. 36, Kassel, loc. cit., Bain, *LCM* 2 (1977), 87.

<sup>80</sup> Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, p. 163. For similar reactions to poetry see Cat. 16. 9–11 with T. P. Wiseman, *LCM* 1 (1976), 14 ff., and Pers. 1. 19 with Bramble, op. cit. pp. 78 ff.

<sup>81</sup> cf. Dem. 18. 287, μηδὲ τῇ φωνῇ δακρύειν ὑποκρινόμενον τὴν ἐκείων τύχην ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ συναλαγεῖν. On the opposite tradition see N. Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 170 ff.

characters of the poem he is reciting (535c): 'Are you not carried out of yourself, and does not your soul in ecstasy seem to be among the persons or places of which you are speaking? . . . I must frankly confess that at the tale of pity my eyes are filled with tears, and when I speak of horrors, my hair stands on end and my heart throbs.'<sup>82</sup> Aristotle makes imaginative identification a requirement for the poet, but distinguishes it from *μανία* (*Poet.* 1455<sup>a</sup> 29–34): 'For given the same natural endowment, people who actually feel passion are the most convincing; that is, the person who most realistically expresses distress is the person in distress and the same is true of the person in a temper. That is why poetry is the work of a genius rather than of a madman; for the genius is by nature adaptable, while the madman is degenerate.'<sup>83</sup> This must be the sort of idea to which Agathon is appealing in saying that assimilation to the ways of women is necessary for him to be able to write 'for' them.<sup>84</sup>

In lines 159 ff. Agathon shifts his ground to a more general defence of his dress and soigné appearance, arguing that if a poet aspires to *καλὰ δράματα*, he must himself be *καλός* and dress well, for what a poet composes must be like his *φύσις* (167). This maxim, stated by Agathon, and applied by the Old Man as a universal law, is double-edged. For if his works are really effeminate, what is his nature? Agathon himself sanctions (or does not notice) the slide in meaning from 'outward form' (159–66) to 'natural disposition' (168–70) which provides a hint of the ambiguity.<sup>85</sup>

I have already discussed some aspects of poetic theory in Agathon's *apologia*. But before I continue with the implications of this some specific difficulties of interpretation will have to be faced. The first is *ἄμα γνώμη* in line 148. Austin finds this phrase difficult, because of the use of *ἄμα*, and advocates, besides his own *κατὰ γνώμην*, Sandbach's *μιᾷ γνώμῃ*, which has Agathon claiming singleness of purpose in reply to a charge of inconsistency in his dress (134 ff.).<sup>86</sup> This seems to me to miss the point, since what Agathon has really been accused of is effeminacy, and this is the charge against which he has to defend himself. Hence, as Austin says, the sense required is that of *κατὰ γνώμην*, *menti conuenienter*, and (as he has now conveyed to me) this sense is provided by *ἄμα γνώμη*: 'the clothes go with the thought' (cf. Hom. *Od.* 1. 98).<sup>87</sup>

The division into male and female plays is odd and requires us to look for some extra point to explain it. What is meant by *γυναικεία δράματα* in the first place is given by line 153 ('when you compose a *Phaedra*'). This shows that *γυναικεία δράματα* are plays the heroines of which are women, rather than plays with a female chorus, the explanation offered by the scholia.<sup>88</sup> Part of the point of the contrast is of course the *double entendre* seized on by the Old Man after it has been set up by the wording of line 152. (For *τρόποι* meaning 'characteristic behaviour' cf. Plato *Leg.*

<sup>82</sup> Trans. B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*<sup>4</sup> (Oxford, 1953), i. 109.

<sup>83</sup> Trans. M. E. Hubbard in *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1972), p. 113. See n. 5.

<sup>84</sup> Argued at greater length in Stohn, *op. cit.* pp. 88 ff.

<sup>85</sup> With lines 167 and 171–2 cf. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, p. 90: 'a person's nature is regarded as a disposition which can be, up to a point, forced or suppressed, for better or worse' (e.g. *Wasps* 1557 ff., *Eupolis Fr.* 91 K).

<sup>86</sup> *PCPhS* 20 (1974), 1 f.

<sup>87</sup> For an interesting contrast of *γνώμη* and *σῶμα* see Dover (*Greek Popular Morality*, pp. 123 f.) on *And.* 2. 24, where 'the body . . . is the instrument by which the mind effects its intentions'.

<sup>88</sup> cf. Plut. *Cleom.* 39. 1, ἡ μὲν οὖν Λακεδαιμίων, ἐφαιμίλλως ἀγωνισαμένη τῷ γυναικείῳ δράματι πρὸς τὸ ἀνδρείον . . . The image is used for events in which first men and then women are the main protagonists.

655d, Ar. *Eccl.* 278f.).<sup>89</sup> A parallel contrast is found at Plato *Resp.* 451c, where Plato, after finishing the *ἀνδρείον δράμα*, proposes to move on to *τὸ γυναικεῖον*. For reasons that will become clear I do not want to dismiss out of hand the suggestion that the male/female contrast in both these passages has something to do with Sophron's division of his mimes into male and female.<sup>90</sup>

There is an alternative interpretation of lines 149 ff., however, espoused by Sörbom<sup>91</sup> and held by Cantarella in the first version of his article, according to which Agathon says he requires *μίμησις* not for writing female parts, but for male. I can see that this would be 'an ironical jest', but I cannot make sense of it in the context, for it in no way explains the female dress. Cantarella subsequently changed his mind to argue that 'es wäre ja seltsam, dem Agathon nur oder vor allem das Fehlen des *γυναικεῖον* (und die Notwendigkeit, es durch Mimesis zu erlangen) zuzusprechen, während doch die ganze Aristophanische Szene ihren komisch-parodistischen Sinn wie auch ihre bestimmte dramatische Funktion aus der Voraussetzung herleitet, dass Agathon ein *γύννις* ist'.<sup>92</sup> The point is, however, that Agathon himself does not admit his effeminacy.

There is yet another way in which *ἀνδρεία* and *γυναικεία* could make sense when applied to *δράματα*. This would be as a contrast between manly and effeminate styles of writing.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps we have a hint of what such an effeminate style could be at *Leg.* 669c, where Plato says that 'the Muses themselves would never fall into the monstrous error of assigning to the words of men the intonation and song of women'.<sup>94</sup> This takes us back to Agathon's song and the conclusion the Old Man draws from it. Certainly there is much later evidence for the use of sexual language to criticize decadence in music, literature and oratory, this decadence in turn being seen as the result of a sexually corrupt or effeminate style of life.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps then Agathon's maxim is truer of himself than he will admit, and the fact that he is effeminate means that he writes effeminately.

We cannot ignore the occurrence of the word *μίμησις* in this context, but can we endorse Cantarella's claim that in this scene we find the oldest surviving expression of the concept of artistic mimesis? Given the lack of evidence for a general theory of artistic mimesis in the fifth century, it would be dangerous to assume that the word *μίμησις* here alludes directly to a theory of poetry.<sup>96</sup> Yet it can be shown that Aristophanes is using this word as part of the poetics he attributes to Agathon, thus anticipating its later meaning. While the word *μίμησις* is not found in tragedy, we may still allow it to function here as an abstract in tragic style, the abstract noun standing for a concrete use of the verb, without any implications for the existence of a theory of mimesis. In any case, its use here as subject of *συνθηρεύεται* strikes me as linguistically artificial or pretentious.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Stohn, op. cit. p. 86.

<sup>90</sup> R. Förster, *RhM* 30 (1875), 316 (Adam ad loc.).

<sup>91</sup> G. Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art* (Uppsala, 1966), p. 76 n. 84.

<sup>92</sup> *Wege der Forsch.*, p. 336.

<sup>93</sup> cf. *A. P.* 11. 20. 5 (Antip. Thess.), ἄρσενος . . . Ὀμήρου, Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 43, τοὺς ἀνδρώδεις [ῥυθμούς] vs. τοὺς Ἰωνικῶς (Cobet) διακλωμένους, *Comp.* 17, ὁ δὲ ἀμφίβραχος . . . κέκλασται πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ . . . ὁ δὲ βακχεῖος ἀνδρώδης, Borthwick, art. cit. p. 71 n. 1 on κεκλασμένος.

<sup>94</sup> Trans. Jowett, op. cit. iv. 236.

<sup>95</sup> e.g. Seneca the Elder, *Contr.* 1 *praef.* 9–10 and the other passages collected by Bramble, op. cit. pp. 44 f. Cf. Cratin. *Fr.* 256 K, λυδιστὶ τιλλουσῶν μέλη.

<sup>96</sup> Stohn (op. cit. p. 89 n. 1) argues that, in this context, *μίμησις* must be a technical term.

<sup>97</sup> cf. E. W. Handley, '-sis Nouns in Aristophanes', *Eranos* 51 (1953), 133: 'The intellectualisation of New Tragedy is satirised by making its poets talk in intellectual language of varying degrees of technicality . . . *συνθηρεύεται* is prominent as Agathon's only metaphor in this stretch of dialogue. Hunting metaphors are rare in comedy (C. J. Classen, *Untersuchungen zu Platons*

If we look at the fifth-century occurrences of *μίμησις*, *μιμείσθαι* and *μίμος*, as Sörbom has done, it seems fair to agree with his conclusion that before Xenophon and Plato 'works of art in general are not called mimetic, but only particular ones in given situations'.<sup>98</sup> Where people are the subject of *μιμείσθαι* the context is often one of disguise or imitative action (e.g. Aesch. *Cho.* 560–4, Eur. ? *Rhes.* 208 ff., Ar. *Frogs* 109, cf. *Eccl.* 278, 545, *Plut.* 290–2).<sup>99</sup> Following Sörbom's line I take our passage as similar to these: the primary reference of *μίμησις* here is to the donning of female costume and to the concrete imitation of female dress and behaviour referred to in line 152.<sup>100</sup> In his discussion of *Frogs* 109 (*ἦλθον κατὰ σὴν μίμησιν*) Sörbom suggests that *μίμησις* retains enough of its original connection with the sphere of mime to refer not just to the fact of disguise, but also to the humorous inadequacy of Dionysus' attempt to look like Heracles.<sup>101</sup> The same connotations may be present in our passage, for Agathon's *μίμησις* has already been shown to be comically incomplete and incongruous.

What Aristophanes means by *μίμησις* here, then, is 'disguising oneself as a mime actor does'. The word refers, not necessarily as a technical term, to the activity of an actor, and this is the way it becomes part of Agathon's theory of drama. Aristotle's *εὐπλαστός* poet, identifying with his characters, must in this respect be like an actor, and Plato (*Resp.* 394de, 395cd) seems to make little distinction between the *μίμησις* of poet and actor. This line of interpretation may be confirmed by the echoing of Agathon's dress in the Old Man's disguise, and by the actual transference of the costume from Agathon to the Old Man, who later regards this same *γυναικεία στολή* as suitable support for acting the part of Helen in the parody of Euripides' *Helen* (850 f.). Similarly, Euripides dressed in the costume of his ragged heroes could be seen as an actor of their parts. Perhaps this identification of author, actor and character was facilitated by the flexibility of the verb *μιμείσθαι*.<sup>102</sup>

The dramatic centre of the portrayal of Agathon is his dress, which is at the same time the sign of his effeminacy and the symbol of his effeminate *melopoieia*, made visually concrete in the well-known Aristophanic manner.<sup>103</sup> Therefore far from the poetic *apologia* being 'a comic construction made only to mock the effeminacy of Agathon',<sup>104</sup> his sensual, soft and emasculated art is just as much a target of attack as his personal passiveness. If Agathon had not been effeminate, Aristophanes would have had to make him so.

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*Jagdbildern* (Berlin, 1960), pp. 20 ff.). Lines 155–6 have been connected with Eur. *Fr.* 21. 6 f.: *θηρώμεθα* there was conjectured by Bergler with reference to our passage. It is tempting to see a literary reference in this metaphor. See C. W. Macleod, *CQ* n.s. 23 (1973), 304 f. and 305 n. 3 on Cat. 116. 1–2, 'animo uenante requirens/carmina'.

<sup>98</sup> op. cit. p. 78.

<sup>99</sup> op. cit. pp. 27 ff.

<sup>100</sup> As has already been said by G. F. Else, "'Imitation'" in the Fifth Century', *CPh* 53 (1958), 73 ff. esp. p. 81. Sörbom (pp. 75–7) does not focus clearly on our passage.

<sup>101</sup> op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>102</sup> See Lucas on *Poet.* 1448,<sup>a</sup> 1448<sup>d</sup>23. Cf. 1448<sup>a</sup>23 f.: *μιμείσθαι ἔστιν... πάντας ὡς πράττοντας καὶ ἐνεργοῦντας ἵ τοὺς μιμουμένους*† (Kassel). *τοὺς μιμουμένους* is defensible as 'people engaged in the mimesis' (M. E. Hubbard, op. cit. p. 93).

<sup>103</sup> See P. Rau, 'Das Tragödienspiel in den "Thesmophoriazusen"', *Wege der Forsch.*, pp. 343 f.

<sup>104</sup> Sörbom, op. cit. p. 77.