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THE LION CUB AINOS, SUPPOSITIOUS CHILDREN, AND *THESMOPHORIAZUSAE**

Abstract: In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, a suppositious son is called a 'lion' born for his father (514–16). This article offers a tripartite argument on the cultural contexts relevant to this appellation, and the passage itself: first, that it alludes to the fabular lion in the household, ruinous when its nature is revealed; second, that the cub is aligned with the smuggled baby, the latter perceived as a familial usurper who also destroys the household upon maturation and the revelation of innate character; finally, that the shared tenet of the destructive potential of surfacing nature has thematic relevance to *Thesmophoriazusae*, in which genuineness is constantly under scrutiny.

Keywords: lion cub fable, Aristophanes, hypobolimaios, supposititious, suppositious, Athens, comedy, Greek children

In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides' Inlaw relates numerous colorful examples of inappropriate female behaviour, mostly pertaining to insatiable sexual appetites and the consequent adulterous liaisons (467–519; 552–65). He includes in his catalogue a story about the purchase of a suppositious child: a woman pretends to be in labour for ten days, until she can buy a child and pass it off to her gullible husband as their own son. After its acquisition, the old woman, who brought him and now acts as would-be midwife, runs out of the 'delivery room' and proudly announces to the man λέων λέων σοι γέγονεν, αὐτέκμαγμα σόν, τά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀπαξάπαντα καὶ τὸ πόσθιον τῷ σῷ προσόμοιον, στρεβλὸν ὥσπερ κύτταρον (514–16). Ostensibly, at least, she congratulates the man and promises a puissant offspring, employing language that seeks to (re)assure him of the child's authenticity. I argue that the lines imply a secondary meaning in the appellation, and allude to what was likely a well-known, sub-literary fable in the fifth century –

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that of the 'lion in the household', a creature initially innocent but ultimately vicious, most familiar to modern readers, at least, from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (717–36). In the first portion of a tripartite argument, I examine evidence for the fable and link it with portents proclaiming the birth of leonine men. In the second, I analyze the significance of the suppositious child in Athenian thought, which informs my reading of the allusion to the lion: substituted offspring are represented as slavish intruders in the family, who eventually incite household upheaval and ruin when their innate φύσις surfaces. Thesmophoriazusae 514–16 thus unites in comic equivocation societal concerns about illegitimacy with the inevitable devastation induced by the fabular lion, and so emphasizes the perils of revealed deceptions. Finally, I consider briefly the relevance of the theme of surfacing nature to *Thesmophoriazusae*, in which references to smuggled babies occur repeatedly: in this theatrical world of confusion, imitation, and deceit, in which genuineness is constantly under scrutiny, the juxtaposition of lion cub fable and suppositious child reminds of truths hiding beneath superficial facades and the potentially drastic consequences of their exposure.

I

The declaration that the smuggled child is a lion can initially be taken, understandably, as a positive one, as indeed the husband himself apparently hears it: a good omen or wish for the baby's future. The Greeks traditionally viewed lions as symbolic of power, courage, prowess in battle, and a mighty spirit; hence the Lion Gate at Mycenae, the stone lion that was placed over Leonidas' tomb, the common epic simile of lion-like ferocity in war, the epithet of 'lion-hearted', etc.[1] The boy in question will, seemingly, grow up to be leonine in such a way. But other references to lions in Aristophanes and Euripides (to take an accessible dramatic contemporary) suggest a rather more ambiguous symbolism for *Thesmophoriazusae*. Throughout the twenty-six uses of the word λέων

1) For epic lions see Clarke 1995, Alden 2005, and Pache 2016. For the epithet θυμολέων see, for example, Hom. Il. 7.228, Od. 4.724, 11.267; Hes. Theog. 1007; Ar. Ran. 1041.

in extant Euripides, the lion's destructive, often monstrous, ferocity is emphasized, particularly when the 'lion' is really a human.[2] The prominence of the lion's threatening attributes implies a rather more uncertain symbolic status for the creature than a purely 'positive' reading would denote. Of the other mentions of lions in Aristophanes, those at Knights 1037, 1043 and Frogs 1431 are either oracular or in the context of a pronouncement, and at Peace 1189–90 the reference is proverbial.[3] This suggests a closer look at the symbolism of the lion at Thesmophoriazusae 514 is needed. The traditional scholarly viewpoint on the passage has supported the positive interpretation of the old woman's call of λέων λέων, with claims that "the sense must be entirely complimentary", that the announcement "is clearly a cause for congratulation" and promises "someone who will grow up to be a great and powerful man", or that it reinforces the epic stereotype of the lion as "le symbole de la force et du courage".[4] But it has also been consistently linked with Herodotus' portentous presentation of Pericles' birth, the culmination of his praise for the Alcmaeonidae and a central passage in the debate regarding the historian's opinion of Pericles, Athens, and the city's politics. Herodotus claims that Agariste, Pericles' mother, εἶδε ὄψιν ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ, ἐδόκεε δὲ λέοντα τεκεῖν· καὶ μετ᾽ ὀλίγας ἡμέρας τίκτει Περικλέα (6.131).[5] The *Thesmophoriazusae* passage, however, has been generally underappreciated in the discussion,

2) See especially Eur. IT 297, Heracl. 1006, Supp. 140, 1223, Herc. 1211, Ph. 411 (cf. Supp. 140), and Or. 1400, 1555, but the lion is also more vaguely threatening at Andr. 720 and Ba. 1019, and in references to the Nemean lion (importantly, as an example of a dangerous creature) at Heracl. 950, Herc. 360, 466, 579, and 1271. Cf. arguments that the description at S. Ph. 1436 of Neoptolemos and Philoctetes as a pair of lions at Troy carries a negative tone (Wolff 1979, Winnington-Ingram 1980, 302–3). My thanks to Ian Storey for his comments on the word 'lion' in tragedy and comedy.

3) Cf. Pax Σ ad loc. and Ael. VH 13.9; see further Van Dijk 1997, 641.

4) Quotations from Dyson 1929, 190, Harvey 1966, 255, Austin and Olson 2004, 207, and Taillardat 1965, 168 respectively; see also Sommerstein 1994, 189.

5) For the transition in scholarship from interpreting the passage positively to seeing it as ambiguous at best, see the summary by McNellen 1997, 11–12. Note in addition Focke 1927, 29 and the criticisms of Frisch 1968, 42–6. Since McNellen, most agree that the portent is ambiguous (e. g. Munson 2001, 245–46, Pelling 2006, 108, Kurke 2011, 423) if not entirely critical (e. g. Moles 2007, 262 n. 86); pace Hollmann 2011, 75 n. 53 and 247 n. 86.

perhaps cited among comparanda or dismissed as little more than parody, meant to stir recollection of the renowned politician.[6]

The promise of a leonine son may have recalled the Herodotean episode for some of the Athenian audience, or indeed, lion symbolism generally. However, I suggest that the specific juxtaposition of a young lion with the introduction of a suppositious son into the household simultaneously recalls the famous fable of the maturing cub, in what is practically theatrical doublespeak.[7] The *Thesmophoriazusae* lines do not recall the precise words in Aeschylus' choral treatment of the story, but rather, like contemporary mentions of lion births, the passage recognizes and utilizes the same original αἶνος, 'fable', one evidently so memorable it may have become something close to proverbial.[8] The tale is not exclusively Aeschylean, nor is it one attributed to the legendary Aesop, though it remains 'Aesopic' in that it presents similar fabular elements.[9] As we must separate the fable of 'lion rearing' from any individual author, so we must separate the motif of 'lion bearing' from Herodotus and his Pericles; rather, both tropes seem to refer to a single original αἶνος that was pre-existing and sub-literary, a piece of popular culture with a fluidity that recalled its predominately oral heritage and permeated a shared cultural consciousness. When even an allusion is made to such a fable it immediately summons for the audience (or reader) connotations of the whole of the story, thus acting as a powerful literary tool: to speak of a 'lion in the household' is to evoke a harbinger of destruction, seemingly innocent at first but ultimately devastating as its true nature becomes manifest.

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6) E. g. McNellen 1997, 12: "the story of the dream was apparently well known enough to warrant a parody by Aristophanes, and was doubtless circulated as Periclean propaganda"; cf. Edmunds 1987, 73 on Ar. Eq. 1037–44.

7) That is, the passage offers dual meaning and relies on indeterminacy to furnish "leeway for interpretive choice" (Bartsch 1994, 116, on doublespeak in Latin literature).

8) As, perhaps, it is used at Ar. Ran. 1431a/b and Pl. Gorg. 483e5–6: see below. The fable as proverb might help inform the acerbic point of ps.-Epicharm. fr. 247 K-A and its gnomic misogyny: see also Kerkhof 2001, 100 (without comment on the αἶνος).

9) Aelius Theon explains that the term 'Aesopic' is applicable to more than those fables written by Aesop himself (Prog. 3.3 = Spengel 1865, 2.73): see further West 1984, 105–6. On the similar fable 209 Perry, see below.

To contextualize appropriately the reference in *Thesmophoriazusae* to a lion, particularly how it colors the story of a suppositious child's introduction to the οἶκος, it is necessary to examine the literary presence of the αἶνος (our only access to its popular tradition). Only contemporary references to the birthing or rearing of lions in a domestic or otherwise civilized setting will be considered in full. The earliest, fullest, and most conspicuous telling of the fable is in *Agamemnon*: the famous 'parable of the lion cub' (717–36):

ἔθρεψεν δὲ λέοντος ἶ-
νιν δόμοις ἀγάλακτον οὔ-
τως ἀνὴρ φιλόμαστον,
ἐν βιότου προτελείοις
ἄμερον, εὐφιλόπαιδα,
καὶ γεραροῖς ἐπίχαρτον·
πολέα δ' ἔσχ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις
νεοτρόφου τέκνου δίκαν,
φαιδρωπὸς ποτὶ χεῖρα σαί-
νων τε γαστρὸς ἀνάγκαις.
χρονισθεὶς δ' ἀπέδειξεν ἦ-
θος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων· χάριν
γὰρ τροφεῦσιν ἀμείβων
μηλοφόνοισι σὺν ἄταις
δαῖτ' ἀκέλευστος ἔτευξεν·
αἵματι δ' οἶκος ἐφύρθη,
ἄμαχον ἄλγος οἰκέταις,
μέγα σίνος πολυκτόνον·
ἐκ θεοῦ δ' ἱερεύς τις Ἄ-
τας δόμοις προσεθρέφθη.

Scholars have acknowledged the debt of this story to the Aesopic tradition, pointing out various affinities with fable: use of animals, moral content, function as a parable, applicability to multiple people / situations, etc.; there is no need here to re-examine this body of work.[10] In terms of the relationship of a lion cub fable to subse-

10) For Aeschylean use of fable, especially that of the lion cub, see Adrados 1965, 1–5, Judet de la Combe 1981, 2.61, Davies 1981, 248–51, Jedrkiewicz 1989, 351–57, Harris 2012, 547 and 554. On Greek fable generally see van Dijk 1997 with bibliography, and Adrados 1999 and 2003.

quent allusions or references to it, however, and with a view to the argument at hand, we may hypothesize that the tragic parable preserves the essence or kernel of the story (though of course Aeschylus' adaptation of any 'original', to use the word loosely, serves his own dramatic purposes).[11] It is the paradigm against which we may compare and contrast other allusions, for it is the fullest version of the story that we can suppose contemporary Athenians recognized; Aristophanes' recollection of the passage in *Frogs* testifies to this fact, regardless of its variant lines (1431a/b–32): οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν. / μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ 'ν πόλει τρέφειν· / ἢν δ' ἐκτραφῇ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν.[12] The comic lines imply that the cub will realize, or has realized, a nature that is difficult to manage, comparable to the lion in the Aeschylean version of the story.[13] It is inconsequential here whether we follow E. Fraenkel's view that Aristophanes drew on an underlying αἶνος and was not parodying Aeschylus, or if we assume the opposite;[14] the central message of the fable is the point of the reference, and recollection of Aeschylus' famous lines would serve to heighten the fabular associations.

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11) For the role of the parable in the *Oresteia* trilogy see esp. Knox 1952, Adrados 1965, Nappa 1994, Mauduit 2006, 311–18. Knox influentially argued that the lion in the parable refers to multiple people at once, but this is essentially because the lines are fabular: general applicability to various circumstances is a distinct feature of any given fable's moral message. Conspicuously similar to the passage is the fable of the shepherd and the wolf cubs (209 Perry; cf. 267 and 366 Perry) from the *Collectio Augustana*, though the exact relationship between the two is unclear: Ποιμὴν εὑρὼν λυκιδεῖς τούτους μετὰ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ἔτρεφεν οἰόμενος, ὅτι τελειωθέντες οὐ μόνον τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πρόβατα φυλάξουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἁρπάζοντες ἑαυτῷ οἴσουσιν. οἱ δέ, ὡς τάχιστα ἐτράφησαν, ἀδείας τυχόντες πρῶτον αὐτοῦ τὴν ποίμνην διέφθειραν. καὶ ὃς ἀναστενάξας εἶπεν· ἀλλ' ἔγωγε δίκαια πέπονθα. τί γὰρ τούτους νηπίους ὄντας ἔσῳζον, οὓς ἔδει καὶ ἠὐξημένους ἀναιρεῖν;

οὕτως οἱ τοὺς πονηροὺς περισῴζοντες λανθάνουσι καθ' αὑτῶν πρῶτον αὐτοὺς ῥωννύντες.

12) The lines are advice to Athens regarding Alcibiades; for fable's general function as a means to express counsel or guidance, see Zafiropoulos 2001, 1–10. For the alternative lines see van Dijk 1997, 219–25.

13) Dionysus' earlier joke that the city is pregnant with Alcibiades (1423: ἡ πόλις γὰρ δυστοκεῖ) is perhaps telling with regard to the link between the motifs of bearing lions and rearing them.

14) Fraenkel 1950, 341–42.

Plato refers to the same fable in his *Gorgias*, in the midst of Callicles' glorification of the Machiavellian principle 'might makes right'. Callicles declares that πλάττοντες τοὺς βελτίστους καὶ ἐρρωμενεστάτους ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἐκ νέων λαμβάνοντες ὥσπερ λέοντας, and that these great men are ensorcelled and reduced to slaves, told that an equal share is good and just (483e4–84a1). But if one of 'sufficient nature' (φύσιν ἱκανήν) arises, after shaking free and trampling down all the arguments and enchantments and 'laws against nature' (νόμους τοὺς παρὰ φύσιν), ἐπαναστὰς ἀνεφάνη δεσπότης ἡμέτερος ὁ δοῦλος, καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλαμψεν τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον (484a1–b1). Callicles fully explicates the eventual outcome of rearing lions, or leonine men, and gives strong emphasis to the fact that φύσις cannot be changed, only repressed, destined to manifest itself. The analogies with the αἶνος scarcely need explaining; Plato was apparently familiar enough with the tale (and presupposed familiarity among his readers) that a simple ὥσπερ λέοντας could connote the fable when juxtaposed with the rest of his description. E. R. Dodds puts it plainly: "[Plato] is doubtless thinking primarily of the fable of the Lion's Whelp … This explains why the comparison is introduced so casually."[15] The central theme of the tale, it seems, had become something close to proverbial.[16]

That contemporary Athens knew at least one other adaptation of the lion cub αἶνος, probably as a result of fable's amorphous nature in popular culture, is demonstrated by a tantalizing

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15) Dodds 1959, 268–69. Scholars often accept that ὥσπερ λέοντας refers obliquely to the lion cub αἶνος: e. g. Fraenkel 1950, 341–42, Adrados 1965, 4, Jedrkiewicz 1989, 376, Raeburn / Thomas 2011, 141–42; cf. Dierauer 1977, 63. Van Dijk 1997, 668 claims the passage is "comparable with, but not alluding to" the Aeschylean parable.

16) Aristophanes' maxim in *Frogs* (1431–32) became proverbial in later antiquity: see Macar. 6.71; Erasm. Adag. 2.3.77 (p. 514); cf. Plut. Vit. Alc. 16.3; Val. Max. 7.2 ext. 7 = Eup. Demoi T. vii K-A; Anth. Pal. 10.110: see also van Dijk 1997, 219 and Adrados 2003, 827. If two Euripidean passages involving maturing lions allude to the same fable, it may have been quasi-proverbial already in the Classical period (Supp. 1222–23; Heracl. 1005–8). Against this interpretation see Collard 1975, 420–21. Dyson 1929, 187, contra Focke 1927, 29, argues that the former passage does nothing more than respond to the lion's traditional martial symbolism. Van Dijk 1997, 221 n. 237 considers Supp. 1222–23 in conjunction with fabular lions in Hdt. 5.92, Ar. Eq. 1037–40 (see below), Aesch. Ag. 717–36, Pl. Gorg. 483e4–84a2, and Phaedo, Zopyrus fr. 1. On Heracl. 1005–8, cf. Wilkins 1993, 185–86.

fragment of Phaedo's *Zopyrus* (5th–4th c. BC), preserved by Aelius Theon. In his *Progymnasmata*, Theon speaks at length on Aesop and fable, and includes in his discussion a few sentences from a μῦθος, The original would have perhaps contained an entire fable, likely (but not certainly) complete with a moralizing conclusion, which Phaedo would have presumably used to support his philosophy and discourse in a manner similar to how Plato and Xenophon use the fabular in their Socratic dialogues to explore political and ethical topics.[18] It would not be difficult to imagine a philosophical point here based on a more gruesome end: where once the lion was said to love the boy (cf. Aesch. Ag. 721: εὐφιλόπαιδα), on full maturity (hinted at here) it reverts to its primal state. Indeed, Phaedo emphasizes the foreignness of the lion in its new life by stressing its arrival from an outside source, and thereby lays the foundation for the beast's (potential) later reversion. For the lion to realize its innate φύσις, regardless of upbringing, would align the story with the tragic version and, moreover, not only provide a suitable moral for a philosophic dialogue – participating in the broader discourses on the questions of φύσις vs. διδαχή and φύσις vs. νόμος – but also repeat a theme common in Aesopic fable[19] and elsewhere in Greek literature, namely, the immutability and inevitable revelation of inborn character.[20] In brief, although Phaedo's story differs from the Aeschylean version of the fable in minor details, the strong similarities it offers testify to the popularity of the lion cub αἶνος.

The essence of the fable may be summarized: a (metaphorical) lion, thought to be tame or controlled in a domestic or otherwise civilized environment, proves vicious when mature, as is its na-

17) For αἶνος, μῦθος, and λόγος as 'fable', see van Dijk 1997, 79–97 and Adrados 1999, 3–17.

18) For the relationship between fable and fifth and fourth century philosophical writings, especially those of Plato and Xenophon, see Kurke 2011, 241–360; cf. Jedrkiewicz 1989, 365–78.

19) E. g. fab. 90 Perry, 145 Perry, 209 Perry, 267 Perry, or even 234 Perry, among others.

20) E. g. Pind. Ol. 11.19–20, 13.13; Thgn. 967; cf. an anonymous epigram in the Palatine Anthology that substitutes a wolf for the lion (9.42). See also van Dijk 1997, 173 n. 30. On instinct and φύσις see Dierauer 1977, 52–59, and on the philosophy of *Zopyrus* Rossetti 2015.

ture, to the detriment of those who raised it. Seeming at first to be innocent, the cub becomes a source of ruin in time. One may well object at this point that the fable refers to the rearing of a lion, not the portentous birth of one, as occurs in *Thesmophoriazusae* and in Agariste's dream about Pericles. Why should we assume that birth portents refer to 'negative' lions rather than the traditionally 'positive' ones? There is good reason, in fact, to see the topoi as directly related. As noted above, others have argued in the debate on Herodotus' treatment of Pericles' birth that there is ambiguity, at the very least, in how the leonine qualities may be expected to manifest themselves, and have brought up the lion cub fable as evidence that the image can be interpreted negatively. I argue for a more concrete association between the 'raising' fable and the 'birthing' motif, and suggest that when contemporary authors make use of the latter, they do, in fact, allude to the very fable that inspired the former. In this they capitalize on the popular nature of fable and use context to guide their audience or readers towards the fabular. Yet this is not to deny the inherent ambiguity in leonine birth portents; hence the husband's gullibility in *Thesmophoriazusae*, the misinterpretation of an oracle in *Knights* (1037–44, see below), and the debate on Herodotus' portrayal of Pericles. Rather, it acknowledges that the ambiguity stems from differences in emphasis that are given to aspects of the lion's life. Reference to the raising of a cub highlights the actual life and maturation of the 'lion' and thus reveals its destructive nature, while reference to the birthing of a cub stresses the potential for a child to become savagely leonine, for the ruin has not yet been realized, but only foretold. In cases contemporary with the *Thesmophoriazusae*, however, it is difficult to anticipate any outcome other than that the 'cub' will in time prove identical to the fable's mature lion.

For the connection between the portent of a lion birth and the fable of the maturing lion cub we need look no further than one of the earliest extant references to a miraculous leonine birth, and the only one that informs us in detail on both the birth and life of the lion / lion-like man. Before Herodotus mentions the prophetic dream of Pericles' mother, he uses a similar portent in his telling of the birth and life of the Corinthian tyrant Cypselus, recording the following oracle given to the Corinthians (5.92β): αἰετὸς ἐν πέτρῃσι κύει, τέξει δὲ λέοντα / καρτερὸν ὠμηστήν· πολλῶν δ' ὑπὸ

γούνατα λύσει.[21] Here, the oracle itself clearly implies that rampant and ruinous ferocity will be realized. Informing this reading is the context: the Corinthian Socles[22] participates in a discussion on the terrors of tyrannical rule and attempts with horrific examples from his own city's experience to dissuade the Spartans from reinstalling such government in Athens. Herodotus soon makes it evident from the account of Cypselus' early life that associations should be made with the lion cub αἶνος.[23] In response to the oracle, and because they interpret it as a negative omen, the Bacchiadae family sends ten men to kill the baby boy, but they prove unable to perform their task when the child smiles at them (5.92γ). The infant bears a striking resemblance to the Aeschylean lion cub who stares 'gleaming eyed' at human hands (Ag. 725) and is 'dear to children and source of delight to old men' (Ag. 721–22). After explaining Cypselus' escape, Herodotus turns with startling abruptness from the life of the would-be tyrant as infant to a brief synopsis of his adult career (5.92ζ): τυραννεύσας δὲ ὁ Κύψελος τοιοῦτος δή τις ἀνὴρ ἐγένετο· πολλοὺς μὲν Κορινθίων ἐδίωξε, πολλοὺς δὲ χρημάτων ἀπεστέρησε, πολλῷ δέ τι πλείστους τῆς ψυχῆς. Commentators have wondered why Herodotus gives so much prominence to Cypselus as a baby and so little to the crimes of his adulthood;[24] perhaps it is due to his retelling of the familiar αἶνος with Cypselus in the starring role: a lion cub born in Corinth, he seems innocent in his youth, though in time his inner φύσις is revealed and he becomes ferocious and tyrannical, a source of destruction to those previously charmed (i. e. the Bacchiadae).[25]

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21) The 'eagle among the rocks' is Eetion, Cypselus' father, from Petra.

22) The MSS better support Σωκλέης than the variant Σωσικλέης: see Rosén's apparatus.

23) For the influence of the lion cub fable on this scene see McNellen 1997, 16–18.

24) Pelling 2006, 108 suggests that the emphasis on Cypselus as infant invites the reader to compare Athens' position as an infant city, for it too has the potential to become tyrannical (see further Buxton 2012, esp. 566); see also Gray 1996, 361–62 for the traditional concern that Herodotus presents the early life of Cypselus in "sympathetic portrayal", particularly with respect to his innocent smile in the face of death; cf. Moles 2007, 258–59 for the divine smile.

25) Note too that Cypselus is prophesized to bring justice to Corinth (δικαιώσει δὲ Κόρινθον), a point that has bothered commentators (see Gray 1996, 377); we might see a facet of divine justice, comparable to the lion's role in *Agamemnon* as a priest of Ate (Aesch. Ag. 735–36).

That a well-known pre-existing fable influenced Herodotus' telling, as also Aeschylus', seems probable. There is no need for further elaboration, then, for the traditional αἶνος is thus complete.[26] It is from context and elaboration on the life of the 'lion', not just from the mention of an oracle regarding its birth, that we are able to discern a connection here with the αἶνος.[27] Like Aeschylus, Herodotus draws on fable to make his point.[28]

The lion's place in Greek literature as 'king of the beasts',[29] and the tyrant's and lion's common tendency to savage brutality makes the association of leonine birth-portents with tyranny a natural one, but the life and career of the stereotypical tyrant also accords with the lion cub αἶνος specifically. At first a tyrant may seem a liberator with great potential for good, but soon his abuse of power intensifies and he rules according to his own whims and

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26) There are, of course, other influences on the presentation of the Cypselus episode besides fable alone. Vernant 1982, 26–30 sees interplay with the Oedipus myth; Saïd 2002, 127 observes a tragic influence; Moles 2007, 248–49 notes Dionysiac elements. All of these combine to give the episode its "storytelling character" and make it "generally folkloristic" (Moles 2007, 248).

27) With regard to Herodotus' comment on Pericles' birth, an allusion to the same αἶνος should, I think, be understood in the lack of proper context, but N.B. the point above on an oracle's inherent focus on potentiality, whence derives ambiguity. Perhaps Pericles (or Periclean imperial Athens; cf. Gray 1996, 386–87) is tyrannical, but Athens may still change her ways.

28) For Herodotus' use of fable see Kurke 2011, 361–431, though she does not discuss this passage directly. McNellen 1997 compares the presentation of all lion cubs within the *Histories* to determine how we should interpret the Pericles scene (ambiguously, he concludes, though he sees the "destructive lion" as a prominent motif). Interestingly, he associates with the fable the story told at 1.84, and determines that King Meles' failure to carry around all the walls of Sardis the lion that a concubine bore him, despite the prophecy to do just this if he wished to protect his domain, reflects the cub's role as destructive to the household; it was meant to be a guardian of the city, but Sardis fell nonetheless (for a similar reading see Bunnens 1969, 130–34). This interpretation is certainly plausible, and the nonchalant reference may indeed rely on the fable's potentially proverbial status, at least among Greek readership. We should also note that the story suggests the theme of begetting a lion is rather older than seen elsewhere, and that it may have Eastern connotations (cf. Phaedo's version of the fable, in which he attributes the μῦθος to the Persians, and Fraenkel 1950, 341–42 on its possible Eastern origins).

29) E. g. fab. 334 Perry; cf. Keller 1963, 24.

desires, at the expense of the people and his city.[30] The connection with the cub that reveals its φύσις at maturation is readily apparent. The same correlation may also be understood in Aristophanes' *Knights*, when the Paphlagonian, who represents the politician Cleon, attempts to persuade Demos that he is beneficial to the city (despite protests otherwise) and claims to be the subject of an oracular birth portent (1037–40):

> ΠΑ. ἔστι γυνή, τέξει δὲ λέονθ' ἱεραῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις,
> ὃς περὶ τοῦ δήμου πολλοῖς κώνωψι μαχεῖται
> ὥς τε περὶ σκύμνοισι βεβηκώς· τὸν σὺ φύλαξαι,
> τεῖχος ποιήσας ξύλινον πύργους τε σιδηροῦς.[31]

Demos confesses he does not understand the oracle, and the Paphlagonian's explanation in line 1043, that the city has him ἀντὶ τοῦ λέοντος ('in place of the lion'), sets up a punning rejoinder (1044): καὶ πῶς μ' ἐλελήθεις Ἀντιλέων γεγενημένος; ('And how has it escaped my notice that you are an Anti–lion?'). What at first seems to offer easy interpretation as a positive prophecy becomes problematic with clarification of the reference to Antileon: this was the name of an early tyrant of Chalcis.[32] With this in mind, the semantic sense of the advice τὸν σὺ φύλαξαι alters slightly; the verb of course does not only mean 'protect' or 'preserve', but in the middle 'watch out for'. The oracle does not advise to protect the lion, but rather warns to keep it away and not invite it in as city saviour, lest the

30) McNellen 1997, 17 points out that Plato presents a similar model of tyranny (Resp. 8.565c–69c).

31) The lion (Cleon) in battle with the gnats (ῥήτορες or Medes, according to the scholia) recalls Aesop's fable about a similar contest (fab. 255 Perry), in which a single gnat achieves easy victory: see Corbel-Morana 2012, 103 on what this implies for Cleon as politician; cf. Ar. Vesp. 596–97. The allusion to this known fable does not negate a co-existing allusion to the lion cub αἶνος, for the entire oracle is parodic and as such incorporates separate elements (hence the mention of the 'wooden walls'). If anything, a reference to what we know for certain to have been an Aesopic fable only makes the fabular context that much more substantial.

32) See Arist. Pol. 1316a29–32; for more on Antileon, see H. Lloyd-Jones 1975. Cf. Ar. Vesp. 1232–35, where Cleon is compared to Pittacus, a tyrant of Mytilene.

πόλις suffer ruin.[33] This also makes good sense of the allusion to the infamous oracle promoting the creation of wooden walls, which Themistocles interpreted as a need to defend Athens with a navy (Hdt. 7.141–44). Here too, defence is necessary. The humour thus depends upon the prophecy's ambiguity: although the Paphlagonian believes the oracle to be a positive one, a secondary reading exposes negative connotations (unsurprising when we consider not only the typical obliviousness of a comic character, but also that Aristophanes intends the faux-oracle to refer to Cleon, not the dramatic 'Paphlagonian').[34] The implication of tyrannical behaviour in the oracular 'lion' not only corresponds to the Herodotean Cypselus episode, but also complements Plato's description of the leonine man in *Gorgias* and Aristophanes' own recommendation in *Frogs* 'to submit to its habits' (1432).[35]

With this background of literary references to lion rearing and birthing,[36] I return now to the passage in *Thesmophoriazusae*,

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33) Desfray 1999, 51 also recognizes the verb's ambiguity here. Corbel-Morana 2012, 103 proposes that in claiming to be the lion the Paphlagonian presents himself as a new Pericles.

34) Contra Dyson 1929, 188, who ignores Aristophanes' consistently contumelious treatment of the politician and claims that because 'Cleon' considers himself the oracular lion, "the sense of the symbolism cannot be anything but blatantly complimentary".

35) Compare Hdt. 5.56, where Hipparchus, as tyrant (cf. 5.55), is called a lion.

36) I have only discussed evidence from the Classical period, but accounts of the raising and birthing of lions continue. Most interesting for my argument is Cicero's explanation of dreams as divine signs, where he cites the following as a historical example of such (Div. 1.121): 'if a woman dreamed that she had born a lion, the city in which it occurred would be conquered by foreign peoples' (cf. Hdt. 1.84, Ar. Eq. 1037–41). Other references include, but are not limited to, the following: Plutarch includes the Herodotean story of Pericles' birth in his *Parallel Lives* (Vit. Per. 3), and similarly ornaments the telling of Alexander's birth (Vit. Alex. 2; cf. Tert. De anim. 46); the same author contrasts human behaviour towards animals, including domesticated lions, to that towards other men (Mor. 462e and 482c); Martial's trained lion reverts to savagery (2.75; cf. Spect. 10 and Stat. Silv. 2.5); Artemidorus provides several possible (and contradictory) interpretations of dreams about lions (1.37, 2.12, 3.66, 4.56); Aelian passes down a story when a portent of a leonine birth indicated tyranny (VH 1.39); in a spurious fragment of Euripides' *Danae* (1132 Kannicht), dated to somewhere between the fourth and seventh century A.D., an oracle is given to Acrisius that Danae ὑπόπτερον (or ὑπόπετρον) λέοντα τέξεται πατρί (15). No ambiguity is implied, nor does the oracle confound Acrisius (for the fragment see Karamanou 2006, 225–38). The majority of these examples do not refer to lion

where the context of a suppositious child, I argue, intimates that this particular 'lion' will also fulfil the implied αἶνος and become ruinous for his household; as elsewhere in the comedy, φύσις lurks beneath the surface of superficial appearances. In its reliance on fable to convey a comic point, the passage finds parallels with other Aristophanic lines that mention or allude to Aesopic tales.[37] Especially comparable is an oblique reference in *Lysistrata* to the fable of the beetle and the eagle's eggs (695), stated with no immediate reference to Aesop, but the comedy of which depends on conscious association with one of his stories.[38] The average member of the audience was expected to be familiar with the tale, as with other fables elsewhere in Aristophanes, a testament to their status as a piece of popular culture and to their accessibility to the general public. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, the replacement of a lion as an individual destined for power with a suppositious child is comically parodic, subversive in its incongruity. There is absurdity in the promise that this child will be a lion, both in the primary sense of leonine valour and in the secondary sense that recollects the fable, for such an address is traditionally reserved for prominent men. In part, the humour resides in the audience's awareness that the boy will certainly

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taming and rearing as real-life practices, but use the contrast between innocence and ferocity to make a literary point (for a similar contrast regarding grateful lions that do not cause harm see, e. g., Sen. Ben. 2.19, Gell. 5.14, and Ael. NA 7.48). There are also numerous references to the actual domestication of lions in history: Greeks caged them for display (Isoc. Antid. 213; cf. Hdt. 3.32), as the Romans for spectacle; the Carthaginian Hanno apparently used a lion as beast of burden (Plin. HN 8.21; Plut. Mor. 799e; Max. Tyr. 31.3; Ael. NA 5.39); Pliny discusses the capture and taming of lions, and states that Mark Antony yoked lions to his chariot (HN 8.21); Aelian likewise discusses the process of lion taming and lists several notable persons who kept lions (NA 5.39; cf. 3.1); Juvenal opines that feeding a pet lion must be expensive (7.75–78). See Calder 2011, 87–88 on the reality of big cats as pets in classical Greece.

37) Av. 471, 651–53, Pax 129–34, Lys. 695, Vesp. 566, 1259, 1401–5, 1445–48; on Aristophanes and fable see Rothwell 1995, Kloss 2001, 106–15, Schirru 2009, Lefkowitz 2009, 10–82, Hall 2013.

38) The fable is 3 Perry: an eagle's eggs are held in Zeus' lap for safe keeping, but a beetle, avenging a wrong, drops dung in the god's lap and thereby causes him to leap up and unthinkingly shatter the eggs. In *Lysistrata*, the joke depends on an implied threat to the male chorus' testicles: see Henderson 1987, 161 and van Dijk 1997, 216–19. The fable was popular; for other references to it, including Ar. Pax 129–34 and Vesp. 1445–48, see Adrados 2003, 6–8.

not become the equal of a Pericles or a Cypselus, or even a Cleon, for he is nothing more than a familial usurper, surreptitiously purchased as if some lowly slave. The idea that he will become leonine and great is laughable.

The reference is embedded in a complex situation: a lie about a child in a story created by Inlaw, while he is disguised among the women at the Thesmophoria, in a comedy before an audience. While the theatre spectators are privy to knowledge of the newborn's true origins, the husband is utterly ignorant, as Euripides' Inlaw tells it. He is cast as gullible and over-trusting, and humour is gained from his naiveté. Indeed, this is a prime reason why the story is funny, for if the man had any inkling of the truth of the situation the comic punch would be hopelessly ruined. This colorful tale is, after all, one of Inlaw's examples of feminine misbehaviours that supposedly remain unknown to men, not (yet) popularized by Euripidean tragedy (but cf. 407–8). The ambivalent doublespeak of the lion portent therefore enhances a great deal of the humour here. In the story, the oblivious husband surely interprets the words of the midwife as a positive omen. As in other instances of begetting a lion, however, we must analyze context to validate the assumption that the portent is an optimistic one. Here, the context is of illegitimacy, hinting that the lines convey a dark undertone with the portent. Inlaw (or rather Aristophanes) actually makes the midwife quite glib, and her remark that the child is his father's 'spitting-image' emphasizes the fact that this is not a legitimate son. That jibe is for the informed audience, of course, both the women at the festival and the theatre audience; there is no sort of warning or admonition here for the 'father'. To those in the know, the midwife's latent insincerity becomes clear, as does the duplicitous meaning of her bogus congratulations.

The story of a smuggled son is generously developed here, but prominent, too, is the allusion to the lion cub αἶνος by means of a birth portent, a juxtaposition which, I argue, implicitly equates the suppositious child with the fable's cub. We must question whether this bold assimilation is appropriate to the Greek perception of such youths. How would the audience contextualize the reference to a suppositious child, particularly with respect to any thematic interplay with a recognizable fable? In what way does the collocation of fabular lion and suppositious son respond to the *Thesmo-*

phoriazusae's themes of deception vs. revelation and appearance vs. reality? Scholars have offered only summaries of the evidence available on suppositious children, and so a full discussion on the subject is required to inform accurately our interpretation of this curious category of illegitimate offspring.[39] It will be seen that like the cub in the αἶνος, the manifestation of the child's innate φύσις also proves socially destructive.

II

The ὑποβολιμαῖος was a child smuggled illicitly into the household, usually at the instigation of the would-be mother, and presented by her as legitimate offspring.[40] The deception would occur when the baby was still a newborn, and could conceivably remain unrevealed for any number of years. Some have questioned the frequency of these 'baby smugglings' in actual practice, proposing that our sources (often comedy or slanderous oratory) are liable to exaggeration.[41] The point is a lucid one, but equally important to actual occurrence was the widespread and popular belief that baby smuggling did happen; we may not be able to say for certain how often suppositious children were actually raised, but we can say that Athenian men consistently feared the possibility and believed that it did, in fact, occur.[42] Ample testimony from our extant sources indicates that suppositious children in the Classical period were strongly associated with, or equated to, slaves. In the *Thesmophoriazusae* passage at hand, for example, the child, like a slave, has been purchased from an outside source: the 'mother' faked la-

39) E. g. Patterson 1985, 115–16, Gardner 1989, 55–57, Kassel 1991, 61–62, Ogden 1996, 108–10, Powell 2001, 365–68.

40) The term derives from ὑποβάλλομαι; Eur. Alc. 639 (μαστῷ γυναικὸς σῆς ὑπεβλήθην λάθρᾳ, 'smuggled in secretly to your wife's breast') demonstrates the sense; see Powell 2001, 365.

41) Pelling 2000, 210, for example, argues that Thesmophoriazusae 502–16 jumbles reality and dramatic stereotype, and that "it would be rash to infer that passing off suppositious children … was a regular feature of real life".

42) See further Powell 2001, 368. In this light it is significant that myth provides a prototypical example of child substitution, namely, the stone Rhea gives to Cronus 'wrapped in swaddling cloth' (Hes. Theog. 485); see Bergren 1983, 74.

bour 'until she bought a child', ἕως ἐπρίατο παιδίον (503). Compare Demosthenes' reference to the purchase of a suppositious child in his *Against Meidias* (21.149), where he outlines 'the obscene circumstances of Meidias' birth, as if in a tragedy' (τὰς ἀπορρήτους, ὥσπερ ἐν τραγῳδίᾳ, τὰς τούτου γονάς)[43] and contrasts the wisdom of his subject's birth mother with the utter foolishness of his new one: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀπέδοτο εὐθὺς γενόμενον, ἡ δ' ἐξὸν αὐτῇ βελτίω πρίασθαι ταύτης τῆς τιμῆς τοῦτον ἠγόρασεν.[44] Demosthenes does, of course, take the liberty of comic exaggeration to enhance his insult, but the essence of the slur finds its basis in the existence of an informal, and probably impromptu, type of 'child-market' (or, at least, in the belief that such a 'market' could conceivably exist).[45] Evidently, it was not thought impossible that 'legitimate' children could be acquired in exchange for money, if required. A fragment by Teleclides likewise alludes to the purchase of a suppositious child, and relates how a certain Charicles and Nicias pay sycophants to prevent the accusations that they were born ἐκ βαλλαντίου, 'from a wallet' (fr. 44 K-A):

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43) Despite the fact that the women complain in *Thesmophoriazusae* that Euripides has displayed the issue often enough that men are now wise to it (407–8), the only tragedies known to reference suppositious children are Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (28–31) and *Alcestis* (638–39); pace Zeitlin 1996, 289, Ion 1090–1105 does not concern ὑποβολιμαῖοι. The theme was, apparently, more common in comedy (see below) than tragedy. A papyrus fragment from Satyrus' *Vita Euripidis* (T137 Kannicht), however, includes ὑποβολὰς παιδίων in a list of New Comedy tropes derived from Euripides; see Kovacs 1994, 19. Dio Chrysostom (15.7) claims that both comedy and tragedy show suppositious children 'all the time' (ἑκάστοτε); cf. Juv. 6.608. A scholiast calls Oedipus a ὑποβολιμαῖος (Σ OT 780; see also Apollod. Bibl. 3.5.7), to help clarify the text's πλαστός, but despite being a παῖς τῆς Τύχης (1080) Sophocles' Oedipus is strictly speaking a foundling, not a smuggled baby (cf. Eur. Phoen. 28–31 with Mastronarde 1994, 152–53); see Dugdale 2015, 423–25.

44) A scholiast suggests that because Meidias' family was unimpeachable in their prominence, the best insult was to separate the man from his γένος: see MacDowell 1990, 365–66.

45) Patterson 1985, 116 proposed the idea of a type of "female network" through which unwanted babies might find homes with willing parents, as an alternative to exposure (accepted by Ogden 1996, 108–9 and Traill 2008, 74 n. 130); such a network need not be anything more formal than contingency arrangements made as necessary in individual circumstances. For the role of the midwife in helping a 'mother' procure a child, see Demand 1994, 63–70 and 132.

> Χαρικλέης μὲν οὐκ ἔδωκε μνᾶν, ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν μὴ λέγῃ
> ὡς ἔφυ τῇ μητρὶ παίδων πρῶτος ἐκ βαλλαντίου;
> τέσσαρας δὲ μνᾶς ἔδωκε Νικίας Νικηράτου·
> ὧν δ᾽ ἕκατι τοῦτ᾽ ἔδωκε, καίπερ εὖ εἰδὼς ἐγὼ
> οὐκ ἐρῶ, φίλος γὰρ ἀνήρ, σωφρονεῖν δέ μοι δοκεῖ

The passage is comic, certainly, but the lines nevertheless reflect a common social anxiety. It is also telling that the (presumed) status of being suppositious is one Charicles and Nicias take great effort to avoid. Whether their worry stems from an awareness of their illicit origins or simply from a desire to forestall pernicious allegations is impossible to say. In these examples, the trafficking in human flesh connotes the condition of slavery, regardless of whether the child might be raised as a supposedly legitimate heir; youth or adult, a purchased human would be considered, on a social level, little more than a piece of property.[46]

Often, the connection between suppositious children and slavery is stated absolutely. Soon after the story of the lion birth in *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides' Inlaw accuses Mica, one of the women at the festival, of having exchanged her daughter for a slave's son (564–65): οὐδ᾽ ὡς σὺ τῆς δούλης τεκούσης ἄρρεν εἶτα σαυτῇ / τοῦθ᾽ ὑπεβάλου, τὸ σὸν δὲ θυγάτριον παρῆκας αὐτῇ. The charge is delivered at the end of another list of women's reprehensible deeds and shifts the tenor of the allegations from impersonal to personal reproach, causing Mica to take offense and exchange threats with her calumniator (567–70). The accusation is, apparently, taken seriously, and we are reminded of the chorus' earlier curse upon those who denounce women rearing suppositious children (339–40).[47] In Inlaw's accusation of Mica, a slave is again named as the source of suppositious offspring, though the boy is bartered for, not bought.

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46) See Arist. Pol. 1253b24–54a16 for slaves as property. For the Teleclides fragment see Bagordo 2013, 216–19.

47) The insult is not only that Mica's child is suppositious, but also that Mica herself, in preferring a son to a daughter, yields to the social preference for a male child over female. While this inclination may, in general among Greek households, arise from the importance of a male heir to a family, here it serves as a particularly stinging jab in the context of the women's Thesmophoria festival, where the dramatic participants vaunt their gender.

While this is a unique example in our sources, it would not be impossible that similar trades happened more frequently in practice, as an alternative to the outright purchase of a child.

In contrast, in Euripides' *Alcestis* we hear not of the process of acquisition by a would-be parent, but the accusations of a disillusioned son on his true pedigree (636–39). After his father's refusal to die in his stead, Admetus denies a natural relationship to him and to 'the one who claims to have given birth' (ἡ τεκεῖν φάσκουσα), and asserts that δουλίου δ' ἀφ' αἵματος / μαστῷ γυναικὸς σῆς ὑπεβλήθην λάθρᾳ (638–39). In his rhetorical rejection of any paternal inheritance from Pheres, Admetus not only insinuates that Pheres is worse than a slave, for presumably his true parent, though a slave, would have died on his behalf, but also takes a tone of reproach by suggesting that Pheres would raise a slave's child as his own.[48] Clearly, as in the slur against Mica in *Thesmophoriazusae*, there was not only a stigma against being a suppositious child, but harbouring one within the οἶκος as well. Although any given father could not be expected to know that a son was suppositious, to rear a slave as a legitimate scion nevertheless adulterated the purity of a city's citizen body.[49]

A ὑποβολῆς γραφή, recorded long after the Classical period in a lexicon of phrases from the orators (Lex. Bekk.^{v} Anecd. I 311–312), confirms that the ὑποβολιμαῖος was considered essentially slavish. Despite the late date, there seems little reason to doubt its authenticity or its indication of a formal process in Athens to deal with suppositious children, as Anton Powell points out.[50] Indeed, the generally suspicious attitudes towards these illegitimate offspring and the efforts to ward off accusation of having been such a child suggest that some type of official process existed to handle

48) See Griffith 1978 for the implied syllogism in Admetus' statement that because true parents help their children, and Pheres did not, he cannot be the true father.

49) Contra Parker 2007, 182 who believes that Admetus "assumes collusion between husband and wife". I see no evidence of implied collusion; indeed, the rhetorical insult is designed to shock Pheres and it gains significant force if he is meant to be in the dark regarding his wife's duplicity. Furthermore, the acquisition of suppositious children excludes, almost by its very definition, collusion between the two parents: adoption would be the viable, and legal, alternative.

50) Powell 2001, 367.

known cases.[51] The γραφή has strict terms for those discovered to be suppositious: ὑποβολῆς γραφὴ τί ἐστιν εἶδος ἐγκλήματος. εἴ τις ἐγκαλοίη τινὶ ὡς ὑποβολιμαῖος εἴη ἐγράφετο ὑποβολῆς, καὶ ἁλόντα αὐτὸν ἔδει πεπρᾶσθαι. Some have denounced the law as overly cruel for penalizing a child ignorant of his supposed parents' actions, and thus pronounced it spurious, irreconcilable with known Athenian legislation.[52] Powell, however, argues that the γραφή did not so much result in punishment for the suppositious child as in a "reversion to that person's original status".[53] The youth was a usurper in the household, a slave in citizen's clothing, perceived as intrinsically slavish and purchased in similar manner as, and / or born from, slaves. Powell's conclusion that "it may well have been assumed that most of the babies involved were of slave parentage" is no doubt correct.[54]

Parallel to the presentation of suppositious children as slaves is the belief that these youths were inherently base, lacking positive qualities and thoroughly reproachable.[55] They are consistently cast

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51) E. g. Hdt. 5.41. Herodotus records that the wife of a Spartan king, once thought barren, suddenly became pregnant, which prompted the Ephors to witness the birth on suspicion of a ploy to smuggle in a child. Cf. Pl. Menex. 237e1–7, where Plato writes that one can determine if a woman has truly given birth if she proves able to breastfeed (but in Men. Sam. 267 and 535–46 similar logic proves faulty). Theophrastus' 'offensive man' (δυσχερής) claims that the visibility of supposedly hereditary medical conditions makes it difficult to smuggle a suppositious child into his family (Char. 19.2; see Diggle 2004, 386–94).

52) This was the objection of Beauchet 1897, 418 to the authenticity of the law. He professed it inconceivable that the author of the crime (i. e. the 'parent' who brought the suppositious child into the house) could go unpunished while innocent children, ignorant of all wrong-doing on the matter, would be robbed of their liberty. Gomme 1934, 139 n. 29 later agreed that the γραφή "was probably an action against a parent for introducing a suppositious son to his phratry".

53) Powell 2001, 367.

54) Ibid. Dramatic situations might make foundlings and suppositious children aristocratic (e. g. Sophocles' *Oedipus* or at Eur. Phoen. 28–31) or normal citizens (e. g. Plautus' *Truculentus*), but these deviations serve dramaturgic purpose.

55) While slaves in Classical Athens could display what were deemed by society to be 'positive' qualities, overwhelming popular attitude condemned them to untrustworthiness and moral inferiority; see for example Lys. 13.18, Eur. fr. 86 col.ii 6–7 Kannicht, Men. Georg. 55–58, or Plato citing common opinion in *Laws* (776e4) that ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ψυχῆς δούλης. See further Dover 1974, 114–15 and Kamen 2013, 8–31.

as squanderers of household wealth with no right to the circumstances they enjoy. A short passage in Demosthenes' *Against Meidias* (21.150), immediately following the lines discussed above in which the defendant is accused of suppositious heritage, exemplifies this view. The orator states that it is because of his suppositious status that Meidias has no claim to his family's wealth (καὶ γάρ τοι διὰ τοῦτο τῶν οὐ προσηκόντων ἀγαθῶν κύριος γεγονώς), is furthermore no legal citizen of Athens but has only 'happened upon' the city as fatherland (πατρίδος τετυχηκώς), and is incapable of abiding by her laws. His true nature is that of a barbarian (τὸ τῆς φύσεως βάρβαρον ἀληθῶς), and he has no right to his present circumstances (καὶ φανερὸν ποιεῖ τοῖς παροῦσιν ὥσπερ ἀλλοτρίοις, ὅπερ ἔστιν, αὐτὸν χρώμενον). That Meidias' supposedly suppositious nature is advanced as causal to this condemnation (καὶ γάρ τοι διὰ τοῦτο) deserves to be stressed. An element of exaggeration is present in Demosthenes' invective, but his description of the suppositious child's innate characteristics was likely one that resonated with the Athenian audience.

A similar criticism can be found in the same orator's *Third Philippic*, in which he compares the actions of legitimate and illegitimate heirs to property. If a legitimate child squandered his inheritance or mismanaged his property it would be reproachable, but one would not be able to deny the man's right to use the wealth as he wished (9.30). However, εἰ δέ γε δοῦλος ἢ ὑποβολιμαῖος τὰ μὴ προσήκοντ' ἀπώλλυε καὶ ἐλυμαίνετο, Ἡράκλεις ὅσῳ μᾶλλον δεινὸν καὶ ὀργῆς ἄξιον πάντες ἂν ἔφησαν εἶναι (9.31).[56] The suppositious child is presented as an intruder into the proper familial hierarchy, and a squanderer or destroyer as well. In his lack of legal right to any wealth, and because they might have been avoided if the child did not exist in the οἶκος, the losses of the ὑποβολιμαῖος are that much worse than those of the legitimate heir. The destruction of household wealth corresponds to the child's illegitimacy: as he had no legal right to citizenship, he could not lawfully own property at all (indeed, the ὑποβολῆς γραφή suggests he had no more legal re-

56) Once again the ὑποβολιμαῖος is associated with the slave; here, they are essentially equated. On the preference for legitimate over suppositious offspring, see [Arist.] Rh. Al. 1421a29.

course than a slave). In essence, any of the οἶκος that a suppositious child inherited was lost to the family's true members.[57]

In a passage in the *Republic*, Plato provides one of the lengthiest and most informative pieces of surviving evidence on the Greek perception of ὑποβολιμαῖοι, comparing their behaviour as youths and adults to the reaction of students of dialectic when improperly educated.[58] Socrates asks his interlocutor to consider the case of a suppositious son raised in great wealth and surrounded by flatterers (κόλακες), who only discovers upon maturation that he is not the legitimate son of his presumed parents (ἀνὴρ δὲ γενόμενος αἴσθοιτο ὅτι οὐ τούτων ἐστὶ τῶν φασκόντων γονέων) and is thereafter unable to locate his actual mother and father (7.537e9–38a7).[59] When still ignorant he honours his supposed family more than the flatterers, is less likely to allow them to lack in anything, or to do or say anything unlawful towards them, or to disobey them in important matters (7.538a9–b5). After he has grown up and learned the truth, however,

> περὶ μὲν τούτους ἀνεῖναι ἂν τὸ τιμᾶν τε καὶ σπουδάζειν, περὶ δὲ τοὺς κόλακας ἐπιτεῖναι, καὶ πείθεσθαί τε αὐτοῖς διαφερόντως ἢ πρότερον καὶ ζῆν ἂν ἥδη κατ' ἐκείνους, συνόντα αὐτοῖς ἀπαρακαλύπτως, πατρὸς δὲ ἐκείνου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ποιουμένων οἰκείων, εἰ μὴ πάνυ εἴη φύσει ἐπιεικής, μέλειν τὸ μηδέν.

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57) Cf. Plautus' *Truculentus*, where a woman uses a suppositious child to acquire wealth from a soldier, the avowed father, who falls victim to the fraud. The legal problem discussed in Isaeus' *On the Estate of Philoctemon* is sometimes cited as one involving the introduction of suppositious children into the household (e. g. Ogden 1996, 118 and Carawan 2008, 386), but the situation here is rather one of 'insistent adoption', so to speak.

58) Jowett and Campbell 1894, 354 summarize the metaphor: "as a suppositious child, who after a time discovers that his supposed parents are not his real parents, ceases to honour them: so the young man ceases to honour the principles of justice and virtue in which he has been brought up, when he hears them refuted by the eristics".

59) Presumably more difficult if his parents were slaves, but Aristotle (Eth. Eud. 1239a35–38, Eth. Nic. 1159a27–34) records that mothers of suppositious children will watch in silence and secrecy as their children grow up, more willing to love than be loved in return; cf. the reunion of a mother and the son she gave away in Arist. Rh. 2.23.24, though the story has a dramatic tone.

Upon discovery of his heritage he begins to act transgressively toward his parents and the οἶκος (being 'less likely', ἧττον, to do so before) and to disobey their will. The vague threat of 'doing something unlawful' (παράνομόν τι δρᾶσαι) could cover any range of sins, but regardless of what form it will take, it demonstrates the suppositious child's disloyalty and ruinous potential. For Plato the greatest danger is not that the youth will waste inheritance or incur financial losses, but rather that as he lives according to the ways of the flatterers he will disregard his family.[60] The lack of τὰ θρεπτήρια, the important Greek ideal of reciprocal care for one's elderly parents, is the greatest woe of all.

Plato is by no means alone in stating that undutiful offspring have no regard for those who reared them, nor in expressing the worry that they might precipitate violence within the household. The worry of an elderly father that a son will shirk his filial duties is common, as is the more serious anxiety of direct violence (portrayed often, for instance, in Aristophanic comedy). A passage in Herodotus presents a similar thought, but one that considers extreme circumstances: listing some of the admirable qualities of the Persians, the historian claims that none has ever killed his parent, and if such an event seems to occur, πᾶσαν ἀνάγκην φασὶ ἀναζητεόμενα ταῦτα ἀνευρεθῆναι ἤτοι ὑποβολιμαῖα ἐόντα ἢ μοιχίδια· οὐ γὰρ δή φασι οἰκὸς εἶναι τόν γε ἀληθέως τοκέα ὑπὸ τοῦ ἑωυτοῦ παιδὸς ἀποθνήσκειν (1.137). The assumption that legitimate offspring in Persia would not commit crimes against the family is perhaps an application of Greek values to the East, as the passage seems to reflect praise for τὰ θρεπτήρια and disapproval for the destructive tendencies of illegitimates. However, the text also conveys a sense of the curious, if not exotic, and Herodotus cannot be taken as

60) The constant comparison of the child's behaviour towards his family and that towards the flatterers is central to Plato's point about dialectic, but also proves significant to the metaphor in isolation from his philosophical discourse. The contrast between the early, prosperous life of the child and his later affectations to the flatterers emphasizes the inferiority of his 'new' status, on both a social and moral level. Κόλακες are presumably lower in the social hierarchy than the boy's original family, and were popularly thought to be ignoble and base (Pl. Phdr. 240b1–2; Dem. 18.46; cf. Theoph. Char. 2.1; see Diggle 2004, 181–82), if not inherently slavish (Pl. Symp. 183a4–b3). For further citations and for the κόλαξ in Greek society, see Edwards 2010, 303–21.

straightforward evidence for widespread Greek beliefs regarding suppositious children. Still, as in the *Republic*, there is little interest in the damage to, or loss of, familial property; instead, Herodotus also presents the basic assumption that bloodshed in the household might arise from fostering ὑποβολιμαῖοι. Along with youths born from adultery, all patricides and matricides are laid at their feet.[63]

Popular opinion regarding suppositious children not only judged them ruinous on a private level, but also to the city as a whole. While all illegitimate children posed a threat to a city's "racial purity" and "autochthonous pride", as Daniel Ogden puts it with respect to Athens,[64] suppositious children were more likely to grow up to be deleterious in concrete ways. A pun in Aristophanes' *Peace*, for example, associates the infamous ῥιψασπία of Cleonymus, and thus cowardice and an unwillingness to fight for the homeland, with ὑποβολιμαῖοι. In response to Hermes' question about Cleonymus' nature in war, Trygaeus answers ψυχήν γ' ἄριστος, πλήν γ' ὅτι / οὐκ ἦν ἄρ' οὗπέρ φησιν εἶναι τοῦ πατρός. / εἰ γάρ ποτ' ἐξέλθοι στρατιώτης, εὐθέως / ἀποβολιμαῖος τῶν ὅπλων ἐγίγνετο (675–78). Like Demosthenes' slur against Meidias 'happening on a fatherland' and unable to endure her laws, so too Trygaeus, punning on the words ὑποβολιμαῖος and ἀποβάλλω, proclaims that Cleonymus is a liability to the city.[65] While the abandonment of his shield was infamous in Athens and a source of frequent jabs for Aristophanes,

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61) A law attributed to Solon ([Arist.] Ath. Pol. 56.6) exemplifies the ideal of filial duty; cf., for example, Hes. Op. 187–88 and Men. Mon. 322. For various other examples in Greek literature that reflect this ideal see Dover 1974, 273–74, van der Horst 1978, 116–17, and Dunbar 1995, 652–53, 656–57, and 469–70. In Aristophanes, see, e. g., Av. 1344–71, Ran. 149–50, Eccl. 638–40, and especially Nub. 1321–1451; cf. also Dem. 24.60, 102; Lys. 8.91; Aesch. Eum. 269–72.

62) Cf. Ar. Eccl. 635–43 where, in the absurd plan for a utopia, children will not know their true parents and vice versa. Blepyrus complains that children already strangle their known father, but now they will defecate on him as well (640).

63) It should also be noted that Aristotle labels the cuckoo suppositious in his description of the bird's violent tendencies, linking it with cowardice (cf. Pax 675–79, below) and claiming that it either kills the children of its new family itself or prompts the foster mother to abandon her legitimate offspring (Hist. an. 618a9–30; cf. Antig. Car. Mir. 44.1).

64) Ogden 1996, 66.

65) The initial reply that Cleonymus is 'excellent in spirit' should be taken ironically, given both the following lines and the lampooning of Cleonymus throughout Aristophanes.

often made in passing,[66] here the comedian offers social commentary along with his jest by associating Cleonymus' shield-throwing with the nature of a suppositious individual. We infer from the word play that, like Meidias, it is because of his alleged illegitimacy that Cleonymus has thrown his shield (an explanation for his ῥιψασπία not seen elsewhere); the pun suggests that his cowardice is due to the lack of a true Athenian father.[67] Not being a veritable citizen, Cleonymus does not feel any obligation to fight on the city's behalf.[68] We might even interpret οὐκ ἦν ἄρ' οὗπέρ φησιν εἶναι τοῦ πατρός as a further reference to the level of separation between Cleonymus and Athens if we understand an assimilation of 'father' and 'fatherland', no great stretch given the military context.[69]

In sum,[70] the possible existence of a suppositious child in one's household was a genuine point of anxiety for an Athenian citizen.

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66) For Cleonymus in comedy see Storey 1989, and the list of passages in Olson 1998, 167.

67) For the link between illegitimate children and cowardice, see Ebbott 2003, 37–65 and 110.

68) A later passage by Polybius provides an instructive parallel: discussing the difficult capture of Megalopolis by Cleomenes III in 223 B.C., Polybius compares the ease by which he seized Cleitor due to the treachery of a single man, Thearces, ὃν εἰκότως ἐξαρνοῦνται Κλειτόριοι μὴ φῦναι παρὰ σφίσι, γενέσθαι δ' ὑποβολιμαῖον ἐξ Ὀρχομενοῦ τῶν ἐπηλύδων τινὸς στρατιωτῶν (2.55.9). Tellingly, the city as a whole rejects Thearces and imagines that he might be suppositious, to have done so wicked a deed, for such a betrayal could not be the act of a true citizen.

69) Cf. Dem. 60.4, for similar play between 'father' and 'fatherland' in contexts of legitimacy.

70) As in discussion of the lion cub fable, I have limited consideration of suppositious children to relatively contemporary texts. Later important references include, but are not limited to, the following: A law in Justinian's *Digest* outlines extreme measures to prevent women from smuggling babies into birthing rooms (25.4.10); according to Diodorus Siculus (10.14.5) the Carthaginians blamed their misfortunes on Cronus' anger at the sacrifice of suppositious children in lieu of legitimates, their erstwhile practice; the historian also relates the dismissal of two (apparently) suppositious sons of Ariarathes IV of Cappadocia after a legitimate heir (Ariarathes V) was born and the truth revealed (21.19.7). One of the pair was Orophernes of Cappadocia, a paradigmatic 'bad' ruler when he later came to power, in contrast to his 'good' (and legitimate) brother (see e. g. Polyb. 32.25); Dio Chrysostom equates suppositious children with slaves, states that no citizen – even a famous one – can know his true parentage (cf. Hom. Od. 1.214–16) for he may in fact be suppositious (as repeatedly dramatized in plays), and outlines why women rear such children (15.7–8); the same author has the philosopher Diogenes jokingly call Alexander the Great suppositious (4.18–20) and elsewhere describes how diffi-

It represented a perversion of the normal biological and social relationships within a family and challenged Athenian purity, raising issues of inheritance, legitimacy, and genealogical adulteration. The image that emerges of the ὑποβολιμαῖος in Greek thought is one of a youth inherently slavish, with no regard for those who reared him, and sure to wreak destruction of some kind, whether material or physical.[71] For the child as well, life held little promise if his true origins were revealed; not considered a legal citizen, he thus retained no citizenship rights and could be sold as a slave. The familiar presence of suppositious children in Attic comedy, which responded in light-hearted fashion to widespread popular opinions, further testifies to the fact that Athenians were acutely nervous about these illegitimates. In addition to the numerous references to suppositious children in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (see below), several comedies are known to have been produced under the title *Hypobolimaios* (by Alexis, Eudoxus, Menander, Philemon, and the Roman playwright Caecilius), as well as two titled *Pseudohypobolimaios* (by Cratinus the Younger and Crobylus), and one *Hypoballomenai* (by Epinicus). Plautus' *Truculentus* also deals extensively with the problems caused by a woman claiming a suppositious child as her own, and in his *Captivi*, like Terence in the prologue to the *Eunuchus* (39), Plautus lists these children as a comedic commonplace (1031).[72]

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cult it can be for a parent to accept the revelation that a child is suppositious (11.3); Lucian (Salt. 37) implies that the stone fed to Cronus by Rhea was like a suppositious child and elsewhere (Deo. conc. 6) alludes to a local myth that considered Zeus suppositious; Juvenal (6.602–9) has Fortuna smuggle children into prominent Roman households; Tacitus (Ann. 3.22) recalls an accusation of a simulated birth.

71) An obvious question arises: why would anyone choose to raise this child in their home? For a would-be mother, even a suppositious son could be better than none at all, for it solidified her position as wife / mother and established her value as 'producer' for the οἶκος: see Gardner 1989, 55–56 and Patterson 1985, 115–16; cf. Men. Perik. 1–4, where Myrrhine is 'in need' (δεομένη) of a baby. A woman might also use the baby as a means to acquire wealth (e. g. Plaut. Truc. 389–400), or she might exchange a daughter for a son (Ar. Thesm. 564–65), or perhaps replace a child who died in childbirth (Grubbs 2014, 87). Dio Chrys. 15.8 presents a similar list of reasons.

72) At times the distinctions between suppositious children, foundlings, and foster children become hazy in comedy, and when plots hinge on citizenship in particular, characters tend to be revealed as citizens of one city or another, not slaves (e. g. Moschion in Menander's *Perikeiromene*, or Stratophanes in *Sikyonios*; cf. the baby in *Samia*).

III

To return to Thesmophoriazusae 514–16, the associations between the portent of a lion birth with references to a suppositious child are unmistakable. The socio-cultural significance of ὑποβολιμαῖοι influences the meaning of the midwife's pronouncement of 'a lion born to you'. Both the lion cub of the fable and the suppositious child will be reared in their respective houses as if they were their proper domains, when in fact the youths are alien to the environment. There is little common ground between the mature cub's or child's φύσις and its foster family, for their true genealogical inheritances are incompatible with those of the presumed families and readily result in separation, loss of property, or violence. They ultimately betray their caretakers and prove disastrous to both the household and the πόλις. The lion's power is raw and irresistible, even tyrannical, and the fate of those who suffer it is sealed; so too the destruction that the suppositious child brings is almost inevitable.[73] The ὑποβολιμαῖος is thus the epitome of the fabular lion cub. In the midst of equivocation and a humorous lack of comprehension, the passage prompts consideration of the similarities between the baby at hand and those potent individuals normally featured in stories of wondrous births, destined to become vicious tyrants. The 'father' would no doubt want his son to grow up to be like a ferocious lion, presumably as he fights for his city in times of war, but the boy's ferocity will be limited mostly to the household scale as he destroys the family from within simply from the fact of being suppositious. This image of the ὑποβολιμαῖος as fated to be a destroyer of the οἶκος is both striking and grave, but consistent with the negative Greek perception of such youths. As it engages with the issue of illegitimacy, the pronouncement of the lion portent – the climax of Inlaw's list of female transgressions – reflects the genuine apprehension that the male-dominated Athenian audience held towards the female potential to disrupt societal balance.

Recognition of the ambiguity in labeling a smuggled child a lion certainly augments our understanding both of the Athenian attitude to suppositious offspring and of the comic force of Inlaw's

73) With the exception of Plato's naturally ἐπιεικής youth.

story, but the interpretation offered here also has wider applicability to the comedy. References to ὑποβολιμαῖοι come up multiple times in the *Thesmophoriazusae*: at 339–40, those who denounce a suppositious child are cursed in the ritual prayer that opens proceedings; at 407–8 the women complain that men are now overly aware of, and watchful for, child supposition, thanks to Euripidean tragedy; at 502–16 the story is told of the ten day labour and purchase of a child; at 564–65, Inlaw accuses Mica of having exchanged her daughter with a slave's son. That reference to this specific category of illegitimates occurs repeatedly in the play surely reflects the severity of the crime, particularly given that the setting is the Thesmophoria festival, intended to promote fertility and legitimacy, and limited to wives of Athenian citizens.[74] Its frequency also encourages direct comparison with another disguised intruder, and the predictable exposure of his ruse: Inlaw himself, a 'suppositious' woman in feminine masquerade, whose illicit presence at the festival upsets the status quo.[75] But the most elaborate development of the motif of suppositious children in the play is one that explicitly, and ludicrously, stages the surfacing of a child's nature. The unveiling and parodic slaughter of Mica's wine-skin 'baby' (689–764), à la Euripides' *Telephus*, theatrically balances the revelation of Inlaw's own deception, and displays that revelation's destructive result. The 'child' is technically suppositious: Mica insists doggedly that she bore it in pregnancy and claims it as her own offspring (697, 706, 741–48, 755).[76] The scene elegantly links the recurring leitmotif with the thematic treatment of women's consumptive tendencies (cf. 735), and substantiates the dramatic assertion that women falsely present smuggled babies as legitimate. Inlaw's faux-sacrifice of the child is not only a failed enactment of *Telephus*,[77] but also a restoration of genuineness, revealing as it does the true nature of

74) On the Thesmophoria festival see Parker 2005, 270–76, and for its relationship to *Thesmophoriazusae* Habash 1997 and Faraone 2011, 40–42.

75) The word 'suppositious' could apply to more than children (e. g. Com. Adesp. 886 K-A, Plut. Mor. 3c; cf. Hermippus fr. 64). The audience would perhaps also expect Inlaw's disguise to fail in that his ruse is modelled on Telephus', likewise discovered.

76) We might compare the feigned pregnancy in *Lysistrata* (742–57); cf. Philo, Moses 1.5.

77) Stehle 2002, 390, Farmer 2017, 172. Cf. Ar. Ach. 204–625.

the 'baby'.[78] In context, it is not inappropriate that Inlaw, in a scene where he briefly re-assumes his masculinity, delivers a harsh justice for the serious crime of baby supposition, for by killing / draining the baby / wine-skin he upholds the male-dominated social order, even at a women's festival.[79] Thus if it is Euripidean tragedy that proliferates among men social anxieties about suppositious children, as the women in *Thesmophoriazusae* claim, it is a comedic appropriation of tragedy that stages the symbolic quelling of their threat before the community.[80]

Thesmophoriazusae is structured on the premise of deceptions and their revelations, and of secrets kept and secrets exposed: the women gathered at the exclusive festival contrive to halt Euripides' exposé of their clandestine misdemeanors; Inlaw disguises himself as a woman to infiltrate their meeting; costumes in paratragic scheming are assumed and tossed aside, temporary identities alongside them. At the core of both the lion cub αἶνος and Athenian attitudes to suppositious children is a central tenet that proves relevant, then, to the comedy as a whole, and recurs in it: that despite attempted disguise one's φύσις eventually surfaces, with drastic, often destructive, consequences. In a play that constantly invites its audience to question reality and fabrication, secrets and truths, disguises and identities, this resonates strongly.[81] Simply because

78) Bobrick 1997, 192–93 notes that 'destruction' prior to 'restoration' is a hallmark of Greek comedy (including *Thesmophoriazusae*). See Romani 2006, 113–19 for the 'baby' as a prop.

79) Cf. the ὑποβολῆς γραφή, by which ὑποβολιμαῖοι were sentenced to slavery. Inlaw's moment of male dominance also pertains to his 'undressing' the wine-skin: see Compton-Engle 2015, esp. 94–102 on *Thesmophoriazusae*, for the argument that control over costume in Aristophanes correlates with masculinity. For the case that "*Thesmophoriazusae* ultimately leaves social boundaries largely intact", see Bobrick 1997 (quote from 178–79); see also Austin and Olson 2004, lxvi. Faraone 2011 suggests that women might have dealt with juridical matters at the Thesmophoria, a possibility against which Inlaw's primitive justice stands in stark contrast.

80) Though to be sure, comedy outdoes tragedy in promulgating those anxieties. On the genres opposed in *Thesmophoriazusae*, see Bobrick 1997, 189–91, Austin and Olson 2004, lv–lxviii, Saetta Cottone 2005, 347–49, and Farmer 2017, 155–94, esp. 170–72 for the wine-skin scene.

81) On the themes of identity, disguise, and imitation in the play, and on their meta-theatricality, see, e. g., Paduano 1982, Sommerstein 1994, 7–10, Zeitlin 1996, 375–416, Bobrick 1997, Stehle 2002, Tzanetou 2002, Farmer 2017, 155–94.

appearances alter does not mean that internal qualities also change, even if perceptions might. The opening lines of the comedy (5–18) are programmatic in this regard,[82] and even throughout the Agathon scene, with its transvestism and attention to the (mis)alignment of body and character (e. g. 146–52, 154–56, 159–67, 171–72), φύσις is immutable.[83] The corollary to illusive facades is that there is value in perspicacity, but of course this is not to say that the play promotes avoiding deception entirely. After all, it is playfully meta-theatrical with its shifting roles and tragic parody, in which the humor of disguise is not inseparable from ontological or epistemological concerns of unalterable nature, and scheming eventually does succeed at the expense of the duped Scythian archer. But if Aristophanes is again assuming the role of teacher-poet, his concern is civic, not ethical:[84] as the chorus states early on, deceit and the exposure of secrets for personal gain harm the πόλις (357–68).[85] In the end it is only cooperation between men and women in deceiving a non-Greek that gives the comedy its 'happy' conclusion.[86] To paraphrase *Frogs*, 'one should not raise a deceit in the city', but its inhabitants, acting in unity, might do just that to their collective advantage.

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82) Clements 2014 discusses the philosophical significance of this passage.

83) For the scene see Stohn 1993, Bobrick 1997, 180–82, Given 2007, and Farmer 2017, 158–67. Kyriakou 2013, esp. 148–50, argues that Agathon's (and other poets') φύσις remains unchanged.

84) On politics and *Thesmophoriazusae* see Austin and Olson 2004, xliii–xliv (contra Sommerstein 1994, 4). Clements 2014, esp. 185–93, links the dangers of theatrical illusions with contemporary Athenian politics. On Aristophanes as civic διδάσκαλος, see Bobrick 1997, 191–93.

85) On the textual problems of this passage see Austin and Olson 2004, 167–71. The claim that harm to the city comes from those who 'substitute' (ἀντιμεθιστάναι) decrees and laws or who introduce Medes into the city mirrors the secret smuggling of babies, as familial intruders, into the household.

86) Tzanetou 2002, 357.

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