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Isocrates' Civic Invective: *Acharnians* and *On the Peace*

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On the Peace attacks traditional Athenian patriotic myths and ceremonies with a violence unexampled elsewhere in Isocrates' work. To explicate and justify his unusual approach, the orator assimilates his role to that of the comic poet as defined in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*. *On the Peace* suggests that the only effective remedy for Athenian vice would be to permit an honest rhetor the same freedom in invective as the comic poet.

Isocrates' surviving work contains two speeches that ostensibly present issues of public policy to a meeting of the Athenian assembly. *On the Peace* contrasts usefully with *Areopagiticus*, indicating the freedom with which the consummate rhetorician could vary his tactics and approach. Neither "speech," of course, could be a redaction of any genuine performance by Isocrates the citizen. It was common for those who shared Isocrates' hostility to the current democracy to boast, as he did, of their determination to avoid public life;[1] but this author's reticence was such that he abdicated even the usual mode of publication in his day, the performance of his literary works.[2] Isocrates' anomalous relation to oral performance coincides with a strong emphasis on the literary work as text, and on the gap between the written work and its fictional occasion.[3] *On the Peace* in particular uses this gap to contrast Isocrates' real audience and his imagined one, the mass of Athenian citizens assembled at the Ecclesia. The real hearers or readers of the speech would likely have been a

[1]See *Antid.* 38. On Isocrates' use of the political theme of *apragmosynê*, see Heilbrunn 161 and Bringmann 62–64, and consult Michelini for further bibliography.

[2]See *To Philip* 81, *Panath.* 9, and the analysis of Heilbrunn 156–57. See also Too, ch. 3, "The Politics of the Small Voice," and Alexiou 133–37. Anecdotes report Isocrates as reluctant to continue reciting when others, presumably non–students, entered the room: [Plut.] *X orat.* 29; *Vit. Isoc.* (anon.) 38–40 (both in Mathieu 1929). On performance, see the detailed treatment of fourth-century conditions by Usener: in spite of the development of a broad reading public (for which see Usher 37–38), performance still remained the normal mode of presentation for poetic as well as prose works (6).

[3]See discussion of these topics by Too *passim*, esp. ch. 4; and cf. the sophisticated playfulness of *Panath.*, a text which explains the circumstances of its own revision (see 200–203).

small elite group, well-educated and trained to appreciate rhetorical style, and, because of their backgrounds and privilege, more likely to share the author's anti-democratic views.[4]

Areopagiticus, which seems to model itself carefully on procedures for presenting new topics to the Assembly,[5] shares characteristics with the published speeches of Demosthenes and others. As in several of Demosthenes' public speeches, the orator, more in sorrow than in anger, reproaches the citizens, saying that he cannot decide whether they do not care about, or are merely insensitive to, the nation's problems (9).[6] He requests careful public attention and promises to present his views as briefly as possible (19). The speech artfully argues in favor of a form of "democracy" that has a decidedly oligarchic flavor. Perversity reaches a climax at 26: in an elegant distortion of a familiar trope, the *dêmos* in the days of Solon is lauded as a powerful dictator (τύραννος), while the elite were, allegedly, its slaves (οἰκέται). The orator attempts to show fairness to the current democracy by proving that the oligarchy of the Thirty was worse (64–70). He closes by mentioning praise topics familiar from the funeral orations, including Athenian victories against the Persians, but argues that such memories can only be a source of shame, unless the people return to the ways of their ancestors (76). Although its proposal to revive the powers of the Areopagus Council is radical in the extreme, *Areopagiticus* follows the conventions of a symbouleutic speech fairly closely, in its reproachful yet conciliatory tone, in its attempt to appropriate the terminology of democracy, and in its modest length, half that of *On the Peace*. *Areopagiticus* is not an assembly speech, but it resembles one enough to permit some suspension of disbelief by a willing audience.

In *On the Peace*, the conventions of oratory are employed to estrange the author from the body that he pretends to address. The orator is arguing for acceptance of peace proposals, presumably during the Social War of the 350s; but one of several ways in which *On the Peace* belies its purported status as a speech to the Assembly is its disregard of the requirement that public speakers

[4]See especially Usener 80–84 on Isocrates' preference for a small, elite audience, especially those who would have time to devote to careful study of the written text.

[5]Cf. 15–16: καὶ τοὺς λόγους μέλλω ποιεῖσθαι καὶ τὴν πρόσοδον ἀπεγραψάμην; see discussion of the proper procedure in D. *Timoc.* 24.48.3: πρόσοδον γράψασθαι πρὸς τὴν βουλήν and Rhodes 52–56.

[6]Thucydides' speech for the democrat Cleon opens on just such a note (3.37); cf. D. 2.3, 3.3, 5.2 and Treu 129.

stick to the subject and be brief. Isocrates begins by expanding his theme beyond the question of a treaty with the rebellious allies to the concept of a general peace with all the Greek states (16).

The argument for this broader peace is based less on conventional political and economic grounds (presented briefly in 19–24) than on the moral question of whether just behavior is more beneficial than injustice. The philosophical argument is therefore paramount, and the praise of peace as beneficial is only a small part of what remains to be done. "I intend to devote the major portion of my speech before you to topics about which no other rhetor has dared to address you" (26). Isocrates proceeds to unite his political themes with those of moral philosophy, a defense of justice and *aretê* in terms that quite strongly evoke Plato. It is by the "goods that we have in the soul that we obtain other benefits as well...so that those who fail to care for their minds are unaware that they are also neglecting the means of attaining greater wisdom and more prosperity."[7] As he explores this philosophical and ethical theme the "orator" protests that he must "touch upon many things and make my arguments at considerable length" (27).[8] While typical of Isocratean style, such expansiveness in time and topic is even more inappropriate to the fictional occasion than is the "orator's" scolding tone. Just as the pretended rhetor claims a broader theme than the one appropriate to his mimetic context, so he also demands more time to expound that theme and adopts a tone and focus more appropriate to moralizing than to political discourse.

The conventional promise of *Areopagiticus*, "I will attempt to narrate to you as briefly as possible" (ἐγὼ δ' ὡς ἂν δύνωμαι συντομώτατα ...πειράσομαι διελθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 19),[9] reappears in a version that is both

[7]τοῖς γὰρ ἀγαθοῖς οἷς ἔχομεν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τούτοις κτώμεθα καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ὠφελείας...ὥσθ' οἱ τῆς αὑτῶν διανοίας ἀμελοῦντες λελήθασι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἅμα τοῦ τε φρονεῖν ἄμεινον καὶ τοῦ πράττειν βέλτιον...ὀλιγωροῦντες, 32. For parallels between Isocratean and Platonic texts, see especially Eucken 27 and *passim*. Isocrates' conclusion, of course, is not Platonic: justice must bring conventional advantages to the just, otherwise they would not practice it (33).

[8]ἀνάγκη δὲ τὸν ἔξω τῶν εἰθισμένων ἐπιχειροῦντα δημηγορεῖν...πολλῶν πραγμάτων ἅψασθαι καὶ διὰ μακροτέρων τοὺς λόγους ποιήσασθαι.... Cf. a similar passage in *Antid.* 179, also prefacing a discussion of *philosophia* (181). See Pl. *Tht.* 172c8–e4 on the qualities of expansiveness and the absence of temporal limitation as distinguishing philosophical *logoi* from the arguments of rhetors. Isocrates' concept of *philosophia* was of course much less rigorous and exclusive than Plato's: see Eucken 17–18.

[9]In dicastic speeches, the formula or a variant usually precedes the *narratio* in which the facts of the case are laid out, e.g., Lys. 7.3, 12.3, 19.12, 32.3; Is. 1.8, 7.4, etc.

more conventional, since it substitutes the more familiar "instruct" (διδάσκειν) for "narrate" (διελθεῖν), and somewhat perverse, insofar as it promises not a brief but an extended explanation, as the italicized passages indicate:

> If you hear me *to the end* with attention, I think that all of you will judge foolish or mad those who think injustice is advantageous.... About this I will attempt to instruct you *throughout my whole speech* (ταῦτα μὲν οὖν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ λόγου πειρασόμεθα διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς, 18).

Further, by connecting his "teaching" to moral matters, Isocrates revivifies the dead metaphor in the conventional promise to "instruct" the audience in the facts of the case.[10] This speech will be extended in compass, philosophical in content, and didactic in intent.[11]

After his defense of justice, Isocrates begins a revisionist account of Athenian history; this account contains the most controversial material in the speech. In defending peace, Isocrates must reverse the usual model of rhetors who urge the people to emulate their warlike ancestors (36): his message is that they must learn to avoid the bad example of the past. Isocrates purports to draw distinctions between two sets of "ancestors," the leaders of the Marathon days and those "who managed the city before the Decelean War" (37).[12] The former, remote from the present, deserve praise, while the latter, like his contemporaries, are targets for attack.[13] He begins by demolishing his compatriots' pretensions to be the legitimate inheritors of the laudable past. Contemporary Athenians do not fight in the battle line themselves; they hire mercenaries. The orator draws a sarcastic picture of Athenian naval forces putting into a foreign port (48): the hoplite marching off in full armor is a paid hoodlum, while the citizen soldier disembarks with his rower's cushion under

[10]On the use of διδάσκειν, see Treu. 127. In the symbouleutic speeches of Demosthenes the formula is less common; but cf. 15.1, 16.3, and esp. 17.2 (συντόμως διδάξω). "Instruction" about details would be more important in a lawsuit than in a real (as opposed to a fictional) public meeting, where many speakers would be treating the same topic.

[11]Note that Isocrates' reputation was largely founded on his work as a teacher; see Eucken 141; Too chs. 5 and 6; Alexiou 55–60 and ch. 5.

[12]In distinguishing the less-favored ancestors, Isocrates avoids the loaded, patriotic term *progonoi* in favor of the neutral *progegenêmenoi*. (37). See Schmitz-Kahlmann 114.

[13]Cf. *Antid.* 62, a passage discussed below, that introduces a long quotation from *On the Peace*: blame belongs to the present (τοὺς ἐπιπλήττοντας τοῖς νῦν ἁμαρτανομένοις), while praise refers to the past (τοὺς τὰ πεπραγμένα πρότερον ἐπαινοῦντας). See below, n. 15 and 16.

his arm! Isocrates even dares to challenge traditional boasts of Athenian autochthony when he claims that modern Athenians share their good Athenian birthright (*eugeneia*) more readily with outsiders than the Triballoi share their savagery. If the citizens have become sailors, the menials of warfare, and the purity of the native stock is polluted, the connection to an ancestral past is tenuous indeed.

Isocrates' indictment will necessarily implicate not only the despised post-Periclean leaders[14] but Pericles himself, the founder of the maritime empire, which the orator intends to identify as the source of all public evils (64). But, while Periclean policies (e.g., teaching the citizens to hide behind the walls rather than fight bravely before them, 77) are attacked, Pericles himself remains an ambivalent figure.[15] Evidently the connection between reality and the fictional world of the speech, already strained as it is, could not survive outright denunciation of this revered statesman, conventionally seen in the fourth century as the representative of a glorious past. Yet Isocrates is prepared to be quite daring. He excuses those who rebelled against the Empire, placing the blame for the great Peloponnesian war squarely on the Athenians themselves. In an amazing phrase, he refers to the rebels as provoked by the intolerable "vice of our fathers" (τίς γὰρ ἂν ὑπέμεινεν τὴν ἀσέλγειαν τῶν πατέρων τῶν ἡμετέρων, 79).[16] By using such language, Isocrates strikes at the heart of fourth-century reverence for fifth-century glory; and, appropriately for the connection of this work to the Social War, it is the resentment of oppressed "allies" that provokes his polemic.

The grounds given for rebellion against the Empire deserve closer inspection, since they help to connect the contemporary Athenians with their bad forefathers, the imperialists of the fifth century. Isocrates first denounces those Periclean Athenians because they used the scum of Greece as mercenary

[14]On the *diabolê* exercised against the successors of Pericles, see Connor 1971.

[15]See Jost 132: Pericles is always praised when named; when his policies are reprobated, he is not named. Schmitz-Kahlmann 115–16, also 108–9, remark that Isocrates uses Pericles as a good or bad exemplar alternately, as the moral occasion warrants. Cf. the reference in 47 to a (Periclean) time when the Acropolis was full of treasures. Isocrates marks the distinction thus: "we are so inferior to our ancestors, not only the honored ones but those who were hated (οὐ μόνον τῶν εὐδοκιμησάντων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν μισηθέντων) that, etc...." In 126 Pericles is grudgingly admitted to have been superior to later *dêmagôgoi*.

[16]See Jost 128, 156; Schmitz-Kahlmann 109–10: as Isocrates pushes back the dividing line between past and prelude to the present, the *pateres* become a virtual synonym for the present.

rowers (79).[17] On the other hand, if we think of the earlier sarcastic reference to the rower's cushion (48), the suggestion that rowers are base may also indict the current Athenian citizenry, who now use mercenaries as hoplites and do the rowing themselves. Second, the Athenians of Pericles' generation offended because "they exiled the best men of the other states and distributed their property to the vilest of the Hellenes." The passage is vague enough to serve as a description of the notorious cleruchies of the period, a means of providing the poorer citizens with land.[18] Again, there is an implied denigration of the lower class of citizens, a denigration that will later extend to denying altogether their claims to the Athenian heritage.

Isocrates punctuates his negative view of fifth-century Athenian history with a series of allusions to Aristophanes. It has recently become apparent that Old Comedy, like fifth-century tragedy, was performed and enjoyed outside Attica in the late fifth and early fourth century.[19] But evidence for the lively survival of an art that had seemed to some scholars irredeemably local and parochial is not necessary to establish the conviction that Isocrates could have read and alluded to Aristophanes. Isocrates was an author who wrote for readers and who praised education through reading.[20] We should think of his acquaintance with Aristophanes, not in terms of the stage revivals that may have inspired the comic "Phlyax" vases of Magna Graecia, but in terms of his younger contemporary Aristotle, another bookish man, who argued that the best elements of drama could be conveyed without staged performances or actors (*Po.* 1450b18–19).

On the Peace makes repeated allusions to *Acharnians*, a play in which the comic poet figured himself in the beleaguered hero Dicaeopolis and embodied the potentially hostile audience in the chorus, the charcoal burners of the title, who want to lynch the peacemaker. Of course, the possibility that Isocrates refers to other comic plays no longer extant cannot be entirely eliminated. However, the motifs detailed below (e.g., the peacemaker under attack, the

[17]See Meiggs 439–41 on the apparently common occasional use of non-citizen rowers during the period of the Empire.

[18]See Meiggs 260–62. It might alternately refer to the imposition of democratic governments, which would make a similar point. But see Norlin 55 note f, who suggests another interpretation, citing Thucydides 8.21.

[19]See Taplin; Slater 31–34.

[20]See *Nic.* 42, *Demon.* 51, and Usener 8–15 and 79–81 on *Panath.* and *Antid.* 55, where Isocrates refers to readers who have "often perused"—τῶν πολλάκις ἀνεγνωκότων—his works. See also Too 113–17.

contrast between honest abuse and lying flattery and between the poetry of blame and praise, the claim to address an audience of insiders, and the key mention of the ceremony of parading the tribute) strongly point toward direct allusion to *Acharnians*. In addition, the preoccupation of *Acharnians* with the authorial persona, its intertextual connections with Euripides' *Telephus*, and its distinction between fictional and real audience find many analogies in the literary technique of Isocrates' speech.

Isocrates states in the beginning of his fictional speech that he expects the audience to reject his unpopular views (3), since they tolerate only lies and flattery from politicians. He further makes the rather paradoxical claim that free speech (*parrhêsia*), the conventional trademark of the democratic polis, exists at Athens only for the worst and most thoughtless rhetors[21]—and for comic poets (14). These poets expose Athenian faults to the rest of Greece without provoking the resentment that drives honest orators from the podium. The theme derives from *Acharnians* 502–8. Aristophanes/Dicaeopolis protests that now at least Cleon cannot accuse him of insulting the polis in front of strangers (ξένων παρόντων). Since it is the Lenaia, the tribute is not being brought in, and few of the "allies" are on hand: οὔτε γὰρ φόροι / ἥκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι (505–6).[22] Every element of this key passage is recapitulated in one part or another of *On the Peace*. In this instance, Isocrates implies that *a fortiori* there should be more toleration for honest rhetors than even for comic poets, since the Assembly, a gathering more closed than any dramatic festival, is a place where the citizens are truly separated from all others, "winnowed" (περιεπτισμένοι), as Dicaeopolis puts it (*Ach.* 507).

The allusions to *Acharnians* parallel repeated insistence upon the alienation between Isocrates and his fictional audience, the Athenian *dêmos*. Isocrates has argued, in terms evocative of Plato's *Gorgias*, that his *logos* is a medicine for the sick soul, unpleasant but beneficial (39).[23] Insofar as he has accused the Assembly of tolerating none but pleasant speeches, however, it seems unlikely that they will readily swallow Isocrates' medicine. His stated

[21]Cf. a similar complaint in D. *Phil.* 3.4.3–5; the passage, however, ends hopefully: εἰ μὲν οὖν καὶ νῦν οὕτω διάκεισθε, οὐκ ἔχω τί λέγω· εἰ δ' ἃ συμφέρει χωρὶς κολακείας ἐθελήσετ' ἀκούειν, ἕτοιμος λέγειν.

[22]The absence of the "allies" is causally related to fact that the tribute was not due, cf. Raubitschek 361.

[23]Cf. *Grg.* 521d6–522a7. On parallel passages in Isocrates and that dialogue, see Eucken 36–39; Too 155. For the beneficial and moral discourse as disdained by the multitude see *Nic.* 45–51 and the close of this speech, 109.

fear that the audience will turn against him seems reasonable: should he speak or keep silent, fearing to alienate the citizens (δείσας τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπέχθειαν..., 38)? Still, Isocrates boasts that he intends to drop all caution and address the audience "completely unrestrainedly" (παντάπασιν ἀνειμένως, 41).

A series of repeated references exaggerate and extend a familiar trope,[24] the deprecation of audience anger. At 65–66, the orator admits that in attacking an empire that has been the object of so much desire and competitive struggle "it is difficult...to say something endurable" (ἀνεκτόν τι λέγειν); still, since they have put up with his other remarks, which were true but invidious (φιλαπεχθήμονας), he urges the audience to endure further and not to think him insane enough to deal in such controversial matters (πραγμάτων οὕτω παραδόξων), unless he had something true to say.[25] At 70, the key motif of *Acharnians* 502–8 emerges a second time, as Isocrates attempts to claim the license to speak freely that belongs to a private, purely Athenian forum. Someone may think that he has chosen to denounce the city (τῆς πόλεως κατηγορεῖν); in defense, he responds (71):

> If I had chosen to analyze matters in this manner to any others, I should deserve that reproach; but, as it is, I speak to you, not wishing to slander you before others (νῦν δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ποιοῦμαι τοὺς λόγους, οὐ διαβάλλειν ἑτέροις ἐπιθυμῶν).

Isocrates' fictive audience is native—public within Athens, but private from outsiders; but his real audience, better trained in philosophy and more conservative in politics than the average citizen, is better suited to tolerate this speech. Because *On the Peace* is not a real civic speech, it is open to outsiders, both in its audience and in its dissemination, as any literary text would be. Many of Isocrates' pupils were distinguished foreigners (*Antid.* 164, cf. 93), and a number of his works (the two Nicocles pieces, as well as *Euagoras* and *To Philip*) are addressed to foreign princes. The work of such an author is naturally

[24]Cf. requests that the audience not shout the speaker down: D. 5.3, 5.15, 13.3, 13.14, 21.14; Lycurg. *Leocr.* 52; Pl. *Ap.* 20c4, 21a5, 30c2. See Bers, who treats direct and indirect evidence for interjections by the audience in the courts and in public meetings.

[25] Cf. 61–62: Isocrates is at a loss for an answer, "not an honest and beneficial one, but one that would please you (οὐκ ἀληθοῦς καὶ συμφερούσης ἀλλ' ἀρεσκούσης ὑμῖν)." What he has to say "may seem strange to some of you listening and extremely remote from the views of others" (ἴσως δ' ἂν ἀκούσασιν ὑμῖν δεινὸν εἶναι δόξειεν καὶ παρὰ πολὺ τῆς τῶν ἄλλων ἐξηλλαγμένον διανοίας, 63).

cosmopolitan and pan-Hellenic.[26] The audience Isocrates claims to address cannot be his real target; and *On the Peace* cannot be taken as a genuine, though indirectly presented, proposal for reform, because, on its own showing, the Athenian people are too degenerate to tolerate its frankness, let alone respond favorably to its arguments.

The paragraphs that follow push the attack on the Periclean period to a further extreme, even expanding it to include ridicule of cardinal Athenian civic institutions. The speaker begins with the city Dionysia, telling of a ceremony, since discontinued, in which the tribute from the "allies" was paraded publicly and the war orphans for the year appeared in their ephebic gear:

> ἐψηφίσαντο τὸ περιγιγνόμενον τῶν φόρων ἀργύριον διελόντες κατὰ τάλαντον εἰς τὴν ὀρχήστραν τοῖς Διονυσίοις εἰσφέρειν, ἐπειδὰν πλῆρες ᾖ τὸ θέατρον (82).[27]

This display, he claims, was mere insolence and shamelessness, perfectly designed to inspire resentment, in the case of the tribute, and to satisfy malice, in the exposure of the losses caused by war (82–83): "So precisely did they find the means by which they might arouse the greatest spite[28]...showing to the allies the taxes on their property carried in by paid servants[29] and to the rest of the Greeks the number of the orphans and the misfortunes derived from the Athenians' greed (πλεονεξία)."

This is the third allusion to *Acharnians* 502–8. The tribute (φόροι) mentioned there and in the parodos (643) is explicated for a later generation, to whom this particular ceremony can only have been a remote memory. The tribute is a symbol of Athenian imperialism, and the ceremony that paraded it

[26]See Heilbrunn (160–61 and cf. 178), who remarks on the connection between written dissemination of a text and appeal to a Panhellenic audience.

[27]Raubitschek 360 explains περιγιγνόμενον as meaning simply "revenues." This passage is virtually the sole source for the tribute display. See Pickard-Cambridge 58–59 and Raubitschek 358–60 for a reconstruction of the ceremonies preceding the fifth century performances. R., using inscriptional and pictorial evidence, pictured a procession in which over five hundred bearers, each carrying a jar or bag with a talent of silver, marched through the orchestra.

[28]Ἐξ ὧν ἄνθρωποι μάλιστ' ἂν μισηθεῖεν—μισεῖν implies despising as well as hating, so that it can apply to the *Schadenfreude* of outsiders as well as to the resentment of the "allies."

[29]Ὑπὸ μισθωτῶν εἰσφερομένας is a pun on the collection (*LSJ* s.v. μισθωτής, 2) of taxes (εἰσφοραί).

unmasks the dazzling public buildings and festivals as inextricably linked through wealth to imperialism and eventually to war. Like Dicaeopolis, Isocrates must argue against the seductions of patriotism; and, like him, he takes an irreverent view of the city's pretensions. Foolish people, the orator claims, thought the city divinely fortunate (ἐμακάριζον) because of these displays, being unaware of what was to come and admiring the wealth that, "having come into the city unjustly, was fated to destroy swiftly even that which had been justly obtained."[30] The tragic performances, in Isocrates' account, are themselves a part of a tragedy in which the city is the hubristic hero, moving from vainglory into disaster.

A direct result of this corrupting wealth was the folly of the Sicilian expedition. With painful satire, the orator points out that the Athenians aimed at vast conquests when their own territory was under occupation: "when not in control of their own suburbs, they expected to rule Italy, Sicily, and Carthage" (εἰς τοῦτ' ἀφροσύνης ἦλθον, ὥστε τῶν προαστείων τῶν οἰκείων οὐ κρατοῦντες, Ἰταλίας καὶ Σικελίας καὶ Καρχηδόνος ἄρξειν προσεδόκησαν, 85).[31] Isocrates claims that the loss in the single, tragic debacle of the Sicilian campaign was greater than all the rest combined; but he embeds the actual numbers of dead in a general recital of naval losses, beginning with the Egyptian expedition of the 450s and continuing down to Aigospotamoi (86–87).[32] Thus the entire history of fifth-century Athenian imperialism is epitomized in the Sicilian invasion and recapitulated as a series of disasters. Like the epic poet, the orator despairs of being able to enumerate the individual losses: they could only be marked with the continually recurring (τῶν ἐγκυκλίων) public funerals (87). As he did in the case of the parade of orphans at the City Dionysia, the orator suggests that the public funerals were often attended by outsiders (πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν ἀστυγειτόνων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων) who in this case came, not as fellow-mourners, but to gloat over the

[30]For the conventional ethic of *hubris* here invoked, cf. Sol. 13.9–16 W and discussion of the traditional roots of Isocrates' "philosophy" by Schmitz–Kahlmann 17. For tragic connections between wealth and *hubris* see discussion in Michelini 224–26, 241.

[31]Mathieu 1942: 34 n. 1 cites Th. 6.15.2 for the wildly expanded ambitions in some Athenian circles at that time and points out that Isocrates here distorts chronology for his witticism, since the Decelean occupation began over a year after the departure of the first fleet sent to Sicily.

[32]All the disasters except the final one (Egypt, Cyprus, Datus, and Sicily) deal with far-flung imperialistic ventures that failed. On the dating of the first two, see Meiggs 101–3. The disaster at Drabescus or Datus is especially significant in Isocrates' context because it probably correlates with an early revolt of an "ally," that of Thasos: see Raubitschek 363–64.

city's military losses (οὐ συμπενθήσοντες τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἀλλὰ συνησθησόμενοι ταῖς ἡμετέραις συμφοραῖς).

Not content to denounce the ceremony itself, Isocrates demolishes a basic theme of Athenian patriotism. He audaciously claims that the public funerals, celebrations of Athenian autochthonous origins and ancestral solidarity,[33] can in fact be taken as a sign of the literal degeneration at which he has previously hinted. As the war wiped out the best of the old families and lesser breeds crept into the citizen rolls, he states, the earlier race of Athenians has been contaminated (88). If we use the loss of the best families as an indication of the rest, the orator ventures, the Athenians would seem to be an almost completely altered people (μικροῦ δεῖν ἀντηλλαγμένοι). Isocrates' dual attack on the funeral oration virtually defines *On the Peace* as the generic inverse of those patriotic speeches, which, as Nicole Loraux has shown, euphemistically neglected the failures and fissures of the body politic,[34] areas that this speech exposes to a caustic examination. Instead of flattering the citizens for their quasi-aristocracy, Isocrates points to the gap separating the present population—unwarlike yet aggressive, impoverished yet extravagant—from that of the Empire. Those apparently glorious days have already been shown to carry the seeds of corruption; but the present citizen body may have no connection even to this set of ancestors. W. R. Connor (1994: 41) points out that it was precisely the shakiness of Athenian civic identity that made it necessary to construct and reconstruct it "by shared myths, by participation in cults, festivals, and ceremonies...."[35] Isocrates' attack on the above ceremonies thus reinforces his attack on the civic identity of his "audience." The dilution and corruption of the citizen body is the final justification for this "speech" of denunciation, a speech that will never be heard on the Pnyx but that will resound in other ways and in other forums.

When giving samples of his work in the later *Antidosis* (62–66), Isocrates uses *On the Peace* as an antithesis to the *Panegyricus*, a speech of praise for Athens that recapitulates the mythical stories of the funeral orations (66–70) and defends the empire (100–109). Juxtaposition of these two texts indicates the versatility of an author who can work in the genres of both praise and blame. Ability to switch attitudes in this way may seem to remove political validity from Isocrates' work; but this assumption reflects a modern bias. The same

[33]See Schmitz–Kahlmann 88; Loraux 150–51; Ober 261–63.

[34]See discussion in Michelini 248.

[35]On the civic nature of the dramatic festivals, tragic as well as comic, see Henderson 286–87.

opinions can appear in different guises, and different means may lead to similar political ends. Praise of Athens may induce the citizens to be better and, if judicious, need not be false;[36] the choice between tactics of praise or of blame is a matter of situation (καιρός) and appropriateness (τὸ προσῆκον, τὰ δέοντα). Introducing the long selection from *On the Peace*,[37] the author apologetically remarks that some, who prefer blaming others to inventing anything good, may argue that reproach is more useful than praise. A comic poet, as Aristophanes does in the parabasis of *Acharnians* (633–40), prefers rebuke over flattery; and in *On the Peace* Isocrates prides himself on offering not the most pleasant but the most beneficial advice (39–40). As a speech of blame, *On the Peace* takes up a position in Isocrates' carefully managed oeuvre that corresponds to the *Panegyricus* as comedy does to serious poetic genres such as lyric and tragedy.

Yun Lee Too is surely correct in stating that Isocrates imperialistically attempts to occupy all generic positions at once (7, 13–21). In *On the Peace* Isocrates stakes out new territory, defining and justifying his stance by playing off a series of genres, poetic and prosaic. In denigrating the tragic festivals as well as the public funerals, the orator challenges the two most impressive specifically Athenian modes of poetry and prose, modes designed to glorify and adorn the city, both through their attendant ceremonies and through their patriotic content. Further, by picturing the city as the hero of its own tragedy, instead of the site at which tragic ills are remedied, Isocrates appropriates tragedy, and even epic, to his own uses.[38] Adopting the private/public antithesis of *Acharnians*, Isocrates extends it to show that the glorifying modes of tragedy and the funeral oration ultimately fail in their aim of awing and impressing outside observers. Like Aristophanes, he attempts to counter charges that the scolding mode is unpatriotic by arguing that it can be administered in private, while in fact implicitly referring his claims to a wider, non-Athenian audience. The funeral oration serves *On the Peace* as a kind of inverse model. *On the*

[36]See also the interesting theory of Harding that praise of peace in *On the Peace* is balanced by the antithetical praise of war in *Archid.* Note the lukewarm praise of the democracy in *Areop.*: being better than the Thirty ("madmen") is no great achievement (72–73).

[37] The quotation in the *Antid.*, another speech that pretends to face an irate Athenian public, tones down the effect by stopping at 56, before the attack on Athenian history, and concluding with the final paragraphs of standard conservative advice.

[38]See Zeitlin on the half-hidden patriotic content of typical tragic plots, which celebrate the disasters that befell the mythical ancestors of other states, such as Argos or Thebes. For epic cf. 87 above (τίς ἂν ἐξαριθμήσειεν;...), following a typically epic catalogue of the slain.

Peace, as the negation of the speech of praise, may represent what Isocrates takes to be the ideal, if unrealizable, form of the symbouleutic oration: a speech that attempts to usurp the comic play's privilege of *parrhêsia* while at the same time transferring its didactic function[39] to a more "philosophical" and serious prose discourse.

Why has the orator preferred to use motifs special to *Acharnians* in preference to more generalized comic allusions? This play abounds in themes that are typical of Isocrates' writing and that are particularly prominent in this speech. Not everyone in Isocrates' real audience could have grasped all or even any of the points of contact between these two texts;[40] the allusions would, however, be available to the sophisticated and careful readers/hearers that this author prized. Both *On the Peace* and *Acharnians* share the theme of inverted patriotism: Aristophanes' hero comes under violent attack by the chorus when he dares to question Periclean war policy. Both texts deal with a problem in rhetoric: how can the citizen audience be induced to hear a plea for peace that threatens their solidarity and even their civic identity? Like Isocrates, Aristophanes uses a historical (in his case, pseudo-historical) account to unmask Athenian patriotic myths and attack Periclean policy.

The feature that most strongly links *Acharnians* with Isocrates' work and with this speech is its extended play with allusion. Aristophanes uses a burlesque of the Euripidean *Telephus* to support his own unpatriotic rhetoric: the great rhesis (496–556) with which Dicaeopolis finally wins over the Acharnians is composed in imitation of a speech in which Telephus attacks Greek patriotism before a hostile audience, the Greek chiefs at Troy.[41] Additional references to *Telephus* are widely scattered throughout the comic play, creating an intertextual effect that Silk has called "bifocal" (496), while genre issues also appear in the attack on praise in the parabasis[42] and in the

[39]On the role of the comic poet see Heath 1987 and a conflicting view in Henderson. Heath's later article (1997) strikes a balance that I would agree with: comic poetry and political oratory are mutually influential genres, but the aims of each were somewhat different. *On the Peace* could be seen as an attempt to resolve this conflict.

[40]A similar point is made about Aristophanes' paratragedic allusions to Euripides by Silk 496: they enrich the text, but will be available in differing degrees to different members of the audience.

[41]See E. fr. 708–11 N (vol. II); text and testimonia in Austin 66–82; see also bibliography in Foley 34 n. 9.

[42]At 636–40, the text depreciates the flattering epithets that ambassadors have applied or might apply to Athens; but the words "violet-crowned (ἰοστέφανοι)" and "richly anointed"

paratragedic elements, including the heroic boasts and tragic laments of the general Lamachus.[43] By alluding to *Acharnians*, therefore, Isocrates has evoked a mirrored series of allusions that place his work in a complex relation to his model. As Foley has shown, Aristophanes both borrows from tragedy and asserts the contrasting superiority of his own genre. Isocrates' suggestion of the superior privacy and moral efficacy of an assembly speech over a comic play performs the same maneuver on Aristophanes' own text. On the other hand, *On the Peace* stands with *Acharnians* when it denounces both the funeral orations and tragedy as genres of pretension, self-deception, and self-exposure.

The key passage that links Isocrates' text to Aristophanes' appears at the opening of Dicaeopolis' *Telephus* speech (496–508). As the playwright alludes to his problems with Cleon, his authorial personality begins to bleed through the persona of his protagonist. The question of the speaker's identity goes several layers deep:

> Nothing can offer a more bewildering illustration of dramatic illusion than the spectacle of a beggar who is really the disguised Mysian king Telephus, who is really the Euripidean character "Telephus" as acted by the comic character "Dicaeopolis," who clearly speaks for the comic poet, known to most of the play's audience as Callistratus, who is however really fronting for the little known Aristophanes.[44]

This play of identities, both concealing and revealing the author, clothing the work with borrowed tragic features only to reveal the moral superiority of the comic stance, is paralleled by Isocrates' pretense to be a civic orator while in fact attacking conventional civic oratory and proposing this fictive "speech" as a new model.

Isocrates' "unpatriotic" account of Athenian history is partially balanced by a much briefer attack on Sparta (95–105), showing that it was not democracy but the sea empire that caused the downfall of both cities. The balance remains negative on the Athenian side, however, since the Spartans make a sudden transition from the good government that enabled them to defeat Athens into oppressive degeneracy after the victory. The account of Athens is more

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(λιπαραί) actually come from a dithyramb of Pindar: see fr. 76 Snell/Maehler. Thus Aristophanes attacks both lyric and rhetorical-epideictic modes of praise.

[43]On the effect of paratragedy, which borrows tragic coloring to create contrasting generic effects, see Silk 494–97. He distinguishes it from parody, which focuses upon the work that is being imitated (495; see also 479–80).

[44]Hubbard 59.

damning, because it involves a refutation of the city's greatest claims to fame and honor in the previous century. At the end of the speech, Isocrates marks the imbalance by proposing the Laconian constitutional monarchy as a model for Athenian relations with the allies and as an antithesis to the tyrannical way in which Athens now attempts to treat other cities (142–44). The earlier anti-Spartan excursus does provide a mollifying transition to the closing segment, in which the Athenians are urged to practice philosophy (φιλοσοφήσετε, 116) and discover the real sources of civic prosperity. Isocrates points to the paradox that the philosophical virtues, *dikaiosynê* and *sôphrosynê*, are praised for private life but disregarded in public, where they are even more necessary. The fictional setting of the Assembly recedes at this point; and familiar self-referential apologies for the author's senile prolixity and inability to control his material[45] accompany another marker of closure, an explicit summary of the main points (142–44).

In *Acharnians*, metatheatrical play between Dicaeopolis/Aristophanes is extended by Dicaeopolis' distinction between the chorus, his fictional audience, and the real audience of Athenian citizens. At 442–43, after quoting Telephus, "I must appear as a beggar for the day; be who I am, but seem it not," Dicaeopolis explicates, "The spectators must know who I am, while the chorus must stand by in ignorance..." (τοὺς μὲν θεατὰς εἰδέναι μ' ὃς εἰμ' ἐγώ, / τοὺς δ' αὖ χορευτὰς ἠλιθίους παρεστάναι).[46] This contrast between real and fictive audience is central to Isocrates' text, a "speech" that the Athenian Assembly would never tolerate. Isocrates' claim that he can hide his rebukes from the eyes of a wider public picks up and exaggerates the irony in his comic model. In the parabasis of *Acharnians* we hear that, when the allies do bring in their tribute, they will come longing to see the plays of the "best poet, who risked speaking justly before the Athenians" (ὅστις παρεκινδύνευσ' εἰπεῖν ἐν Ἀθηναίοις τὰ δίκαια, 645). The allies, although not present, are still an important part of the poet's public.[47] While Aristophanes speaks over the heads of the chorus of *Acharnians* to the civic audience in the theater, and beyond them to a wider audience, including the tribute-bearing cities and perhaps a pan-Hellenic public, Isocrates speaks over the heads of a fictional civic audience,

[45]141, 145. See Too (84–89) on ubiquity and the effect of this trope.

[46]See Hubbard 45–47, who points out the multiple referents of the question of "who I am"; see also Foley 39–41.

[47]On the ambiguity, see Taplin 4–5. For performances outside Athens see n. 19, above.

ostensibly to the local Athenian public, but really to his quite differently defined literary audience.

As Heath (1997: 238–39) has pointed out, the "advice" dispensed by comic poets could not be directly equivalent to that given by the rhetors, since the poets' real rivals were not politicians but other comic poets.[48] Isocrates' polemic, however, is directly aimed at his generic rival, public rhetoric, a discourse that he claims is based, like the high genres of poetry, on a potentially deceptive charm. Isocrates hopes to transcend and to supplant this traditional patriotic talk with a moral and philosophical discourse that, because of its written form, can be more widely disseminated and less vulnerable to public resentment. Like Isocrates (18), Aristophanes reanimates the metaphor of "instruction," picturing himself as a moral as well as a dramatic *didaskalos* (655–58) and claiming that his apparent treason represents a truer patriotism.[49] But Isocrates' enmity with the *dêmos* runs much deeper than the comic poet's. The strong flavor of *philosophia* in his "teaching" is appropriate to his low expectations of the general public, who cannot be expected to understand or tolerate a long and demanding text.[50]

Isocrates' last words address, not the demos, but "those younger and in the prime of life," whom the author urges to "speak and write" what will "convert" (προτρέψουσιν) the great cities to virtue and justice. The key term for philosophical protreptic is underlined by the final phrase: the task is important because "in prosperous times for Greece, philosophers also do much better" (ὡς ἐν ταῖς τῆς Ἑλλάδος εὐπραγίαις συμβαίνει καὶ τὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων πράγματα πολὺ βελτίω γίγνεσθαι). Here, the writer at length speaks to his true audience, the elite who share his political views and his intellectual sophistication. The conflict between the philosophers' separation from the public and the aim of converting the public to philosophical values remains unresolved; and the author's relation to the masses remains problematic, as it does in the Platonic texts. Isocrates points out that distinction between indictment (κατηγορεῖν) and reproach (νουθετεῖν) lies in intention rather than

[48]For the complex relation of comic art to two sets of rivals, political and poetic, see n. 42 above.

[49]See Foley 43–45.

[50]See Heilbrunn 160: Isocrates "regarded publication...as a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, with παιδεία or φιλοσοφία (i.e. intellectual and moral cultivation) the successor to the polis as the focus of his attention and interest."

in content: the abusive speech (λοιδορία) of the hostile should be despised,[51] while those who aim at our benefit are deserving of every praise (72). But a speech that pretends to influence the Athenian public, while denigrating the proudest ceremonies expressive of their patriotism and calling into question their very right to be called Athenians, remains ambivalent, both in intent and in the response it might hope to evoke.

[51]Isocrates probably does not intend to deprecate λοιδορία. See *Paneg.* 130: νουθετεῖν δὲ τοὺς ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ λοιδοροῦντας, again in opposition to accusation (κατηγορεῖν).

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