

Friends, Lovers, Flatterers: Demophilic Courtship in Aristophanes' *Knights*

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SUMMARY: The politician-as-lover conceit in Aristophanes' *Knights* presents a comic twist on the "demophilia topos," a strategy whereby speakers accuse opponents of seducing the *dêmos* with specious claims of affection. By sexualizing the topos, Aristophanes stages demophilic politics as pederastic courtship, foregrounding tensions between the *eunoia* ideal and *kolakeia* scare-image in city leadership. But Aristophanes does not stop there. Demos, a virtual *pornos* complicit in his leaders' efforts to con and "bugger" him, pursues self-interest no less passive-aggressively, cynically, or covertly than they do. Hence value-reversals suggesting *stasis*, along with a profoundly equivocal return to the "noble simplicity."

IN THE *ACHARNIANS* OF 425 B.C.E., Aristophanes promises to "shred" the leather merchant Cleon, a political bigwig and a thorn in the playwright's side (299–302).¹ Delivering on that promise the next year in *Knights*, Aristophanes portrays Cleon as a repulsively obsequious yet violently quarrelsome house-slave named Paphlagon. But to exact full poetic justice, the playwright evidently felt he needed to create a character in whom this stage-Cleon would more than meet his match. Hence the Sausage-Seller, a disreputable street-vendor vying with Paphlagon to win the affections of the significantly named Demos ("The People"), an elderly householder and Paphlagon's master. Indeed, the pair profess love—*sexual* love—for their incongruously superannuated love-object, but why? What could they, or, for that matter, the playwright, hope to gain from staging a thinly veiled political rivalry as a tawdry love triangle? Whatever it is, students of the play would do well to pay heed. For sexual imagery runs through the goings-on like an *idée fixe*, at times sounding the

¹ Aristophanes' troubles with Cleon and related matters: Atkinson, Olson xxix–xxxi, xlvī–xlvii, l–li, Sommerstein 1986.

dominant note, at times playing counterpoint to other themes.² Yet this imagery has, at least until recently, mostly gone unnoticed.³ When scholars comment, they tend to focus on one or another of two “logics.” Thus Dover, pointing out how each of Demos’ two “lovers” stands to benefit from coming across as the more generous, and therefore more deserving, “suitor,” alludes to some of the more elevated components—the ameliorating reciprocities—of classical Athenian pederasty.⁴ That, however, cannot be divorced from another, equally important, “logic.” Thus Henderson connects *erôs* imagery to Paphlagon as “violator of the people.”⁵ I would further assert that *dêmos*—“buggery,” which is quite as organic to the *erastês* (male lover) conceit as any positive connotation, needs to be understood within a larger system of reversals and incongruous revalorizations. Curious, and too little studied, is the fact that Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller pursue their quarry by means of *kolakeia*, obsequious cajolery at odds with the dominance usually associated with being an *erastês*. More curious still is it that Demos, elsewhere a gullible victim, in the lyric interlude at lines 1111–50 rationalizes his passively mercenary stance vis-à-vis his lovers.

I shall, then, be taking a closer look at still unresolved problems relating to the politician-as-*erastês* conceit in Aristophanes’ *Knights*. In so doing, I part company with those who start from the assumption that the image mimics the purportedly “demerastic” rhetoric of a Cleon. I too see oratorical *praxis* as the starting point for this conceit. I read it, however, as comically absurdist reification inspired by the “demophilia topos,” a well attested blame-motif attacking court and assembly speakers for attempting to seduce the *dêmos* with specious claims of affection. By sexualizing the topos, Aristophanes discovers within the dysfunctional give-and-take of “demophilic” politics a whole tangle of contradictory reciprocities, symmetries, and asymmetries—strategies, in other words, whereby power is got through surrender, and dominance

² See Landfester 55 on “die Darstellung des Politischen im Erotischen für die weitere Handlung als konstitutiv”; cf. Hubbard 67–68.

³ But see now Wohl 73–123; also Henderson 1991: 66–70, Ludwig (consult index). Landfester 50–60, 73, 100–101 provides detailed analysis; his focus on passivity looks forward to Dover 1989 and Foucault. Rosen’s discussion of iambographic obscenity in *Knights* (59–82) does not address the politician-as-*erastês* conceit *per se*. For recent work on political themes in the play see Hesk 255–58, 289–91, Riu 1999: 143–54, Yunis 50–58.

⁴ Dover 1972: 91: “... for lovers try to outbid one another in generosity to the person whom they love.” Cf. Connor 96–98 and sources cited p. 97 n. 14, Sommerstein 1981: 181 *ad* 732.

⁵ Henderson 1991: 69; cf. Monoson 86–87. Brock and Landfester connect Demos-*erômenos*’ passivity to the “Souveränitätsproblem.” Wohl 73–123 reads *Knights* as reversing a constructive leadership-erotics suggested by Th. 3.37–40 (Cleon’s Mytilenian speech).

through subservience. Overlooked by commentators has been the role of Demos, who, in the crux passage mentioned earlier (1111–50), admits to feigning ignorance and passivity so as to screen his own aggressively exploitative stance toward would-be “buggerers.” Strife and conflict therefore underlie the amicable veneer. Comically dressed-up as pederastic *kolakeia*, this dystopian vision of political friendship presents Athenian democracy as fraught with category slippage and revalorizations symptomatic of *stasis*.

1. THE DEMOPHILIA TOPOS

To make sense of sexual imagery in *Knights*, we should first turn to the play's finale, where the Sausage-Seller, setting aside all pretense that Demos is anything but the sovereign *dêmos* of Athens, or that the courtship of Demos was anything but a political contest, demonstrates the sort of assembly rhetoric that previously so enthralled his new master (1340–44⁶):

ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ: πρῶτον μὲν, ὅπῳτ' εἴποι τις ἐν τῇ κκλησίᾳ·
 "ὦ δῆμ', ἐραστής εἰμι σὸς φιλῶ τέ σε
 καὶ κῆδομαί σου καὶ προβουλεύω μόνος,"
 τούτοις ὅποτε χρήσαιτό τις προοιμίῳ,
 ἀνωρτάλιζες κάκερουτίας.

SAUSAGE-SELLER: First of all, whenever an assembly speaker would say, “O Demos, I am your lover (*erastês*), and I love (*philô*) you and care for (*kêdomai*) you, and no one else counsels you the way I do”—whenever they'd start their speeches like that, it would set you flapping your wings and tossing your horns.

It would seem that Demos had, prior to his transformation, been an easy mark for the highly emotional, even erotic, brand of audience bonding favored by the city's politicians—or so claims the Sausage-Seller as he pointedly shifts our attention from the dramatic illusion to the “real” world of public oratory.

But how close to reality are we? Certain scholars, pointing out similarities between the love language famously scripted by Thucydides in the Periclean Funeral Oration (2.43.1 “You must daily gaze upon the city's power and become lovers [*erastai*] of it”) and the erotically inflected love declarations in our play (732–35, cf. 1341–42), detect in the latter a snapshot of late fifth-century practice—“flowers culled from the oratory of Cleon,” as some have put it.⁷ There is, however, reason for doubt. In the surviving corpus of Attic

⁶ Here and elsewhere the text of *Knights* is that of Henderson 1998b.

⁷ Connor 97, quoting Rogers 188 *ad* 1341; see also Burckhardt 40, Crane 318–19, Dover 1972: 91, Gomme 2.135–37 *ad* Th. 2.43.1, Ludwig 145 (cf. 151), Monoson 66, Neil 175

oratory and related evidence (speeches in Thucydides, Plato's *Apology*, sophistic exercises), we find no instance of, nor reference to, speakers wooing audiences with professions of *erôs*. In fact, we find but a single, rather unusual instance (Pl. *Ap.* 29d, though cf. Th. 2.60.5) of an emotional effusion at all like what the Sausage-Seller reports—that is, one where a speaker professes a heartfelt attachment or partiality (*philia*, *kêdos*) to his audience (“you”), or to the collectivity (*polis*, *dêmos*) to which that audience belongs.⁸

That is not, of course, to imply that democratic sympathies, whether expressed as *philia* or in some other way,⁹ were themselves a liability. On the contrary, they were indispensable credentials, whence the practice of (for instance) listing one's own or one's forebears' civic-minded accomplishments (Antiphon 6.45; And. 1.141–43; Lys. 25.12; D. 18 *passim*; see Ober 1989: 226–47, cf. 266–70), or representing one's friendships and hatreds as identical to those of one's listeners (D. 18.280–81; cf. Ar. *Ach.* 509–12 and Arist. *Rh.* 1381a6–20), or, with varying degrees of obliquity, implicating oneself in patriotic sentiments of various sorts.¹⁰ None of that is, however, quite as blunt or direct as what the Sausage-Seller quotes. To be sure, speakers show little reluctance to profess civic goodwill (εὐνοία),¹¹ though we shall see how *eunoia* could be viewed differently from *philia* in terms of emotional intensity. Lysias, Aristides tells us, “professed himself to be a friend in common of the *polis*” (Aristid. 3.607 Lenz-Behr = Lys. fr. 109b Albini ἔφη Λυσίας κοινὸν ἑαυτὸν

ad 1341–42. Wohl 92–93 suggests that *erôs*-rhetoric could have figured in the historical Cleon's attempt to bind “demos to demagogue in a relation of mutual desire without mutual degradation.” For a differing perspective see below in this section and n. 25.

⁸ For the affective register of *philia* see below; for κήδεσθαι see Landfester 101, Neil 175 *ad* 1341–42.

⁹ E.g., Ar. V. 888–89 (φιλεῖν); Th. 6.14 (κήδεσθαί τε τῆς πόλεως καὶ ... γενέσθαι πολίτης ἀγαθός); 2.60.5 (φιλόπολις); And. 2.26 (δημοτικός); Isoc. 16.28 (φιλία, εὐεργεσία); D. 18.6 (Solon εὖνους ὦν ὑμῖν καὶ δημοτικός); 59.93 (ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς ὄντας καὶ βεβαίους φίλους περὶ τὸν δῆμον); Din. 1.31 (φιλόπολις ἀνὴρ καὶ κηδεμών); E. *Supp.* 506–8; Ar. *Nu.* 1187; [Arist.] *Rh.Al.* 1442a10. Cf. μισόδημος, μισόπολις; Din. 3.22; Lycurg. 39; Ar. *Eq.* 767; V. 411, 474; [Arist.] *Rh.Al.* 1442a13. See Burckhardt 40–46, Connor 99–108, Landfester 53–55, Ober 1989: 336.

¹⁰ Isoc. 8.39 (ἐμὸν μὲν οὖν ἔργον ἐστίν, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κηδομένων τῆς πόλεως); D. 23.190 (to speak, as I am doing, against a disloyal general is χρηστοῦ καὶ φιλοπόλιδος ἀνδρὸς ἔργον); Din. 1.92 (εἰ δέ τι κηδόμεθα τῆς πατρίδος); Aeschin. 2.152; Lycurg. 3 (the civic-minded risk-taker unfairly deemed *philopragmôn* rather than *philopolis*); cf. Ar. *Ec.* 180–82. See also n. 21 below on *dêmotikos*.

¹¹ And. 2.25; Aeschin. 1.159; 2.118, 181; D. 18.1, 8, 286. Similar are first-person affirmations of civic *prothumia*, “zeal” or “commitment” (προθυμία/-ος /-ως /-εἶσθαι), e.g., Lys. 12.99; D. 18.286.

εἶναι φίλον τῆς πόλεως), though just what Aristides quotes, and how accurately, remains a puzzle. Pericles, in the last of the speeches assigned to him by Thucydides, affirms himself to be *philopolis*, “partial/devoted to the city”—in other words, a patriot (2.60.5). But in tandem with his patriotism Pericles notes his incorruptibility (φιλόπολις τε καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσων), seemingly as if to thwart suspicions the first claim might tend to raise (see further below). Nor do we find a fully applicable parallel in the Periclean Funeral Oration (Th. 2.43.1), where Pericles affirms no city-*erôs* of his own, but urges it on others.¹² There is a warm expression of *philia* in Plato's *Apology* (29d):

If then you would, as I said, acquit me on these conditions [viz. that I give up philosophizing], I should answer you, “Men of Athens, I do indeed love you dearly (ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, ὧς ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀσπάζομαι μὲν καὶ φιλῶ), but I shall obey the god rather than you.”

But this does not express democratic sympathies so much as a rather elaborate, and somewhat ironic, “No, thank you.”¹³ As for speakers declaring *erôs* for audience, *dêmos*, or the like (“I am your lover [ἐραστής],” “I love [ἐρῶ] you”), that does not happen in our sources—except, of course, in Aristophanes' *Knights*.¹⁴

Let me be clear: I obviously cannot rule out the possibility that the Sausage-Seller's quotation (1341–42) mimics love-language from an orator like Cleon. Yet the evidence provides what is at best only weak or equivocal support for bluntly first-person affirmations of audience-*philia* (or *kêdos*), and even weaker support for affirmations of audience-*erôs*.¹⁵ But questions of historicity should not take precedence over the key issue, which is how existing data can be brought to bear on the Sausage-Seller's quoted example of assembly rhetoric and, by extension, the play's erotic goings-on, the “before” pic-

¹² Similarly, Theorus in *Ar. Ach.* 141–46 is speaking to the *dêmos* not of his own, but of foreigners' philathenian *erôs*.

¹³ Cf. the use of φιλεῖν with requests (*LSJ* s.v. I.7); also ἀγαπᾶν in Aeschin. 2.5 (ὑμᾶς ... διαφερόντως ἀγαπῶ, ὅτι, “I am well pleased with you because”; see *LSJ* s.v. III). In tragedy, Praxithea (wife of Erechtheus), sacrificing her daughter for the city, wishes all Athenians would love Athens as much as she (οὕτω φιλοῖεν ὥς ἐγώ, *E. fr.* 360.53–55 Nauck, adduced *Lycurg.* 100–101).

¹⁴ Demad. fr. 78 de Falco (the orator claims to be a cowardly *erastês* of peace) is spurious.

¹⁵ Exaggeration and caricature, favorite devices of the playwright, feature in satire targeting (as opposed to realistically mirroring) Cleon's demagoguery in general and his allegedly indecorous rhetorical style (evidence in Connor 97 n. 14) in particular. Demerasty in *Knights* fits within comedy's efforts to portray Cleon and his like (Connor's “new politicians”) as practicing a politics of *ponêria/mochthêria*, “vulgarity” in word and deed, for which see Rosenbloom 59–63.

ture to which the Sausage-Seller alludes. Thus I suggest we understand the *erastês* conceit in relation to a blame-motif well attested in the orators and illustrated by the Sausage-Seller himself, to wit, the practice of attributing such “love talk” to others. Compare, for example, the Sausage-Seller’s *reportage* at 1340–44 to the following from one of the Demosthenic *Exordia* (53.3, my italics):

Why in the world is it, men of Athens, that you, whose interests are on the lips of all, are generally no better off now than before, while these men, whose every word hangs on your welfare, never their own—why is it that they have gone from poor to rich? *Because, men of Athens, though they say they love you, it is not you they love but themselves* (ὅτι φασὶν μὲν, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, φιλεῖν ὑμᾶς, φιλοῦσι δ’ οὐχ ὑμᾶς ἀλλ’ αὐτούς).¹⁶

Similar is Isocrates’ warning to an imagined assembly audience “not to pay heed ... to those who claim to love the *dêmos* (τοῖς φιλεῖν μὲν τὸν δῆμον φάσκουσιν) yet bring it to utter ruin” (8.121), or another speaker’s to ignore “those whose words speak of love for you (τοὺς μὲν φάσκοντας τούτους τῷ λόγῳ φιλεῖν ὑμᾶς)” but whose deeds, we gather, speak otherwise (D. 26.23).¹⁷ We are, then, dealing with a variation on the familiar words-versus-deeds antithesis, with the emphasis placed, as usual, on deeds as the more truthful signifier (Parry 15).

But it would seem we are also dealing with a red herring of sorts if, as we saw earlier, matching instances of speakers actually saying such things in so many words fail to materialize in the expected contexts. I would therefore posit an element of exaggeration, even distortion, for what I shall call the “demophilia topos” (“So-and-so claims to love you/the *dêmos*/the *polis*, but in fact does not”).¹⁸ Though it tends to avoid direct quotation, we should not regard this topos as mere shorthand for an adversary’s audience bonding. Rather, it evokes sentiments, even language, imputed to targeted speakers.¹⁹ Thus when a plaintiff in the corpus informs the jury that the defendant “will be telling you he loves you second only to his relatives” (D. 58.30 δευτέρους γὰρ ὑμᾶς φήσει φιλεῖν μετὰ τοὺς οἰκείους; cf. 28–29), the intimacies implied by *philia* are key to the sarcasm of the speaker’s quip.

¹⁶ For questions of authenticity see Yunis 287–89 with bibliography. Cf. Arist. *EN* 1168b15–25 (ill-will against pleonectic self-lovers).

¹⁷ Cf. Isoc. 8.127; 12.141 (φιλεῖν μὲν τὸν δῆμον προσποιουμένους); D. 3.24; 22.66 (κηδεμῶν, sc. ἡμῶν, sarcastic; cf. 24.173); 58.30; Aeschin. 2.8 (μόνος δ’ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ φαίνεται κηδεμῶν τῆς πόλεως Δημοσθένης, sarcastic); Din. 1.100; 3.22; Pl. *Ap.* 24b; similar use of *eunous* in And. 4.16, D. 25.64. For topos *formulae* in D. 23 see n. 20 below.

¹⁸ Cf. *Eq.* 870, 946 (φάσκων φιλεῖν, μ’ ἐσκορόδισας).

¹⁹ Direct quotation only by the Sausage-Seller (*Ar. Eq.* 1340–44). Cf., however, direct quotation of an allegedly impassioned (ἀεὶ βοᾷ, “always shouts”) and bogus *eunoia* claim

But why the apparent reluctance to profess in one's own behalf the sort of *polis*-oriented *philia* readily attributed to others (e.g., in Isoc. 16.28)? Dionysius, commenting on Pericles' avowal of *polis*-love (Th. 2.60.5 "I am *philopolis*"; see above), faults it as vulgar (φορτικωτέραν), inappropriate (ἥκιστα τῷ παρόντι καιρῷ πρέπουσαν), and squandered (μὴ τεταμειυμένως), inasmuch as singing one's own praises tends to provoke annoyance and resentment, not sympathy, especially before a political or courtroom audience (D.H. Th. 45). Plutarch, though he too recognizes risks inherent in self-praise, nevertheless cannot criticize Pericles' gambit: the statesman had no choice (Pericles in Th. 2.60–64 is under attack), nor does he lie (*Moralia* 540C–D; cf. 541E–F on D. 18). So too Demosthenes, needing to defend honors he has received, mentions the disadvantage self-commendation places one in (D. 18.3–4). In another speech, Demosthenes clearly relishes the opportunity to rake Charidemus (mercenary commander and honorary citizen) over the coals for a letter combining, so we are told, fulsome self-praise (23.160–61) with a bogus profession of "love for you."²⁰

Use of *dêmotikos*, "true-blue democrat," *Volksfreund* (Wankel), offers further clues.²¹ However commendable it was to be *dêmotikos* (see n. 10 above), bluntly first-person affirmations of the type "I am *dêmotikos*" are difficult to confirm.²² Still, the charge that "so-and-so falsely claims to be *dêmotikos*" appears to have been commonplace, as when Aeschines alleges some such claim to be Demosthenes' mantra (3.168 ναί, ἀλλὰ δημοτικός ἐστίν).²³ Later

at D. 25.64 (ἐγὼ μόνος εὖνους ὑμῖν, κτλ.); for derogatory βολῆ see Bers 1997: 187 and n. 110. Cf. Bers 1997: 134 on emotive indirect discourse; 115–28 on direct quotation in Aristophanes; 224 on direct versus indirect quotation.

²⁰ D. 23.184 φίλος εἶναί φησι φενακίζων ὑμᾶς; cf. 162, 174, 179 (κολακεύων καὶ φενακίζων ὑμᾶς), 193–95.

²¹ Th. 6.28.2 (Alcibiades' allegedly οὐ δημοτικὴ παρανομία) suggests *dêmotikos* as a potent slogan already in 415. Later comedy satirizes overuse of *dêmotikos* as catchphrase (Eub. fr. 72 Kassel-Austin [henceforth K-A]; Philem. fr. 3 K-A). See Wankel 1.138 *ad* 18.6.

²² Hoping to be recalled from exile, a contrite Andocides assures listeners he probably, and sensibly, will be *dêmotikos* (ἔμοιγε ... εἰκότως ὑπάρχει δημοτικῷ εἶναι, εἴπερ ... φρονῶν τυγχάνω)—that in imitation of his patriotic forebears (2.26). Cf. the obliquity of Isoc. 18.62 ("you should regard as *dêmotikoi* not those who ... but who," etc.). Note non-problematic third-person assertion: Lys. 20.23 ὡς δ' ἦν δημοτικός, ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ἀποδείξω; Isoc. 16.36; D. 24.134; Aeschin 1.173, 3.194.

²³ Cf. the next sentence in Aeschin. 3.168; also 3.176, 248; Lys. 28.12, 30.9 (οἵτινες τότε συγκαταλύσαντες τὸν δῆμον νυνὶ δημοτικοί φασιν εἶναι), 15; Isoc. 18.48; Din. 1.9, 44, 78–79 (with 44, sarcastic). In Ar. V. 699, Bdelycleon charges Athenian politicians with "people-izing" (δημιζόντων) even as they cheat the people of tribute.

in the same speech, Aeschines disparagingly observes that “goodwill (εὐνοία) and the name ‘the people’s friend’ (τὸ τῆς δημοκρατίας ὄνομα) are common property, yet those whose conduct least fits the description are usually the first to seek refuge there” (3.248). Whatever its accuracy, this last observation suggests that listeners could at least be induced to regard self-commendation in a demophilic vein as *ipso facto* suspect.

Noteworthy is the psychagogic power speakers sometimes ascribe to patriotic posturing. Thus Aeschines alerts listeners to the danger of being deceived (ἐξαπατηθήσεσθε) by the pleasant sound (εὐφημίαν) of Demosthenes’ claim to being *dēmotikos* (3.168). In a similar vein, the speaker in *Against Aristocrates* warns his audience not to let Charidemus’ fraudulent friendship “cloud” their wits (D. 23.184 δεῖ ... μὴ τετυφῶσθαι). Relevant to these psychological considerations is the very wording employed by the demophilia topos. For we must not overlook the power of affective vocabulary to place a “spin” on allegations of patriotic posturing.²⁴ What sort of spin? For that, we can turn to Aristotle, who draws an illuminating contrast between *eunoia* and *philia*. *Eunoia* (he tells us), while it appears to be an element of *philia*, differs in possessing neither “tension” (διάτασις) nor “desire” (ὄρεξις), these last being concomitants of *philêsis*, “loving” (EN 1166b30–34; see Konstan 1997: 74). A client of Lysias’ appears to capitalize on just such a contrast when, having already commended victims of the Thirty for their *dēmos*-oriented *eunoia* (13.1; cf. 13, 93–94), he raises the rhetorical temperature by characterizing the relationship between the martyrs of democracy and “you” as a *philia* involving the same obligations as those incumbent on “friends and intimates” (92 φίλους καὶ ἐπιτηδέιους; cf. 94, 96–97). The demophilia topos, especially when it uses a verb like φιλεῖν, will, therefore, have similarly magnified the affective dimension to civic *eunoia* and the like. As for why the data weigh as heavily as they do against overtly first-person declarations of audience-*philia* (as opposed to, say, avowals of *eunoia*), affirmations so demonstrative could well have been viewed as too indecorous for courts or assembly.²⁵ In any event, bluntly demophilic declarations, while notionally *possible* in the

²⁴ For the concept of “spin” applied to Attic oratory see Hesk 202–7, 213.

²⁵ Bers 1994 and 1997: 147–48 argues that the decorum of courts and assembly discouraged speakers from anything, including “overemotional speech,” that might reflect poorly on their social personality. I make the case (Scholtz 1997: ch. 4) that speakers in court and assembly avoided non-sexual *erôs*-language (indecorous), but that the epideictic genre admitted and encouraged certain extravagances, e.g., *erôs*-language in Th. 2.43.1 and non-logographic Isocrates. Cf. Isoc. 4.11 on display rhetoric as more elaborate than dicanic; Arist. *Rh.* 1415a10–13 comparing epideictic *prooimia* to those of dithyramb, a notoriously extravagant genre.

service of one's own self-presentation, were clearly less useful that way than as targetable hypocrisy in one's *opponent's* self-presentation. Thus we can view the demophilia topos as a strategy to control the discourse, specifically, to color audience perceptions of an opposing *captatio benevolentiae*, even if that meant misrepresenting the "misrepresentations."²⁶

Still, we should remember that the problem was not *dêmos*-oriented *philia* itself (ordinarily highly commendable) but the notion that a speaker would go before an audience and declare, "I love you" (φιλῶ ὑμᾶς) or the equivalent. Such a sentence performs an emotional bond between speaker ("I") and addressee ("you")—so especially in the case of the Greek verb φιλεῖν, whose semantic field extends to the performance of *philia* through kissing (*LSJ* s.v. I.4).²⁷ Of course, the topos "performs" *philia* only at a mimetic remove, but imitative performances could exert a powerful hold over ancient audiences (*Gorg. Hel.* fr. 11.8–9 D-K; *Pl. Ion* 535b–e; *Arist. Po.* 1449b24–28). Thus by "performing" *philia*, the topos would have excited a listener's *thumos*, the soul's "spirited" dimension and seat of *philia*, according to Aristotle; the concomitant impression of *philia* betrayed (inevitably an element of the topos) would have then incited the *thumos* to anger.²⁸ Also galling would have been the unseemly gullibility the topos imputes to a citizenry taken in by such talk. So, for instance, in Demosthenes' *Third Olynthiac*, the current generation, dotting as it does on the ingratiating love-talk of corrupt politicians, fails to measure up to the *dêmos* of yesteryear (3.24; cf. 3, 13, 21–22, 25–26, 30–31)—precisely the Sausage-Seller's point, as it is also the playwright's in much of the comic business soon to be examined.

2. FRIENDS, LOVERS

The play opens with two house slaves complaining of a third, Paphlagon, a newcomer who will stop at nothing to make himself the favorite of Demos, the master of all three. To rid themselves of the Paphlagon-nuisance, the first two slaves enlist the aid of a nearly perfect rogue, the Sausage-Seller, in hopes that he, by dint of utter shamelessness (that is, by fighting fire with fire), will replace the upstart as manager of Demos' household.

²⁶ See more generally Hesk 202–91 for "the rhetoric of anti-rhetoric."

²⁷ To the extent that the sentence "I love you" goes beyond the mere conveyance of information, it resembles what J. L. Austin (160–61) calls "behabitives" ("I thank you"; "I apologize"). For the "illocutionary" (work-accomplishing) force of political rhetoric in classical Athens see Ober 1998: 36–38.

²⁸ *Philia* and *thumos*: *Arist. Pol.* 1327b40–28a3; Ludwig 194–95 and n. 98.

A contest pitting Paphlagon against the Sausage-Seller is ushered in with love declarations (730–36) that place a decidedly pederastic complexion on what follows:²⁹

ΔΗΜΟΣ: τίς, ὦ Παφλαγών, ἀδικεῖ σε; ΠΑΦΛΑΓΩΝ: διὰ σὲ τύπτομαι ὑπὸ
τουτουὶ καὶ τῶν νεανίσκων. ΔΗΜΟΣ: τῇ;
ΠΑΦΛΑΓΩΝ: ὅτιη φιλῶ σ', ὦ Δῆμ', ἐραστῆς τ' εἰμὶ σός.
ΔΗΜΟΣ: σὺ δ' εἰ τίς ἐτεόν; ΑΛΛΑΝΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ: ἀντεραστῆς τουτουί,
ἐρῶν πάλαι σου βουλόμενός τέ σ' εὖ ποιεῖν,
ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ καλοὶ τε κάγαθοί.
ἀλλ' οὐχ οἱοί τ' ἐσμέν διὰ τουτονί.

DEMOS: Why Paphlagon, who's been wronging you?

PAPHLAGON: *Him!* Him and his boys have been beating me up, all because of you.

DEMOS: But why?

PAPHLAGON: Because you're special to me, Demos. Because I love you.

DEMOS: Okay, so who are *you*?

SAUSAGE-SELLER: I'm this guy's rival. I've pined forever for you, wanted to treat you nice—me and a lot of us respectable types have. But we can't. *He* won't let us.

By identifying himself, however incongruously, with the *kaloi k'agathoi* (“respectable types”; contrast 185–86) wishing to benefit Demos (“treat you nice,” σ' εὖ ποιεῖν), the Sausage-Seller hints at shame-honor protocols again evoked when Paphlagon, some ten lines later, urges Demos to choose his favorite within the formal setting of an *ekklēsia* (746–48):

ΠΑΦΛΑΓΩΝ: καὶ μὴν ποιήσας αὐτίκα μάλ' ἐκκλησίαν,
ὦ Δῆμ', ἵν' εἰδῆς ὁπότερος νῶν ἐστί σοι
εὐνούστερος, διάκρινον, ἵνα τοῦτον φιλήῃς.

PAPHLAGON: So hurry up, Demos! Call an assembly, so you can decide between us which one's kinder and give him your love.

In relation to the *erōs* declarations uttered just lines earlier, “love” (ἵνα τοῦτον φιλήῃς) in requital for “kindness” (ὁπότερος ... εὐνούστερος) can be understood as the reward a successful suitor can expect from a compliant beloved; our sources show it could stand for sexual gratification (Dover 1989: 49–54). Yet the venue—a political assembly—for the upcoming contest leaves no doubt as to the dual character (political-pederastic) of the anticipated courtship.

²⁹ Cf. Landfester 51–52 on the programmatic force of these lines; 50–60, 73, 100–101 for erotic evocations generally in *Knights*.

But why choose a “kinder” (εὐνούστερος) suitor in the first place, and “kinder” as opposed to what? It was, we have seen, benevolence (εὐνοία) and good services (εὖ ποιεῖν) that legitimized the persuasive efforts of politicians.³⁰ Much the same can be said for lovers, who were expected (among other things) to prove their worth through the guidance and mentoring they offered their respective beloveds. Take that away, and the reciprocities of pederasty became vulnerable to interpretation as a more disreputable form of quid-pro-quo, to wit, *porneia*.³¹

In Aristophanes' *Knights*, it is Demos' honorable standing that is on the line, and the enticements offered by his lovers that are on trial. Whoever puts on the more compelling display of *eunoia* will win a crown from Demos; that recalls the practice of awarding crowns to politicians and others for civic or *polis*-directed goodwill (εὐνοίας ἔνεκα *et sim.*).³² But the sparring of our two candidates also foregrounds what Demos can expect from an *erastês* whose *peithô* falls short in the *eunoia* department. Thus Paphlagon advises Demos not to heed the Sausage-Seller's oracles lest they turn him into a “worn hide” (μολγός), meaning, arguably, a *kinaidos* (962–63).³³ The Sausage-Seller counters that listening to Paphlagon's oracles could spell circumcision for Demos (963–64),³⁴ a barbaric indignity for any Greek.³⁵ Elsewhere in the play, Paphlagon boasts that he can make a fool of Demos *ad libitum* (713), and that his skills include the ability “to make the *dêmos* expand and contract on cue” (719–20). Quips the Sausage-Seller, “Even my ass-hole knows that trick,” as if to imply that Paphlagon's vaunted skill at *dêmos*-manipulation will habitu-

³⁰ See section 1 above. Conversely, politicians believed to have allowed themselves to be suborned in their advisory function could be prosecuted, for which see Christ.

³¹ Cf. D. 61.5 ἔρωτος χωρὶς αἰσχύνης; Aeschin. 1.137. See Dover 1989: 49–54 for the redeeming power of *philia* in pederasty; 202–3 for the educative role played (ideally) by the *erastês*. Ar. *Pl.* 153–59, though cynically treating honorable pederasty as a dressed-up *porneia*, acknowledges a notional distinction between the two. See further Dover 1989: 145–47, Foucault 204–14, Konstan 1993: 8.

³² Cf., e.g., Isoc. 18.61; D. 18. For evocations of honorary crowning in *Knights* see Yunis 54. For honorary decrees (including those involving crowns) see Hedrick 410, Henry, Veligianni-Terzi. Cf. Monoson 64–87 for the positive connotations of city *erôs* in Th. 2.43.1.

³³ I find Henderson 1991: 68–69, 212 and the parallels adduced there persuasive. Henderson 1998b translates “a mere balloon”; Sommerstein 1981: 195 *ad* 963 understands as “flayed alive.”

³⁴ So Henderson 1998b and Sommerstein 1981: 195 *ad* 963.

³⁵ See Dover 1989: 129–30. For Herodotus, Egyptian circumcision is unattractive (2.37.2). In *Acharnians*, ostensibly circumcised mercenaries are not worth the money (155–63); Henderson 1998b *ad* 158 notes them to be “barbaric (and therefore cowardly).”

ate Demos to a degrading docility analogous to the Sausage-Seller's own *euruprôktia* (721).³⁶

All of this connects with the demophilia topos in fairly obvious ways. "Spinning" civic *eunoia* as a more intimate, and in context more disquieting, *philia*, the topos exaggerates the affective dimension of the audience-bonding of public speakers. Spinning demophilia as *erôs*, the playwright renders the "Demos-bonding" of Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller more disquieting still. Yet this politics-pederasty equation, when looked at closely, reveals cracks in its ideological underpinning. Democracy presupposes a sovereign *dêmos*, and one therefore dominant over individual citizens, including the leadership elite. Pederasty presupposes an *erômenos* (beloved) subordinate to his *erastês* (lover).³⁷ Thus in our play, politics-as-pederasty, insofar as it *subordinates* Demos (= the *dêmos*) to his lover-politicians, necessarily subverts at least as much as it ratifies democratic values. Yet the problematics of pederastic politics extend well beyond what Landfester terms the "Souveränitätsproblem" (11). As we shall see, this imagery, at least as it is played out in *Knights*, so infuses reversal, contradiction, and conflict into democracy as to leave the system in a state of virtual war with itself.

3. FLATTERERS

Early on in the play, Slave 1's account of Paphlagon's behavior provides a foretaste of the direction courtship will take once it gets under way (46–54):

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ Α': οὗτος καταγνοὺς τοῦ γέροντος τοὺς τρόπους,
ὁ βυρσοπαφλαγών, ὑποπεσὼν τὸν δεσπότην
ἤκαλλ', ἐθώπευ', ἐκολάκευ', ἐξηπάτα
κοσκυλματίοις ἄκροισι, τοιαυτὶ λέγων·
"ὦ Δῆμε, λοῦσαι πρῶτον ἐκδικάσας μίαν,
ἐνθοῦ, ῥόφησον, ἔντραγ', ἔχε τριώβολον.
βούλει παραθῶ σοι δόρπον;" εἶτ' ἀναρπάσας
ὅτι ἄν τις ἡμῶν σκευάσῃ τῷ δεσπότη
Παφλαγὼν κεχάριται τοῦτο.

SLAVE 1: Well, this Paphlagon tanner-fellow, once he'd sized up the old man, fell at our master's feet and began to wheedle and cajole and flatter and

³⁶ Landfester 11, 59 notes thematic resonances (viz., the "Souveränitätsproblem") of *erômenos*-Demos' passivity; Henderson 1991: 66–70 discusses details of active-passive role-playing in the courtship.

³⁷ On pederastic asymmetry and its problematics I mostly side with Dover 1989: 103–9, Foucault 215–25, Halperin 88–112. For useful critiques of an unnuanced approach readers should consult Cohen, Davidson, Thornton.

gull him with scraps of leather. And he'd say things like, "Demos, let's keep your jury service to one trial, then a bath. Then, a little something to eat, devour, munch. Don't forget your jury pay! Would you like me to serve you dinner?" Paphlagon's next move is to filch whatever one of us is cooking, and present it, compliments of himself, to the master.

No single term quite does justice to the constellation of behaviors that the speaker attributes to Paphlagon. Our sources do suggest, though, that just such groveling, gratifying, and gulling converge in the figure of the *kolax*, whose *kolakeia* would seem to supply the model for persuasive strategies to which one or another "flattery" label is affixed at various points in Aristophanes' play.³⁸ So, for instance, when the Sausage-Seller offers Demos a pillow to cushion the latter's heroic *derrière* (784–85 "No rump that saw action at Salamis should have to feel sore"), Paphlagon cannot help but marvel at Demos' vulnerability to trifling "cajoleries" (788 *θωπευμάτια*, a flattery term).³⁹ "That's what I call a truly noble demonstration of democratic devotion!" gushes a grateful Demos (787 *ἀληθῶς γενναῖον καὶ φιλόδημον*), as if to make sure no one misses the political subtext to *kolakeia* in the play, or the connection with yet another blame-motif prominent in the orators (D. 8.34):

It is, in fact, through political speeches of an excessively gratifying sort (*νῦν δὲ δημαγωγοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ χαριζόμενοι καθ' ὑπερβολήν*) that they put you in a frame of mind to give yourself airs at assembly meetings, and to feel flattered hearing all that pleasing talk (*ὥστ' ἐν μὲν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τρυφᾶν καὶ κολακεύεσθαι πάντα πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀκούοντας*).

To the extent that Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller flatter and cajole within a political framework, they evoke what Demosthenes labels *pros charin dēmēgorein*, "sweet-talking the people" (3.3), and, in the passage just quoted, outright *kolakeia*.⁴⁰ This image of the politician-as-*kolax* presents, we note, much the same jaundiced view of an opponent's *captatio benevolentiae* that

³⁸ For *kolakeia* generally see Ribbeck. For surveys of *kolakeia* (*thōpeia*, etc.) evocations in the play see Brock 18–21, Dover 1972: 91–92, Landfester 57–59. Landfester notes, though he does not fully explore, the connection to pederastic courtship.

³⁹ Cf. Ar. Eq. 216 (*ὑπογλυκαίνων ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς*, "tasty-tidbit sweet-talking"), 776 (*χαριόμην*), 890 (*θωπεΐαις*), 1031 (*σαίνων*, "wagging the tail," "fawning"), 1116 (*θωπευόμενος*). For the offer of a cushion as *kolakeia* cf. Thphr. Char. 2.11; Aeschin. 3.76–77. For fussy attention to grey hairs *et sim.* cf. Ar. Eq. 908 with Ar. fr. 689 K-A; Thphr. Char. 2.3 *et passim*.

⁴⁰ Cf. E. Hec. 254–57, Supp. 412–16, fr. 1029 Nauck (*θωπεΐας ὄχλου*); Ar. Ach. 370–74, 633–58; Th. 3.42.6, 7.8.2; Isoc. 15.133; D. 3.24, 4.51, Prooem. 28.1; Aeschin. 3.127, 226, 234; Arist. Pol. 1292a4–38; Plu. Per. 11.4. See also Konstan 1997: 102–3 with notes.

we get in the demophilia topos, though with added emphasis on the *dêmos* and its vulnerabilities.⁴¹

One cannot easily miss the political resonances of *kolakeia* in *Knights*, but what, if anything, does it mean that Demos' lovers are also his *kolakeuontes*? Paphlagon, so he tells us, can humiliate the *dêmos* at will, knows the kind of crumbs it likes to feed on, and, to top it all off, can make it "expand and contract on cue" (713–20; see section 2). Turning to Euripides' *Suppliants*, a play also dated to the 420s, we note how the Theban Herald implies Athens to be a place where politicians, in quest of personal gain, lead by "puffing up" (ἐκχαυνῶν) the citizens with speeches (412–13) and by providing them with momentary gratification (414 τὸ δ' αὐτίχ' ἡδὺς καὶ διδοὺς πολλὴν χάριν), which is to say, through means recognizable as *kolakeia*.⁴² Comparing that to *Knights*, we see how Paphlagon's Demos-manipulation exploits puffery and deflation—that is, flattery and censure—along with outright gratification. Remembering the Sausage-Seller's caustic rejoinder to Paphlagon's boast (721 "even my ass-hole knows that trick"), it becomes evident that both here and elsewhere in the play, as indeed elsewhere in Aristophanes' *oeuvre*, "flattery" (κολακεύειν, θωπεύειν, etc.) can serve as the medium for a covertly aggressive form of seduction hazardous to a beloved's autonomy and honorable standing.⁴³

Hence a contradiction: flatterers (κόλακες, θῶπες, etc.) as a class were debased figures in classical Athenian culture (ranked with *thêtes* and slaves: Arist. *EN* 1125a1–2; cf. *Rh.* 1383b12–13, 32–35). The relationship of flatterer to victim of flattery was, not unlike that of pederastic lover to his beloved, a relationship of unequals, though with status values reversed. That is, the flatterer, the *active* participant in the arrangement, was viewed as inferior in status to the passive recipient, the target of flattery (ὁ κολακευόμενος).⁴⁴ That contrasts with pederasty, where, as was noted earlier, the sexually inactive *erômenos* was conventionally understood to be subordinate to the active *erastês*.

⁴¹ The flattery and demophilia *topoi* merge in Isoc. 8.121; D. 3.24–26; cf. D. 23.179 (κολακεύων καὶ φανακίζων ὕμῳς) in connection with the false-*philia* theme (see section 1 above and n. 20).

⁴² See Yunis 45, "This passage contains many of the standard charges against the demagogue," etc. Cf. parallels listed above, n. 40, though it should be pointed out that the Herald delivers a blanket attack on democracy, not on democracy gone bad.

⁴³ Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 142–46, where pro-Athenian *philia*, taken to the extreme, amounts to *erôs* to "bugger" Athens, and 634–38, where flattered Athenians sit up on the "tips of their little behinds"; see Hubbard 51, Olson 117 *ad* 143–44.

⁴⁴ Under the mature democracy, treating fellow citizens deferentially could be viewed as *doubleia* or *kolakeia* out of step with democracy: Konstan 1996a: 10–11; see also next note.

But this discrepancy is complicated by a less obvious complementarity. While flattery, at least as the ancient Greeks conceived of it, expressed status inequalities unfavorable to the flatterer, it could also be viewed as a highly efficacious, even empowering, form of *peithô*. For it empowered one to coax compliance out of one's betters, as when a girl in Menander successfully "flatters" gods whose aid she seeks (*Dysc.* 36–39 *κολακεύουσ'* ... *πέπεικεν*; cf. *A. Prom.* 937 *θῶπε*). Yet the empowering modalities of *kolakeia* can point to problem areas. Thus we encounter *kolakes* who "con" their way into inheritances (*D.* 44.63 *ταῖς κολακείαις* ... *ψυχαγωγούμενοι*; cf. *D.* 45.63–65; *Is.* 8.37; *Pl. Lg.* 923b). In Antisthenes, both *kolakes* and *hetairai* prey on victims whose deficiency in good sense they seek to exploit (*fr.* 89 Decleva Caizzi = *Stob.* 3.14.19; cf. *Eup.* *fr.* 172.7–8 K-A). In Antiphon Sophist, a similar deficiency induces the victims of flattery to eschew even the companionship of friends (*fr.* 65 D-K):

Many, though they possess friends (*ἔχοντες φίλους*), fail to acknowledge the fact (*οὐ γινώσκουσιν*); rather, they consort with fortune-hunting toadies (*θῶπας πλούτου*) and opportunistic flatterers (*τύχης κόλακας*).

Whether these last *kolakeuomenoi* suffer from a true cognitive failure or have simply shut their eyes to their friends, the passage just quoted illustrates a dichotomy that will prove thematically important in *Knights*: the contrast between the genuine *philos* and the *kolax*-poseur, a rather slippery sort of contrast since, by playing the *philos*, the *kolax* blurs the difference between himself and his opposite number.⁴⁵ Ordinarily, the *philia* aped by the *kolax* will have been of a deferential, inferior sort (cf. *Arist. EN* 1159a14–15). Yet Paphlagon incongruously boasts that Demos will find "no better friend than me" (860–61)—incongruously because this slave and *kolax* uses language (*φίλον βελτίον'*, "better friend") evoking a bond typified by familiarity, mutuality, and parity.⁴⁶

But *erôs* too can show an ambiguous side to itself. When felt by male subjects, it often comes across as desire not just to enjoy but to possess and dominate, as for instance in meanings the ancients imputed to the Oedipal dream,⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Konstan 1997: 101 maintains that "adulation ... was not normally articulated as an imitation of friendship" in democratic Athens (cf. Konstan 1996a: 10–11), though note the friends-versus-flatterers theme in Antiphon Soph. *fr.* 65 Diels-Kranz (henceforth D-K); *E.* *fr.* 362.18–20 Nauck; *Arist. EN* 1159a14–15; *Rh.* 1371a23–24; *X. Mem.* 2.8–9, a "friendship" vulnerable to interpretation as *kolakeia* (see Millett 28–29, 33, Osborne 96–98, Scholtz 1996: 82–83).

⁴⁶ See Konstan 1996b, Konstan 1997: 52–92. *φίλος* in *Eq.* 861 = noun "friend"; note that Aristophanes has *φίλον βελτίον'*, not *φίλτερον*. Cf. the "good friend" (*φίλος ἀγαθός*) in *X. Mem.* 2.4–6; see section 1 above for *Lys.* 13.

⁴⁷ Hippias (*Hdt.* 6.107.1–2) and Caesar (*Plut. Caes.* 32.9; *Suet. Jul.* 7.2) are recorded as having dreamt the Oedipal dream under circumstances of anticipated conquest; cf.

or in the use of *erôs*-vocabulary to express power-lust and the like.⁴⁸ Yet *erôs* masters those in its grip; as Socrates explains, the supposed freedom of tyrants is actually a form of slavery, for the tyrant is himself tyrannized by *erôs* (Pl. *R.* 572e–73b). But all lovers need to beware of love's power. Warns Socrates, to kiss a pretty face is to let oneself be instantly enslaved (X. *Mem.* 1.3.11).⁴⁹

Though *kolakeia* and pederastic courtship are not regularly paired in our sources, paired they are, and often enough to suggest a pattern. In Plato's *Symposium*, the behavior of lovers can smack of *douleia* and *kolakeia* (183a–b, cf. 184c). In the Lysianic *Eroticus*, male lovers, like *kolakes* and *hetairai*, offer a less-than-beneficial variety of companionship (Pl. *Phdr.* 240a–b). Plutarch characterizes the mass of Alcibiades' lovers (not Socrates) as *kolakes* whom the youth despised, and who afforded him no genuine benefit. Yet in so characterizing them, the biographer has in mind no aberrant or anomalous *erôs* but rather the instabilities and contradictions that *erôs* for an Alcibiades could summon forth (*Alc.* 4.1, 6.1; see Wohl 124–70). Hence the *kolax-erastês* both is and is not a contradiction. By stooping as low as he does, he disturbs the asymmetry ordinarily associated with pederasty. Yet the slavish potential within *erôs* can at times express itself as unseemly *kolakeia*.

And so it does in the person of Paphlagon, who, as Demos' slave, lover, and *kolax*, manifests a paradoxical subservience latent within the *paiderastês* even as he flouts status disparities fundamental not just to pederasty but to the very structure of Athenian society.⁵⁰ Add to that hinted aspersions against his sexual conduct,⁵¹ and this allegorized leader of the democracy begins to mirror the very “buggers” (κινουμένους) whom he, as the people's “watchdog” (1017–24), hounds out of political life (876–80).⁵² Many (not all) of the same attributes appear in the Sausage-Seller. However benign his ultimate aims (he

Artem. 1.79 and see Holt, Winkler 17–44. For dominance and the male sexual role see Cohen 186–87, Dover 1989: 103–9.

⁴⁸ Archil. 19.3 West; Hdt. 1.96.2, 3.53.4; Isoc. 8.65, 113; see McGlew 183–212, Rothwell 37 and nn. 67–68.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Il.* 14.315–16; Archil. 23.19–21 West; Pl. *Smp.* 183a; *Grg.* 481d–82a; X. *Smp.* 4.14. Aeschin. 1.42 (enslavement to lusts as undignified); see further Foucault 78–82.

⁵⁰ Athenian law forbade slaves to “love” (ἐρᾶν) free boys or to “follow after them,” a role reserved for free males (Aeschin. 1.138–39). See also Wohl 226 on Plut. *Sol.* 1.6.

⁵¹ Cf. *Eq.* 75–79 (elaborate punning on *euruprôktia* and political corruption), 377–81 (anus-scrutiny turned against Paphlagon), 765 (Paphlagon is βέλτιστος after Lysicles and two prostitutes); *Ach.* 663–64 (Cleon as δειλὸς καὶ λακαταπύγων). See Wohl 90.

⁵² Ex-*pornoi* were forbidden to address the assembly or play other public roles; for the applicable laws, procedures, and ideology see Dover 1989: 19–39, 102–4, Halperin 88–104, Winkler 54–64.

will emerge as Demos' savior), the idea that he, a sexually compromised street-vendor,⁵³ would pursue pederastic politics with a view to becoming a "big man" (178 ἀνὴρ μέγιστος) riding roughshod over Athens and much else (157–78), brings him uncomfortably close to his rival. Indeed it presents us with a grotesquely exaggerated version of the demophile's reckless egocentricity (D. *Prooem.* 53.3 "Though they say they love you, it is not you they love but themselves"; see section 1). To gain power over Demos, *both* lovers paradoxically stoop to *thôpeumata*, the tricks of the flatterer, thereby calling their professed *philia* for Demos into question. Yet in so doing, they both seem unaware of the even more paradoxical assistance provided by the object of their attentions.

4. STASIS

If nothing else, Aristophanes' play leaves a vivid impression of Demos' weakness for the enticements offered by Paphlagon and (for the purpose of ousting Paphlagon) by the Sausage-Seller as well. Thus we hear of a Demos who can be won over by the mere gift of a cushion (784–89), a "slack-jawed" Demos abjectly dependent on jury pay (804 κεχήνη; cf. 1263 τῇ κεχηναίων πόλει), a naïve Demos, for whom the Sausage-Seller's exposé of past idiocies is pure revelation (1337–57)—a Demos, in short, defenseless against lies and trickery of all sorts (cf. 48, 396, 713, 801–4, 1067–72, 1357).

What, then, to make of the following lines, in which an oddly savvy Demos admits a kind of complicity in the questionable practices of his lovers (1111–30)?

CHORUS: O Demos, you possess a fair empire, for everyone fears you like a big-shot tyrant. But you're easy to trick, and you love flattery and being duped, always gazing in a slack-jawed stupor at whoever is giving a speech. And that brain you've got there, it's just not there!

DEMOS: But it's you with no wits under those fair locks of yours, if you think I'm witless. No, I *allow* myself to be gulled; I *like* bawling for my daily chow. I *want* to maintain a thievish political leader. So I raise him up, and when he's had his fill, I strike him down.

At a point just before the final *agôn*, with Demos' lovers momentarily offstage, the chorus notes the baffling juxtaposition of Demos' king-like qualities with his idiotic vulnerability to flattering speeches. Demos takes issue with very

⁵³ Sausage-Seller as sexually compromised: *Eq.* 417–26 (hiding stolen meat between one's buttocks implies *kinaidia*, which in turn implies a future in politics), 721, 1242. Note that the Sausage-Seller's political disqualifications (see note above) become ironic qualifications. See further Henderson 1991: 66–70, Wohl 81–86.

little of it, countering only that his imbecility is merely a pose, one that he assumes willingly. So long as a given leader responds satisfactorily to his infantile cries (βρόλλων) for handouts, he will fatten the politician as if for the sacrifice (1127–40)—that is, allow him to steal (1127, 1149) from state coffers until the inevitable corruption trial (1150). Thus Demos tolerates bad behavior from his leaders in a way that, for its cynically self-interested willingness to accommodate (up to a point) those who care little for his well-being, exhibits patterns of prostitution.⁵⁴ Ever ready to gratify the thievish lusts of his flatterer-lovers so long as *he* stands to benefit, Demos has long since, and with eyes wide open, embraced a *modus operandi* that he has more than once been warned against, and in suggestively sexual terms.⁵⁵ But, as Landfester points out (72–73), Demos shows complicity in behaviors— Theft of public funds, deception of the *dêmos*—treated under Athenian law as offenses of the highest order. Thus citizen Demos pursues self-interest at the expense of Demos-the *dêmos* personified. Whatever his gains, they inevitably translate as loss.

At this point we begin to notice a strange symmetry of mutual deception, manipulation, and exploitation between Demos and his lovers—a travesty, in other words, of reciprocities whereby leaders and led in the democratic polity “struck and maintained a viable social contract in part through the discursive operations of public oratory.”⁵⁶ But one term of that contract was non-negotiable. Under a system where, as David Konstan puts it (1996a: 11), “the sovereign δῆμος was the unique entity toward which a citizen was expected ... to show deference,” even the elite had to submit to what Josiah Ober (1989: 332) calls the “ideological hegemony of the masses.” Granted, Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller fall over each other being submissive. But their flattering attentions (even the Sausage-Seller’s) are all too assimilable to courtship aimed at subversion and subjugation, even a kind of buggery, and thus deviate from the protocols governing the system within which they operate.⁵⁷ Telling is the implied perversion of democratic checks and balances. Filtered through a sexual lens, the non-negotiable sovereignty of the *dêmos*

⁵⁴ For citizen-male *porneia* as self-compromise cf. Aeschin. 1.22, 29, 54–55; see references in n. 52 above, also Scholtz 1996. For the predatory *hetaira* stereotype cf. Hyp. 5.1–3 Jensen; Ar. *Ec.* 1161–62; Isoc. 8.103 (hegemony, courtesan-like, lures victims to destruction); Pl. *Phdr.* 240b; Anaxil. fr. 22 K-A; see Konstan 1993: 6–12.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Eq.* 719–21, 962–63; see section 2 above; also Wohl 89–90.

⁵⁶ Ober 1996: 91 describing Ober 1989; see also Ober 1994.

⁵⁷ Henderson 1991: 68 suggests that a pathic Sausage-Seller is “at one with the people,” whereas Paphlagon-Cleon is the aggressor-buggerer. But both suitors resort to nearly identical, highly questionable tactics.

becomes a male citizen's sexual autonomy set in phallic counterpoise to threats like those posed by would-be tyrants and oligarchs.⁵⁸ Yet when leaders from outside the ranks of the *kaloi k'agathoi* want to have a go at Demos, he surprisingly seems willing to negotiate in ways that efface distinctions between those threats and the resistance he offers.

For perspective, we can compare the picture of democracy in the "Old Oligarch," who similarly has the *dêmos* showing shrewdness, if not exactly wisdom, in its preference for "bad" men (in [X.] *Ath.* 1.1, πονηροί versus χρηστοί) as leaders useful to its interests.⁵⁹ But the situation in *Knights* is, if anything, more convoluted. Though the "Old Oligarch" mostly detests democracy, he grudgingly admires how well it meets its objectives, namely, unambiguous empowerment for the poorer, "worse," element (the *dêmos*), whom the system sets free to rule (1.8 ἐλεύθερος εἶναι καὶ ἄρχειν). He even allows that the *dêmos* exercises foresight at least insofar as it elects its generals and other unsalaried officials not from its own ranks but from the "elite" (1.3 δυνάτωτατοι). By contrast, Demos in *Knights* "plays" the system in ways (his tolerant passivity) strikingly ambiguous by any standard. Nor would the "Old Oligarch" award high marks for elevating characters like Paphlagon-Cleon (i.e., *worse* than Demos) to the generalship.

But more than that, the whole tenor of the play's satire cuts to the material heart of the late fifth-century democracy. Jury pay, the spreading around of imperial profits—rewards, in other words, deriving from policy aimed at benefiting the masses—these are, according to the "Old Oligarch," spoils to all appearances rightfully (δίκαιοι) accruing to the rank-and-file citizenry (οἱ πένητες καὶ ὁ δῆμος), the mainstay of Athens' imperial might (1.2). In a not dissimilar vein, Pericles expatiates on the many blessings Athens offers its citizen-fighters (Th. 2.38–41), blessings rendering the city a fit object of citizen *erôs* (2.43.1), a place, the orator means, far superior to enemy states such as Sparta.⁶⁰ In *Knights*, however, such advantages tend to come across either as handouts used by the leadership elite to scam a gullible Demos or else as handouts actively sought after by a corrupt Demos cynically scamming those who would scam him.⁶¹

⁵⁸ The "phallic" democracy at Athens: Halperin 88–112. Cf. the *dêmos* as *turannos-erastês*: McGlew 183–212.

⁵⁹ The pamphlet's connection to political currents: Rosenbloom 87–90, Brock 25–26, Forrest.

⁶⁰ For the utopian thrust of the Periclean Funeral Oration, and *epitaphios* generally, see Loraux.

⁶¹ E.g., jury pay (recently raised by Cleon): Ar. *Eq.* 51, 255. Various items: 1019, 1078–79, 1090–91, 1100–106, 1125–26, 1163–1220, 1350–54 (back-reference to *misthos*).

Perhaps not surprisingly, the disclosures of lines 1111–50 have proved singularly challenging to commentators, who often treat them as an antidote to criticism of Demos as foolish elsewhere in the play—an antidote that would seem not to sit very well with the miracle cure (the rejuvenation and re-education of decrepit, dim-witted Demos) still to come.⁶² While I would not deny certain inconsistencies in plot and characterization,⁶³ I would argue that inconsistency here enriches the texture of comic reversal. For it demands that we rethink the entire scheme of sexual-political debauchery, a scheme that, in light of these disclosures, suggests nothing so much as a kind of covertly waged internecine war—in a word, *stasis*.

I would first of all stress that *stasis*, civic discord, though the great nightmare of ancient Greek politics, could function as a comic topos. That is, *stasis* could, in a sense, be funny, or could at least be worked up comically in various ways.⁶⁴ As for the thematic importance of *stasis* in *Knights*, that has been demonstrated by Lowell Edmunds, who stresses a conflict between, on the one hand, disturbance (*tarakhê*, *polupragmosunê*), embodied by the “stormy” Paphlagon, and quietism (*hêsukhia*, *apragmosunê*), identified with the chorus of Knights and, finally, with Demos. But *stasis*, at least of the political variety, ultimately involves conflict *between persons*. We therefore should not gloss over the lyric interlude, revealing, as it does, mutuality of deception and aggression—leaders versus led. That may seem a somewhat eccentric arrangement of factions under democracy, where we would expect *stasis* to play itself out as strife pitting the wealthy few against the many and their champions. But Aristophanes has reconfigured the nature of the conflict, now one in which the interests of the many (Demos) and those of the few (the aristo-

⁶² Yunis 57–58. Landfester 72–73 argues that a Demos boasting complicity in serious political offenses parades his immorality without diminishing his foolishness. Reinders 192 proposes that the passage attacks the *dêmos* “ruthlessly” even as it seeks to inoculate itself against formal charges of slandering the *dêmos* (for which see n. 79 below). Brock takes the claims at face value as an intermediate ending helping Demos save face. According to Rosen, a Demos alert to his leaders’ misdeeds draws audience attention to “the way the demos ought to behave” (79–80). According to Hesk 289–99, the interlude foregrounds the ambiguities inherent in *dêmos*-power and in rhetoric and counter-rhetoric. Bibliographical discussion: Hesk 290 n. 119, Reinders 173–78.

⁶³ E.g., the Sausage-Seller as both vulgar demagogue and *kalos k’agathos* hero. See esp. Brock for the play’s ambiguities, to which Brock applies the solution of a double plot movement.

⁶⁴ Cratinus satirizes Pericles as a Zeus-like tyrant, son of Stasis and Time (Χρόνος). This “Zeus” takes Aspasia, daughter of “Rear-Entry” (Καταπυγιστήνη), as his “Hera” (fr. 258–59 K-A). Cf., e.g., Ar. *Th.* 788 (women chafe at being blamed for *stasis*, discord *et sim.*); V. 488–99 (subversion-tyranny paranoia; see MacDowell 180 *ad* 342–45).

cratic Knights) coalesce in banishing the likes of Paphlagon-Cleon.⁶⁵ Still, we are dealing here with no literally factionalized *polis* but rather with comic *reductio* that problematizes the give and take of democracy.

We can better appreciate the satiric force of Demos' disclosures by noting similarities between this *modus operandi* and category-slippage symptomatic of *stasis* in other sources. Thus the poet of the *Iliad* connects a collapse of legal restraints and social and familial *mores* to *erôs* for internecine war (9.63–64 ἄφρητῶρ ἄθήμεστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος ἰδὺς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόεντος “without clan, law, or hearth is he who loves dire war among his own people”).⁶⁶ Developing that idea further, Theognis (39–52 West) rails against the vulgar herd (κακοί) gaining the upper hand over their betters (ἀγαθοί), and doling out justice (δίκας) in favor of the unjust (ἀδίκοισι) for the sake of private gain and personal power (οἰκείων κερδέων εἵνεκα καὶ κράτεος). Hence *stasis* (στάσεις), murder, and despotism. Notes Veda Cobb-Stevens,⁶⁷ this litany of reversed expectations in Theognis looks forward to similar reversals in Thucydides' famous description of the mindset and discourse typifying *stasis* at Corcyra and elsewhere (Th. 3.82.4):

Speakers too altered as they saw fit the value associations words ordinarily brought to bear upon things (τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἄξιωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα). Thus reckless audacity was deemed the courage of a loyal adherent, while cautious hesitation was made out to be specious cowardice. Good sense became a screen for spinelessness, and the effort to see all sides to an issue, sheer laziness. To strike out rashly was to act like a man; to plan from a secure footing, a fine-sounding excuse for desertion.

And so on. Like many a Thucydidean sentence, the one at the start of the passage just quoted lends itself to no easy translation. Particularly difficult is the noun ἄξιωσις, often understood to refer in context to verbal meanings altered to serve factional interests (e.g., *LSJ* s.v IV). Reading on, though, we

⁶⁵ Edmunds 37–49. See Rosenbloom for an atmosphere of *stasis*—new-wealth elite (*ponèroi*) versus traditional aristocracy (*chrèstoi*)—pervading Athenian politics at this period (i.e., that leading up to the ostracism of Hyperbolus in 415). By reconfiguring radical democracy as *stasis* pitting leaders against led, Aristophanes in effect drives a wedge between the *dêmos* and its (vulgar) champions. Cf. Rosenbloom 88 on “comedy, which plots to sever the bond between *ponèroi* and *demos* and to restore the ancestral/moral order of *chrèstoi* to hegemony.”

⁶⁶ Cf. reversal and disintegration in Hes. *Op.* 182–86, for which West ad loc. adduces Near Eastern and other parallels.

⁶⁷ Cobb-Stevens 165–66 *et passim*; see also Edmunds 35–37, Konstan 1997: 49–50. For the pathology of *stasis* and similar matters see Gehrke 245–54, Kalimtzis, Price.

note the degree to which linguistic instability resides in the affective *impact* of words,⁶⁸ and in the attitude shifts reflected by altered labels for things (“You call it ‘good sense’? I call it ‘spinelessness’!”).⁶⁹ Judging from the historian’s examples, this “rhetoric of *stasis*,” as it has been called (Kalimtzis 11), opportunistically revalorized actions and attitudes by painting factional or personal interest in the colors of received ideals.⁷⁰

Put differently, the rhetoric of *stasis* was largely a matter of *spin* (see section 1 and n. 24). And spin, I would suggest, aptly describes what Demos and the chorus are up to when Demos justifies, and the chorus applauds, the *modus operandi* of the former. For Demos shows little shame when he strikes the pose of a passively mercenary *erômenos* (1162–63), indiscriminate in his choice of lovers (738–40), and a sucker for flattery and deceit (1115–20, cf. 1340–55). This pose the Knights praise as *puknotês*, a pun evoking Demos’ rootedness in the democratic traditions of the city (cf. 42 Δῆμος Πυκνίτης). Yet the noun denotes the cunning with which Demos outwits, exploits, and ultimately destroys leaders. Buttressed by cunning such as that, Demos’ sovereignty, though the very yardstick of political and juridical legitimacy at Athens, recalls what Thucydides (still on the topic of *stasis*) deplors as “intelligence recognized as superior because it prevails through treachery” (3.82.7)—a striking contrast with simplicity (τὸ εὐηθές), the better part of nobility according to Thucydides (3.83.1).⁷¹ As for the Knights, the aristocratic element, siding with Demos, they commend a course of action contradicting not just democratic values but those, too, of oligarchy, the constitution with which the wealthy were liable to be associated. For a Demos cleverly and aggressively arranging matters to keep himself on top, albeit through a show of submissiveness, replicates vulgar Paphlagon’s style of *polupragmosunê*, the impertinent political meddling anathema to *kaloi k’agathoi*, well-bred gentlemen like the Knights (225 ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί).

⁶⁸ I mostly agree with Price 41–42 on the meaning of ἀξίωσις in this passage, though its use here is less unparalleled than Price suggests. ἀξίωσις mostly has to do with “worthiness,” “merits,” and the like (see *LSJ* s.v.); at Th. 2.88.2, it means “conviction” or “belief” relative to the merits of a course of action—so too, more or less, in Th. 3.82.4.

⁶⁹ Dionysius glosses as τὰ τε εἰωθότα ὀνόματα ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασι λέγεσθαι μετατιθέντες ἄλλως ἡξίουσιν αὐτὰ καλεῖν, “changing the usual words for things to be called by, they [those embroiled in *stasis*] saw value in calling them differently” (Th. 29.4). I.e., things were renamed as factional or personal interests dictated.

⁷⁰ Cf. Price 39–67, 81–189. I use the term “revalorization” rather than “transvaluation,” Price’s term, to stress the affective dimension.

⁷¹ Following Hornblower 1.486 ad loc. on μετέχει.

So too the play's representations of demagoguery, from both a political and a pederastic viewpoint, involve no small element of revalorization. Thus policy favoring the *dēmos*—for instance, the *per diem* raise from two to three obols awarded jurors (doubtless encouraging a broader spectrum of Athenians to serve)—becomes vulgar *kolakeia*. Conversely, such an exemplar of vulgarity as the Sausage-Seller is hailed the city's destined savior (147–49), and vaunts himself a *kalos k'agathos* lover of Demos (733–35). Indeed a whole range of ideologically crucial polarities—free versus slave, dominant versus submissive, *philia* versus *kolakeia*, *kalon* (honorable) versus *aischron* (disgraceful)—becomes blurred as a consequence of the passive-aggressive contacts transacted within this *ménage à trois*.

But I would further suggest that in *Knights*, the whole image of politics as *erôs* connotes disruptions of a stasiastic cast. To begin with, the association of *erôs* with *stasis*, or with *stasis*-like disruption, was a commonplace. Homer, we have seen, speaks of *erôs* for internecine strife (*Il.* 9.63–64). In Sophocles' *Antigone*, the chorus reflects on the universal reach of Eros, the god who maddens the wits of mortals and immortals alike, drives the just to injustice, and has “stirred up this strife of kindred men” (τόδε νεῖκος ἀνδρῶν ἱξύναιμον ἔχεις ταραξάζας), which is to say, set father against son (781–94; cf. fr. 684 Radt, Thphr. fr. 107 Wimmer = Ath. 13.562e). Echoing Sophocles, but evoking more explicitly political associations, Aristophon describes Eros as having been “justly” and “reasonably voted out” (ἔστ' ἀπεψηφισμένος) of the company of the gods for “stirring them up” (ἐτάραττε) and “fomenting *stasis*” (ἐμβάλλων στάσεις) whenever among them. Stripped of his wings, Eros has been exiled to the human realm (fr. 11 K-A).⁷²

How, then, within that realm might politically inflected *erôs* prove “stasiastic”? In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, “desire (*epithumia*) for personal gain”—in a word, greed—can impel one to foment “hateful *stasis*” and behave disagreeably toward fellow citizens (359–60). In Thucydides, a pleonectic (*pleonexia*, “greed”) component to *erôs* proper emerges from the Mytilenian debate, specifically, from Diodotus' speech. There greed based on wealth, arrogance, and pride numbers among the incurable passions that, overmastering human beings, cause them to throw discretion to the wind (ἐξάγουσιν ἐς τοὺς κινδύνους)—a pattern with close affinities to the process, discussed in his next sentence, whereby *elpis* and *erôs*, hope and lust, drive people to seek out fortune's riches (τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τύχης) at any cost (Th. 3.45.4–5).⁷³

⁷² For ταραχή (ταράσσειν, etc.) and civic disturbance see Edmunds 7–8 and n. 13.

⁷³ Cf., e.g., Sol. 4, 13.7–13 West; E. *Supp.* 238–39 (the rich who, ever lusting for more πλείονων τ' ἐρῶσ' αἰεί, harm the polis); see Balot 38–39, 79–98, 156–59, 194.

Foucault can help clarify the relationship between *stasis* and the pleonectic dynamic within *erôs*. Though not focusing on politics *per se* but rather applying a political metaphor to the ethics of pleasure, Foucault argues that classical Greek thought viewed sexual lust as a need similar in many respects to other physical appetites (hunger, thirst), though different from them in the degree to which the pleasurable satisfaction of the need creates a desire for more. This inability to achieve satiety can lead to “rebellion and riotousness ... the ‘stasiastic’ potential of the sexual appetite,” and with that, ill health (49–50). Foucault uses the adjective “stasiastic” in a non-political, metaphorical, sense. But we can just as well apply his schema to politics, where *erôs*, the untrammelled, essentially pleonectic desires of citizens and leaders, causes the city to spiral into *stasis*, the political malaise *par excellence*. Thus Thucydides locates the causes of *stasis* in greed (*pleonexia*), ambition, and competitiveness guided by the desire for pleasure (3.82.8)—a recognizably erotic mix of motivations, and powerful enough to dissolve civic *philia*, the glue holding the city together and guarding it against *stasis*.⁷⁴

“Though they say they love you, it is not you they love but themselves” (D. *Prooem*. 53.3). In Aristophanes’ play, *erôs*—not feigned *erôs* for a decrepit old man but real, pleonectic *erôs* for power and wealth—is what drives Paphlagon and even the Sausage-Seller to court Demos in ways blurring the distinction between *philia* and its evil twin, *kolakeia*. But Paphlagon and others like him need to watch out, too. For Demos-*erômenos* revalorizes passive gullibility as a cunning guise to thwart attacks on his supremacy and hide his own ambitious lusts. This tango of desire, deception, and manipulation may have Demos and his lovers moving in sync, but its undertone of aggression sounds a dissonant note. A democracy in name, the reality on stage portrays something closer to a stealthily run rat race.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, just as the demophilia topos sought to destabilize an opponent’s patriotic self-representations, so Aristophanes’ image of the *erastês tou dêmou*, the “people’s lover,” discovers and amplifies within demophilia an erotic dynamic, “the ‘stasiastic’ potential of the sexual appetite.” Put differently, this vision of political eros, despite obvious affinities with Pericles’ famous direc-

⁷⁴ Cf. the prayer at A. *Eu*. 976–87 as antidote to *stasis* (χάρματα δ’ ἀντιδιδόειν ἰ κοινοφιλεῖ διανοίᾳ “May they return joy for joy in a spirit of common love” [tr. Smyth]); Arist. *Pol.* 1262b7–9, 1295b23–24; D. 18.246 (*rhêtôr*’s duty to promote civic *homonoia* and *philia*). See further Hutter, Kalimtzis, Konstan 1997: 69–70. For this passage and the themes of *stasis*, *pleonexia*, etc. see Balot 137–41, Price 6–67.

tive that Athenians “daily gaze upon the city’s power and become lovers (*erastai*) of it” (Th. 2.43.1), exposes a paradox at which the Periclean conceit can only hint. However much Pericles’ metaphor seeks to exploit connotationally divergent resonances (a lover’s generosity toward his beloved, a lover’s self-centered pursuit of a love-object), the work it performs needs to be understood in relation to the challenge faced by the orator, namely, to unite Athenians, and to inspire them to give up their lives for their beloved city. By contrast, erotic metaphor in *Knights* creates, rather than responds to, an atmosphere of uncertainty and crisis. For when the city’s leaders fix their gaze on the sovereign *dēmos* and become lovers of *it*, they become as much potential buggerers as benefactors. Troubling is Demos’ role. However proactive he is in his efforts to police corruption, he plays the system by feigning ignorance and vulnerability, while his self-centeredness combined with his dual character—citizen Demos, the *dēmos* personified—underscores the fragility of the ties binding individual to group (cf. Th. 3.82.8, 83.2, 84.3).

That leaves us with a striking redefinition of “normal” and “deviant” democracy. The norm, reinstated for the play’s finale (1316–408), presents us with a transformed Demos, boiled down, rejuvenated, and beautified through the Sausage-Seller’s magic. Decked out in all the finery befitting the “monarch of Greece and of this land” (1330), Demos has returned to a nearly mythic past when the citizenry, like the aristocrats they supposedly were, still wore golden cicadas in their hair (cf. *Eq.* 1331 with Th. 1.6.3).⁷⁵ Deviant is the here-and-now of jury pay, *misthos* (wages) for the poor, and all the rest—the *erga* of the radical democracy, which are in a sense reduced to *logos*, tricks by which demerastic leaders, for better or worse, court a willing *dēmos*. Thus Aristophanes targets not just Paphlagon-Cleon but the whole rhetorical basis of the democratic process. Yet he does not simply administer an antidote to demophilic rhetoric. Attacking the substance—the *erga*—conveyed by advice cloaked in such seductive *logos*, the playwright envisions a regime under which the operations of the radical democracy will be circumscribed and its belligerent imperialism curtailed (cf. 1300–15).

As for the Sausage-Seller, he has repeatedly distinguished himself in the role of plain-speaking demophilia-debunker (cf. 1340–44 with, e.g., 792–96), forcing his rival again and again to up the demophilic ante. Demos has, in fact, long since acknowledged the Sausage-Seller as true-blue Demos-lover (786–87), and addresses his benefactor now as “dearest of men” (1335)—no

⁷⁵ The golden cicada is an aristocratic fashion from pre-Persian War days (cf. Th. 1.6.3). Other items associated with archaic luxury: the purple robe foreseen for Demos (967) and Demos’ green *batrachis* (1406). See Sommerstein 1981: 195 *ad* 967, 220 *ad* 1406.

hypocrite, but the real McCoy. But rather than accept the compliment graciously, the Sausage-Seller, if anything, goes the demophile one better: "You mean me? My dear fellow, you've no idea what you were like before, or what you did. Else you'd think me a god!" (1336–38)—a comic bit of self-aggrandizement, but ironic as lead-in to the Sausage-Seller's lecture on demophilic speechifying.⁷⁶ Yet the Sausage-Seller's miracles amount to little more than a beauty treatment, and have already been adumbrated for what they really are: *kolakeia* (rejuvenating grey-hair plucking at 908; see n. 39 above). There are, however, more surprises in store. As we have seen, the Sausage-Seller, unlike the orators, adds an erotic layer to his version of the demophilia topos (1340–44 "Whenever an assembly speaker would say, 'O Demos, I am your *erastês*, ...'"). But further on into his lecture, the Sausage-Seller spins the topos in a most unusual direction. In the orators, the topos sets before listeners the humiliating prospect of allowing themselves to be taken in by unscrupulous speakers, or else chides them for having done so. It shames them, in other words, into thinking for themselves. By contrast, the Sausage-Seller absolves Demos from all blame: too senile to resist his leaders' blandishments, Demos failed to notice the subtly phallic threat they posed (1356–57).

But feeble-minded Demos boiled down appears no better off intellectually than before. Whatever the merits of his new policies, impulsive decision-making has replaced deliberation and reflection. Indeed Demos will banish the young from the agora, the school for aspiring orators, and will make politicians give up legislating for hunting (1357–83). Thus *logos*, elsewhere praised as the essence of Athenian democracy (Th. 2.40.2–3; Lys. 2.18–19), will have no place at all under the new order. This Athens of the ancestors has, with good reason, been likened both to oligarchy and to Eastern despotism as the Greeks imagined it.⁷⁷ In the end, though, the play's vision of the "noble simplicity" (Th. 3.83.1) has elided the *polis* altogether. Indeed it returns, or *seems* to return, Demos to a bygone Golden Age. For we enter a world where human beings (Demos), perpetually young (cf. Hes. *Op.* 113–15) and untroubled by politics (*Eq.* 1373–83), enjoy good things without toil (a magic makeover, catamite "chairs," peace-treaty concubines; cf. Hes. *Op.* 116–18) through the good offices of the gods (the Sausage-Seller), with whom the mortal race,

⁷⁶ Anticipated by "epiphanies" (149 σωτήρ ... φανείς; cf. 458, 836) and by the Sausage-Seller's "providential" arrival (147 κατὰ θεῖον); see Landfester 36–37, 92–94, though I regard "apotheosis" here not as resolving the earlier paradox (so Landfester) but as equivocal and ironic.

⁷⁷ Oligarchy: Ludwig 61–62. "Costume monarchy" with overtones of eastern despotism-tyranny: Wohl 110–14.

restored to pristine innocence, may again consort (cf. Hes. fr. 1.6–7 Merkelbach-West; *Th.* 535–36 with West's note).⁷⁸ This arresting vision of bygone Athens could well have aroused powerful yearnings in a war-weary audience, but its *peithô* deviously taps into an atavistic urge for infancy.

Though one might wonder how well so unflattering a treatment of the democratic *status quo* would have played to the Athenian *dêmos*, it could not have played *too* badly. *Knights* did, after all, win, and we should not second-guess the public's tolerance for being satirized, especially amid the carnivalesque revelry of the Dionysian festival.⁷⁹ As for Cleon, he, unlike his stage-counterpart, survived the play's success, career intact. But Aristophanes, in travesty-ing as extravagantly as he does the very topos underlying much of the comic business, undercuts, perhaps with a knowing wink, perhaps not, his own satire: taking the rhetoric of spin and anti-spin to its (il)logical extreme, the play bites its own tail. But what about the apparent inconsistency in Aristophanes' characterization of Demos, whose brief moment of candor (lyric dialogue 1111–50; see above) jars with his transformation from superannuated naïf to the rejuvenated and supposedly reformed Demos of the finale? On the one hand, we can take the transformation at face value, and assume that cunning, crafty Demos has ceased to figure within the dramatic reality. Alternatively, we can assume that Demos continues to “play the babe” to the very end, thus making a mockery of the Sausage-Seller's exertions in his behalf. Neither alternative completely satisfies. Yet a comic *dénouement* featuring an ironically *equivocal* return to the “noble simplicity” would hardly be at odds with the bizarre twists taken by flattery politics in the play. Demos remains a creature of his appetites (1384–92), and let us not forget how important those appetites have been in luring him to his senses. Whether a reformed Demos has finally shed his much vaunted cunning, or whether cunning Demos, in taking up with a new favorite, simply begins the cycle anew—none of that is clear.

⁷⁸ The schema in *Eq.* reprises elements of Cratinus' *Ploutoi* (fr. 171–79 K-A), which seems to have decried a present made corrupt by a recently deposed tyrant Zeus (read Pericles), and to have sought to revive an idealized, aristocratic Golden Age. See K-A ad loc., Ameling 400–402, Schwartze 43–54.

⁷⁹ Satirizing the *dêmos* could be a tricky affair. The “Old Oligarch” says it was forbidden by the Athenian *dêmos* ([X.] *Ath.* 2.18); Aristophanes may have run afoul of Cleon in this regard (references in n. 1 above). *Knights* was, however, produced at the Lenaea, to which foreigners were not admitted (cf. *Ach.* 502–4). For similar comic abuse cf. *Nub.* 1089–106, characterizing the audience, and Athenians generally, as *euruprôktoi*; also *Ra.* 274–76 and *Ec.* 439–40. Henderson 1993: 308 affirms that comedy avoids attacking the rightness of popular sovereignty itself (cf. Henderson 1998a: 263). See further Atkinson, Brock 26–27 and n. 36, Edwards, Riu 1995, Sommerstein 1986, Wilson 149.

Nor can we know for sure how things will turn out for this new favorite once the honeymoon is over.⁸⁰

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