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Costume's comic and intertextual potential: the case of Philocleon's cloak
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This chapter argues that Philocleon's enforced costume change (*Wasps* 1122-73) has rich potential as an *exemplum* through which to explore comic costume's production of humour and its contribution to theatrical discourse.² The 'cloak scene', it is argued, forms an integral part of the ongoing competition between the comic and tragic genre in *Wasps*.³ Despite the importance of this pivotal scene in the comedy, it has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves, with the emergence of studies by Gwendolyn Compton-Engle, Mario Telò, and Alexa Piqueux.⁴ Compton-Engle asserts the dressing scene's importance as an expression of the play's themes, Telò examines its bearing on Aristophanes' self-definition (especially in relation to the defeat of *Clouds* and his comic rivals), and Piqueux explores its perspective on social mobility. This chapter makes a further contribution to these discussions through fresh observations about the humour generated from the costume and reflection on the cloak's 'intertextual' relationship with Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and *Knights*.⁵ In broader terms, if it is accepted that *Wasps* engages with tragedy's

¹I am grateful to Natalia Tsoumpra, Alexa Piqueux, Anne Alwis, Alan Sommerstein, and Lucy Jackson for advice on aspects of this chapter, as well as to those who offered helpful comments at the conference (especially Edith Hall, Chris Carey, and Chris Pelling). Any errors remain my own.

² This is not all that the costume change has to offer: the humour generated from the new shoes and their significance in the scene, as well as the social implications of the new cloak are also important aspects to consider. Others, however, have written eloquently on these elements, see Compton-Engle (2015) 67-74 and Piqueux (2016).

³ Wright (2013), esp. 206, reads *Wasps* as a series of interactions between comedy and tragedy. The growing recognition of the interpretative efficacy of this approach to *Wasps* is evidenced by the analysis of Telò (2016) and Farmer (2016) 117-54. Sommerstein (2016) expresses reservations about Telò's study, but I find many of its observations valuable. Jedrkiewicz (2006) and Auger (2008) are foundational for the approach taken by Wright (2013).

⁴ Compton-Engle (2015) 67-74; Telò (2016) 29-55; and Piqueux (2016).

⁵ I use 'intertextuality' in its broadest sense, on which see Fowler (1997) 26, so that it includes the idea of engaging with the previous performance (i.e. making an interperformative allusion).

manipulation of costume as well as Aristophanes' own previous treatment of it, then this discussion highlights *Wasps*' importance as evidence for the *on-going* significance of costume in Aristophanes' dialectic with tragedy and in his discourse on theatre in general.

The cloak scene occurs after Philocleon's defeat at court and marks the beginning of Bdelycleon's attempt to impose a new lifestyle on his father. The comic consequences of his misguided undertaking are prefigured through the interaction with the costume, signaling both the hilarity and more serious generic points in store. The interaction unfolds across *Wasps* 1122-73 during which Philocleon's threadbare cloak (*tribōn*) is exchanged for a luxury 'Persian' one (*kaunakēs*). The significance of the costume change is established through the verbal emphasis on the new cloak that accompanies its physical handling on stage, 1131-56:⁶

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ
τί οὖν κελεύεις δρᾶν με;

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ
τὸν τρίβων' ἄφες,
τηνδὶ δὲ χλαῖναν ἀναβαλοῦ τριβωνικῶς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ
ἔπειτα παῖδας χρὴ φυτεύειν καὶ τρέφειν,
ὄθ' οὐτοσί με νῦν ἀποπνίξαι βούλεται;

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ
1135 ἔχ', ἀναβαλοῦ τηνδὶ λαβῶν, καὶ μὴ λάλει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ
τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν τί ἐστί, πρὸς πάντων θεῶν;

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ
οἱ μὲν καλοῦσι Περσίδ', οἱ δὲ καυνάκην.

⁶ Text and translation Henderson (1998).

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

ἐγὼ δὲ σισύραν φόμην Θυμαιτίδα.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

κοῦ θαῦμά γ'· ἐς Σάρδεις γὰρ οὐκ ἐλήλυθας.
ἔγνωσ γὰρ ἄν· νῦν δ' οὐχὶ γιγνώσκεις.

ΦΙΛΚΛΕΩΝ

1140 ἐγὼ
μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ τοίνυν, ἀτὰρ δοκεῖ γέ μοι
εἰκέναι μάλιστα Μορύχου σάγματι.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἐν Ἐκβατάνοισι ταῦθ' ὑφαίνεται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

ἐν Ἐκβατάνοισι γίγνεται κρόκης χόλιξ;

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

1145 πόθεν, ὦγάθ'; ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τοῖσι βαρβάροις
ὑφαίνεται πολλαῖς δαπάναις. αὕτη γέ τοι
ἐρίων τάλαντον καταπέπωκε ραδίως.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

οὔκουν ἐριώλην δῆτ' ἐχρῆν αὐτὴν καλεῖν
δικαιότερόν γ' ἢ καυνάκη;

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

ἔχ', ὦγαθέ,
καὶ στήθ' ἀναμπισχόμενος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

1150 οἴμοι δεῖλαιος,
ὡς θερμὸν ἢ μιὰρά τί μου κατήρυγεν.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

οὐκ ἀναβαλεῖ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ'.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

ἀλλ', ὦγαθέ—

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ

εἴπερ γ' ἀνάγκη, κρίβανόν μ' ἀμπίσχετε.

ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ

φέρ', ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σε περιβάλω. σὺ δ' οὖν ἴθι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ
παράθου γε μέντοι καὶ κρεάγραν.

1155 ΒΔΕΛΥΚΛΕΩΝ
τιῆ τί δή;

ΦΙΛΟΚΛΕΩΝ
ἴν' ἐξέλης με πρὶν διερρυηκέναί.

Lovecleon
So, what do you want me to do?

Loathecleon
Take off this ratty jacket and nattily put on that cloak.

Lovecleon
Why should we bear and rear children anyway, when now this one wants to smother me?

Loathecleon
Here, take this and put it on, and stop babbling.

Lovecleon
What the hell is this, for heaven's sake?

Loathecleon
Some call it a Persian cloak, others a tasseled astrakhan.

Lovecleon
I thought it was an overcoat from Thymaetidae.

Loathecleon
No wonder; you've never been to Sardis. Otherwise you'd have recognized it; as it is, you don't.

Lovecleon
I admit I certainly don't. But it looks to me exactly like Morychus' knapsack.

Loathecleon
No it doesn't; these are woven in Ecbatana.

Lovecleon
In Ecbatana they make woollen sausages?

Loathecleon
Where do you get that notion, good sir? No, the natives weave these, at great expense. You know, this one easily sucked down a talent's worth of wool.

Lovecleon
Then instead of an astrakhan, wouldn't it be better to call it a woolpool?

Loathecleon

Take it, good sir. And stand still while getting a change of clothes.

Lovecleon

Good grief, what a hot belch the rotten thing blew at me!

Loathecleon

Please put it on.

Lovecleon

I absolutely refuse.

Loathecleon

But good sir—

Lovecleon

If this is compulsory, dress me in an oven instead.

Loathecleon

Very well, I'll dress you myself. (to Slave) You may go.

Lovecleon

But at least put a meathook nearby.

Loathecleon

Why is that?

Lovecleon

So you can pull me out before I fall apart.

The humour generated from the costume in this interaction arises from a combination of the visual and verbal, operating within the frameworks of semiotics and proxemics.⁷ Aristophanes' selection of the *kaunakēs* (luxury cloak) as the item of clothing to be imposed on Philocleon seems motivated by more than its ability to stand as a symbol of the elite. The *kaunakēs* was, as the iconographic evidence along with the scene itself suggests, a thickly woven, distinctively foreign, garment with tufts of wool or woollen tassels hanging in horizontal rows.⁸ While the monuments

⁷ I use the term proxemics following Revermann (2006a).

⁸ *kaunakēs* description based on Stone (1981) 168, which itself depends on MacDowell (1971) notes on 1137 and 1144. On the iconographic record see Heuzey

discussed in Léon Heuzey's classic article on the *kaunakēs*' fabric do not necessarily provide an exact representation of the garment brought onto the Aristophanic stage, they are certainly helpful in enabling us to envisage the arrangement of this extraordinary garment's tassels. Figure 1 offers a representative example of such a monument.



Figure 1: Chaldeo-Babylonian statuette reproduced in Heuzey's article, *Revue Archéologique* 9 (1887), Plate IX.

The *kaunakēs* seems to have looked like a cross between a flapper dress and an Italian Bergamasco dog. Its comic potential must have proved irresistible to a playwright

(1887). Bdelycleon's use of the term for a standard Greek cloak (*chlaina*, 1132) in the dialogue should not be taken as a literal indication of the garment on stage. The comedy of the scene depends on this piece of costume looking distinctively foreign (i.e. having the appearance of a *kaunakēs*) as Miller (1997) 154 argues. Furthermore, the case has been made that the use of the *kaunakēs* enables an exploration of political identity in the scene see Compton-Engle (2015) 70-71. The reference to the *chlaina* can be understood as an attempt by Bdelycleon to normalize the cloak in his quest to persuade his father to don it (after that fails, however, he takes a different approach by playing up its exoticness).

skilled in slapstick. In performance, the garment's outlandish appearance offers a primary source of laughter before physical and verbal manipulation exploits it further. Philocleon's pointed query (1136) 'What the hell is this, for heaven's sake?' highlights its peculiarity as the protagonist claims that it lies beyond categorization. The humorous conundrum of an unusual costume challenging categorization appears in later comedies, such as Agathon's 'get-up' in *Thesmophoriazusae* (143) and Dionysus' in *Frogs* (46-8). Aristophanes was already experimenting with this concept in *Wasps*.⁹

The fabric of the *kaunakēs* must have given this voluminous garment considerable bulk that also presumably added to the slapstick humour of the interaction. The *kaunakēs*' mass is suggested by Philocleon's quip about Morychus (1142) and the emphasis on how much wool it has taken to make it (1145-49).¹⁰ If the cloak was also white (as Bdelycleon's comparison of it to garlic, 1172, implies), then this would add to the perceived size of the garment. Before it is finally put on Philocleon (1154), the cloak is subject to an emphatic gesture (as suggested by the deictic at 1132) and passed to and fro (implied by 1135 and 1149-50). The effect of this stage action would be equivalent, I suggest, to the handling of baggage. The status of baggage handling as a running joke in comedy (if we can take the opening exchange between Dionysus and Xanthias in *Frogs* at face value) points to its success in generating

⁹ The obvious difference is the later examples depend on the *combination* of garments creating consternation but I do not see this as overly problematic. On Agathon's costume see Duncan (2006) 25-57. On Dionysus' see Wyles (2007) 164.

¹⁰ Sommerstein's translation 'it seems to be most like a pot-warmer for Morychus' together with his note on this line, Sommerstein (1983) *ad loc.*, makes the point of the joke clearer (cf Henderson's translation quoted above); see also Piqueux (2016) 251.

laughter.¹¹ The iconographic evidence of the ‘Chiron vase’ which shows a fabric bundle featuring in a comedy (whatever kind of comic performance it represents) enables us to recognize that part of the comic potential of baggage was its bulk; Figure 2.¹² It can be inferred from the yoke shown secured to the bundle on the vase, that the proxemics of its manipulation added to the comedy.¹³ Through this model, it is possible to see how the bulk of the *kaunakēs* and the slapstick handling of its bundled mass could have generated humour in the scene. The piece of costume becomes in this sense a prop, handled as an object, before Philocleon is dressed in it (and it becomes part of a character’s clothing).¹⁴

¹¹ The humour of the opening exchange depends on there being at least some truth to the assertion.

¹² Apulian red-figure bell krater showing Chiron being pushed up the stairs, Attributed to the McDaniel Painter, 380-370 BC, British Museum 1849,0620.13. On the iconographic conventions informing this type of South Italian vase see Green (2012). This is not the place to become entrenched in the debate over whether this vase, or others like it, reflect a local performance tradition or relate back to Athenian productions. The value of the vase to the current discussion remains unaffected by this debate.

¹³ If, as Green (2012) 296 argues, the stage sequence celebrated by the vase occurred at the opening of the play, then it is possible to imagine that on arrival at the bottom of the steps the slave Xanthias first bundles the baggage up before turning then to help Chiron. The mirroring in this stage action (bundling first the object, then Chiron) would set up a comic equivalence between the baggage and Chiron adding a further dimension to the comedy of the pushing and pulling.

¹⁴ While in the past (Wyles (2007) 7 n.1) I used the terms costume and prop interchangeably (since the ancient term *skeuē* applied to either, apparently indiscriminately), I now think that it can be helpful to maintain the modern distinction between the two in the analysis of ancient drama.



Figure 2: Chiron pushed up stairs, Apulian red-figure bell krater attributed to the McDaniel Painter, 380-370 BC, British Museum 1849,0620.13.

The transition of the *kaunakēs* onto the body of Philocleon does not put a stop to the humour arising from its mass or from the proxemic manipulation of it: the comic aspects of both are exacerbated. The curves of Philocleon’s comic body must have exaggerated the bulk of the cloak further.¹⁵ The dynamic of the cloak’s movement, previously determined by Bdelycleon’s handling of it, now depends on Philocleon’s proxemics. Importantly since the cloak’s expanse is spread around Philocleon’s body and its weight hangs down from his shoulders (both suggested by Bdelycleon’s verb for putting it on (1154): περιβάλλω (cast round)), its ‘woollen sausages’ are aligned and are free to swing in synchronized response to his body’s movement.¹⁶ Aristophanes experiments with this comic effect as soon as Philocleon has the cloak on through the horseplay over putting on the shoes. The symbolic significance of this

¹⁵ Piqueux (2016) 254-55 explores the impact of Philocleon’s comic body on this costume. Both Auger (2008) and Compton-Engle (2015) esp. 73-74 recognise the importance of his comic body to the interpretation of the play. For the body’s significance in the genre see Varakis-Martin (2010).

¹⁶ Philocleon calls them woollen sausages at 1144.

change of shoes has been explored in scholarship, but the impact of this sequence's proxemics on the cloak's comic effect has been overlooked.¹⁷ The comic exchange (1156-68) makes much of the act of putting on the pair of Laconians with each of Bdelycleon's coercive imperatives, together with the deictic at 1158, drawing attention to the stage action. The focus on first one foot and then the other allows for the sequence to be dragged out and heightens the ridiculousness of the claim about the anti-Spartan toe (by making it specific to one foot). There is, however, another motivation for this configuration of the stage action. It requires Philocleon to, in effect, hop on one leg and then the other. The dynamic of his movement as he balances, taking off his old shoes and putting on the Laconians (and pushing down on them 1162) would set the woollen tassels of his *kaunakēs* swinging. Here Aristophanes makes an initial foray into exploiting the comic potential of the garment in motion.

The swinging of the tassels as Philocleon changed his shoes is a precursor of the more exaggerated movement that must have emerged from his more vigorous 'arse-wiggle' (1173) in his attempt to imitate the swagger of the elite.¹⁸ The audience is alerted to pay attention through line 1170 in which Philocleon appropriates the imperatival form (which has been Bdelycleon's domain in this exchange) and clusters three forms of 'looking'-verbs within the same line (ἰδού/θεῶ/σκέψαι). This emphatic request to pay attention applies as much to the audience as it does to Bdelycleon. Philocleon's attempt to imitate the swagger of the elite follows. The stage movement generates humour from ridiculing the elite, but also through its physical disruption of the cloak's grandeur.¹⁹ As Philocleon moves, the rows of 'woollen sausages' must have

¹⁷ See, for example, the excellent analysis of Compton-Engle (2015) 66-67 and 70.

¹⁸ Sommerstein (1983) 115 offers this translation.

¹⁹ This relates to the idea that Philocleon's comic body does not fit this costume, on which see Piqueux (2016) 254-255, and, also, to Foley's claim about 'comedy's

swung vigorously back and forth. Compton-Engle, in her magisterial study of comic costume, notes how 'the loosely swinging phallus could enhance the visual humor of wild slapstick scenes.'²⁰ I suggest that Aristophanes pushed this principle to its absurd limit by multiplying the effect here through the cloak's tassels. In fact, it is possible that the tassels do more than evoke the swinging of a comic *phallus*, they may even mirror it (if the *kaunakēs* was draped in such a way as to allow the *phallus* to poke out and bob up and down).²¹ If Philocleon's *phallus* did bob through here, then it would offer a comic prelude to its later starring role after the symposium 1342-47.²² The 'unstoppable comic force' that Philocleon becomes, and the triumph of comedy at the play's ending, are prefigured here.²³

Comedy also 'wins out' in this scene through Philocleon's humorous verbal manipulation of the cloak's meaning. Alexa Piqueux has made a persuasive case for the essential role of words in the power dynamics of this scene, expressed through a struggle over the definition of the cloak.²⁴ Visually the cloak's appearance is funny for the reasons outlined above, but it holds further comic potential through its semiotic mutability. This is exploited in the scene as the characters' descriptions transform the cloak. Piqueux has already offered a beautiful exposition of this noting the ways in which the cloak is transformed into a monster.²⁵ Following the same principle, it is possible to trace the ways in which Philocleon's comic 'food-obsessed'

deliberate violation of tragic limits' in the process of its self-definition, see Foley (1988) 43.

²⁰ Compton-Engle (2015) 43.

²¹ Heuzey (1887) 261 long ago suggested that the *kaunakēs* would have been wrapped like a *chlaina*.

²² On which see Compton-Engle (2015) 73.

²³ Quotation from Farmer (2016) 118. Triumph of comedy at ending see Jedrkiewicz (2006) 88-9.

²⁴ Piqueux (2016) 249-53. Wyles (2011) 51-52 outlines the role of words in constructing costume's semiotic meaning.

²⁵ Piqueux (2016) 252-53.

perspective eventually transforms the costume resulting in Bdelycleon giving way to the comic gaze and seeing Philocleon's cloak as a bulb of garlic (1172).²⁶ There is not only humour at stake but a battle between genres too.²⁷ The implied alignment of genre comes from Philocleon's references to culinary matters set against the tragic 'grandeur' and pretension of Bdelycleon's descriptions.²⁸ Repeatedly in the exchange, when Bdelycleon attempts to assert the grandeur of the cloak, Philocleon undermines his perspective with a competing comic reading. Two of these 'readings' invite the audience (internal and external) to reimagine the cloak through the perspective of food and its preparation: first Philocleon suggests that the hanging tufts of the cloak are woollen sausages (1144) and then that the cloak itself is an oven (1153-56).²⁹ Bdelycleon's eventual claim that his father looks like a bulb of garlic (1172) can therefore be read as a victory for Philocleon's comic perspective (after his earlier defeats in the play).³⁰ This has further significance as it offers an example of

²⁶ For the implications of Bdelycleon's quip for our understanding of Philocleon's appearance see Biles & Olson (2015) *ad loc.* and Piqueux (2016) 254. On comedy's 'food-obsessed' view see Compton-Engle (1999) 326, and on the discourse of food in comedy see Wilkins (2000). For Dicaeopolis as a cook/comedian see Christenson's chapter in this volume. I present this reading briefly elsewhere in the context of a different argument, see Wyles (forthcoming).

²⁷ Wright (2013) esp. 206 on *Wasps* as a series of contests between tragedy and comedy.

²⁸ This reading creates a challenge to Farmer's interpretation of the scene which assumes that Bdelycleon continues to be associated with comedy (as he had been earlier in the play) here, Farmer (2016) 118 and 133. Nelson (2016) 168, however, identifies a shift in the representation of Bdelycleon part way through the play. The inconsistency to Bdelycleon that my reading introduces could be understood through Silk's model of the 'recreative' comic character, Silk (2000) 207-55.

²⁹ For the translation of *χόλιξ* (the term used at 1144) as "'intestine" stuffed with meat', i.e. sausage; see Biles & Olson (2015) *ad loc.*; also note *Knights* 1179.

³⁰ On the earlier parts of the play as a series of *agones* see Bowie (1993b), 78-101. Farmer (2016) 138 sees the comic victory in this scene as coming about through a different means; namely through Bdelycleon's use of meatheatre to ward off the threat of tragedy. His analysis of the scene downplays Philocleon's resistance (*cf.* emphasis on it in Compton-Engle (2015) 71) and does not (in my view) account for Bdelycleon's alignment with grandeur or Philocleon's insistent deflation of it.

Aristophanes using the alignment between comedy and food to comment on genre a year before he exploits this more fully in *Peace*.³¹ This also highlights the important role of costume as a means through which the contest between comedy and tragedy in *Wasps* could be played out.³² Finally, this scene exemplifies the *continuing* role of costume as a means of expressing the relationship between comedy and tragedy in Aristophanes' theatrical discourse.³³

The comic victory in this scene is also symbolized by the failure of the cloak to transform Philocleon. The cloak is his initiation into the new lifestyle that Bdelycleon plans to impose on him, but his comic body and comic perspective resists this.³⁴ The failure of the cloak has been noted as central to the scene's meaning.³⁵ Discussions, however, have overlooked the potential of this 'intentionally unsuccessful' costume to comment on tragedy through Aristophanes' allusion to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.³⁶ I have discussed *Wasps*' sustained engagement with the *Oresteia* at greater length elsewhere

However, I find Farmer's broader claim of the importance of seeing Philocleon as an obsessive fan of tragedy persuasive; Farmer (2016) 117-154.

³¹ Compton-Engle (1999) makes a compelling case for the generic alignment of food with comedy in opposition to war and epic in *Peace* 1279-90.

³² This element is overlooked in Wright's seminal discussion on this aspect of *Wasps*, Wright (2013).

³³ From the outset of his career, Aristophanes exploited costume as a means of commenting on tragedy as the well-known example of Dikaeopolis' borrowing of Telephus' costume in *Acharnians* demonstrates, on which see (above all) Foley (1988). On the continuing role of costume in Aristophanes' theatrical discourse see Wyles (2011) 95-106; a prime example of this is the borrowing of a costume from Agathon in *Thesmophoriazousae*, on which see Duncan (2006) 25-57. *Wasps* has been rather overlooked in this debate and yet its performance in 422 BC places it at an important juncture between the explicit, and much discussed, metatheatrical costume scenes in *Acharnians* (425 BC) and *Thesmophoriazousae* (411 BC).

³⁴ On the relationship between Philocleon's comic body and this costume, see Piqueux (2016) 254-255.

³⁵ Compton-Engle suggests that it highlights Bdelycleon's error in lobbying for the alteration of civic culture, Compton-Engle (2015) 71; Piqueux sees it as representative of the limitations on social mobility, Piqueux (2016) 254. For Telò (2016) 36 it symbolises the audience's refusal to recognise the beneficial qualities of Aristophanic comedy (and specifically *Clouds*).

³⁶ 'intentionally unsuccessful' see Foley (2000) 305.

but for the sake of the following interpretation of the cloak scene, I summarize the argument here.³⁷ Aristophanes evokes the *Oresteia* through a network of visual and verbal allusions that, together, by the end of the trial scene would have left the audience in no doubt over the intended intertext. The more alert audience member may have detected programmatic references to the *Oresteia* in the opening of *Wasps*.³⁸ The most striking cue perhaps is the use of the term ‘κνώδαλον’ (‘monster’, 4) employed by the slave Sosias to describe Philocleon, a description that had been shockingly applied by Apollo to refer to the Erinyes in *Eumenides* 644.³⁹ The situational parallel of the opening scenario further prompts the connection to be made: the *Agamemnon* and *Wasps* both open with a nightwatch (*Wasps* 2) with the slaves and the Aeschylean watchman keeping watch (note the verbal echo: φυλάττομεν, *Wasps* 4 cf. φυλάσσω, *Ag.* 8).⁴⁰ The blocking of the scene also recalls the *Agamemnon* with a character on top of the roof (Bdelycleon cf Aeschylean watchman) and a parallel verbal emphasis on this staging (*Ag.* 2-3 cf. *Wasps* 67-8).⁴¹

³⁷ Wyles (forthcoming).

³⁸ On the audience's competence see Revermann (2006b). These preliminary allusions could have psychologically ‘primed’ even audience members who did not consciously identify them to make the link to the *Oresteia* in the later court scene.

³⁹ Beta (1999) 136 notes this in passing but it is not within the scope of his article to explore the significance of this potential intertext further. Wright (2013), 205, n. 1 (to whom I owe the reference to Beta's work) does not develop the observation further either. Telò (2016) 99 mentions it in the context of his argument that Philocleon is represented as an Erinyes after the symposium. On the shock of the term in the tragic context: 'The vulgarity of Apollo's reaction is without parallel in tragedy' Sommerstein (1989) *ad loc.*

⁴⁰ Biles & Olson (2015) xli briefly compare the opening of *Wasps* to the *Agamemnon*.

⁴¹ The Watchman may not have been lying down (on which see Taplin (1977) 277) but was certainly on the roof so the allusion in *Wasps* would still be clear in either case. Bdelycleon's position on the roof is recognized as a paratragic element by Telò (2016) 59 n. 9.

Once this allusion is established there may be further playful exploitation of it through the attention given to the net in the opening scenes (*Wasps* 130, 164, 208, 367-8).⁴²

Later in the comedy, the dramatic scenario of setting up a court in the image of an Athenian court on stage, readily invites comparison with Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The 'elaborately staged Dog trial' with its systematic and explicit setting up of the court creates an interperformative allusion to the unusual setting up of the scene in *Eumenides*.⁴³ The choral invocation of Apollo as: ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον Πύθθι' ('Phoebus Apollo of Pytho', *Wasps* 869) reinforces the association. This address and the comic chorus' wish for their wanderings to end (873 cf. Orestes, *Eumenides* 77, 238-239) hints at the intertext through referencing the opening of the *Eumenides* (set at the shrine of Apollo in Delphi).⁴⁴ Further resonance with *Eumenides* arises from the

⁴² Russo (2002) 130 discusses the arrangement of the net in *Wasps*. For its symbolism as a riddle for the audience, see Revermann (2006a) 171; and on its prominence, see Nelson (2016) 161. It may have formed a response to the 'sustained' imagery of the net in the *Oresteia* on which see Taplin (1977) 315.

⁴³ Quotation from Biles & Olson (2015) xliii, who overlook the connection to *Eumenides*. Urns, benches, and perhaps other props must have been brought onto the stage to set up the court in the tragedy. This possibility is put forward by Taplin (1977) 390-391 who suggests that this marks a rare change of scene. Scullion's challenge (Scullion (1994) 77-86) to Taplin's claim for a shift of scene to the Areopagus in *Eumenides* does not affect the suggestion that objects were brought on to set up the court scene. Nor is Scullion's outspoken objection to stagehands (in the case of *Ajax*) relevant here (his argument relates to scenery rather than props essential to a scene, see Scullion (1994) 115 strongly against stagehands; though he has subsequently softened his position a little: Scullion (2015) 77). In any case, no one, I think, would deny the presence of the urns as props in this scene and they must have arrived on the stage somehow.

⁴⁴ Sommerstein (1983) *ad loc.* notes the tragic tenor of these lines: 'The phraseology is elevated and would be more suited to a tragic character such as Io'; he overlooks, however, the allusion to Orestes in *Eumenides*. Biles & Olson (2015) *ad loc.* put forward a different interpretation for the choice of invocation. The recognition of the allusion to *Eumenides* also helps to explain the inclusion of the sacrifice here which MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*, in bemusement, dubbed 'surprising'. Apollo Pythios' association with the courts, on which see Boegehold (1995) 22 n. 7, further adds to the appeal of choosing this point of allusion.

emphasis on the law court being established as a ‘new foundation’ (886).⁴⁵ Following these contextual prompts, a verbal echo secures the intertext: Bdelycleon uses the same deictic and noun as Athena (*Eumenides* 735), when he advises his father to take the voting pebble: 'τηνδὶ λαβῶν τὴν ψῆφον' (*Wasps* 987).⁴⁶ The emphatic attention given to 'voting urns' by Philocleon (987-994) encourages a link to be made with the similarly 'significant' staging in *Eumenides*.⁴⁷ Furthermore, while the urns are comically ‘transformed’ (being replaced with 'little cups' *Wasps* 855), the voting pebble is unlikely to have been substituted and so would have supported the evocation of *Eumenides* visually.⁴⁸ Once the stage action became focused on the voting (986-94), the Aristophanic parody of the *Eumenides* would have become even clearer.⁴⁹ The intertext is then playfully exploited and reinforced through the (ridiculous in the comic context) query over the vote’s outcome (*Wasps* 993 cf. *Eumenides* 744) and Philocleon's desperate cry that he has been reduced to nothing when he hears of the

⁴⁵ For the Aeschylean emphasis on establishing the Areopagus (*Eumenides* 484 and 682 with Sommerstein (1989) *ad loc.*). The parallel between this prayer (*Wasps* 860-90) and Athena’s charter (*A. Eu.* 681-710) is noted by Biles & Olson (2015) *ad loc.*

⁴⁶ On *deixis* in 5th-century drama, above all, see Jacobson (2011). All quotations from *Wasps* use the text of Biles & Olson (2015).

⁴⁷ On Athena’s voting pebble as a focalizer in the tragic court scene, see Bakewell (2013). Taplin (1977) esp. 30 on ‘significant’ props (being marked by verbal reinforcement of the visual).

⁴⁸ Biles & Olson (2015) *ad loc.* note that a 'small domestic item' may have been used instead of a pebble but Philocleon refers to the piles of pebbles he has in the house (*Wasps* 109-110) which makes MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.* assumption that a pebble is used more persuasive in my view.

⁴⁹ See Rau (1967); Silk (1993); Rosen (2006); Bakola (2010) 118-79; and Farmer (2016) on comic parody. I follow Bakola (2010) 121 who collapses Silk's distinction (Silk (1993) 479) between 'paratragedy' ('the cover term for all of comedy's intertextual dependence on tragedy') and 'parody' ('any kind of distorting representation of the original'). Modifying Bakola’s definition a little, I understand parody as: ‘the distortive representation of a tragic original with humorous, playful, and/or self-defining effect’. I use the terms: engagement, allusion, interaction, interplay, intertext (in expanded sense, i.e. including performance dimension), parody, in describing the relationship between *Wasps* and the *Oresteia*. My use of ‘allusion’ is not intended in the narrow sense condemned by Fowler (1997) 15 but should be understood to carry the same possibilities as his ‘intertext’. Thalmann (1993) 156-59 offers a helpful discussion of the terms 'parody' and 'intertext' (in the case of tragedy).

acquittal (*Wasps* 997; cf. the Erinyes' response to Orestes' release, *Eumenides* 845-46, 879-80).⁵⁰

The comedy's sustained engagement with the *Oresteia* allows for the possibility that this intertext asserts itself in the cloak scene. Philocleon's costume change can, in fact, be read through both *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides*, generating commentary on the Aeschylean original as well as implications for the interpretation of *Wasps*.⁵¹ The engagement with *Eumenides* is signaled by the placement of this comic scene and its parallel stage action: the costume intervention in both plays comes after a displeasing result in the trial. The interperformative parallel would be evoked through the similarity of the stage action (the cloaking of a character), rather than through any visual likeness between the appearance of the costumes.⁵² This is further supported by the shared intention behind the provision of new costuming – in both cases it is intended to be conciliatory and to signal transformation. In *Eumenides*, Athena offers new cloaks to the Erinyes as part of her strategy of appeasement through ritual inclusion.⁵³ In *Wasps*, Bdelycleon engages in a similar form of pacifying gesture through the provision of the cloak. The marked difference between the scenes is the Erinyes' apparent acceptance of this costume change compared to Philocleon's comic

⁵⁰ On the possible further tragic associations of Philocleon's response see Farmer (2016) 134. On the similarity between the temperament of Aeschylus' Furies and Philocleon see Nelson (2016) 164. Bakewell (2013) 149 n. 1 notes, in passing, the parallel concern over how the vote will turn out (*Wasps* 993 cf. *Eumenides* 744).

⁵¹ I discuss this elsewhere (Wyles (forthcoming)) but include highlights of the argument here to provide a context for my later consideration of the costume change in relation to Aristophanes' other comedies.

⁵² The Erinyes are given purple-dyed clothing, while Philocleon receives the white tufted *kaunakēs*. I discuss the use of the terminology 'cloaks' for the Erinyes' costume elsewhere.

⁵³ There are textual issues with line in which purple-dyed clothing ('φοινικοβάπτοις ἐσθήμασιν' 1027) is offered (Sommerstein (1989) *ad loc.*). It is generally accepted, however, that the Erinyes were the intended recipients and that this costume change took place on stage (Podlecki (1989) *ad loc.*).

resistance. The Erinyes' new clothing in *Eumenides* symbolizes the positive resolution of the cycle of violence through Athenian justice and ritual (represented by the torch procession) and marks the transformation of the chorus into civic benefactors.⁵⁴ Philocleon, however, is emphatically *not* transformed by his new costume which is particularly striking given his characteristic ability to transform demonstrated elsewhere in the play.⁵⁵

This failure of his costume seems to call into question the Aeschylean scene. In fact, Bdelycleon's sinister intervention to fix the outcome of the trial (992) already hints at Aristophanes' intention to contest the premise for the *Oresteia*'s resolution.⁵⁶ The cloak scene builds on this by challenging Aeschylus' use of costume as a dramaturgic tool through which to produce a sense of closure. Costume, Aristophanes suggests, cannot secure transformation in the way in which Aeschylus claims. Instead costume is subject to continual semiotic manipulation (effected through the words and movements of the character) so that it is the *costume* which is transformed rather than the character.⁵⁷ On a meta-level, the original trilogy had asserted the valuable role of costume (and perhaps, therefore, theatre) as a symbol of transformation, marking the

⁵⁴ This stage action symbolically 'resolves' the negative associations of the fabric from earlier in the trilogy (Goheen (1955)) and established a positive ritual resonance through its visual allusion to the 'crimson cloaks' worn by *metics* in the Panathenaic procession (Headlam (1906)). Easterling (1988) 99-100 discusses ritual and Taplin (1977) 415 explores the significance of the final procession. Podlecki (1999) 80-81 suggests that legal and civil justice is enthroned through the Erinyes' acceptance of acquittal. See also Sommerstein (1989) *ad loc.* 1021-47; on the complexity and ambiguities of the ending, however, see Goldhill (2000).

⁵⁵ Silk (2000) esp. 232, Nelson (2016) 166, and Farmer (2016) 122 and 129.

⁵⁶ By inviting reflection on the judicial process presented in the *Oresteia*; Goldhill (1992) 33-34 addresses the problems with the Aeschylean trial and a useful summary of scholarship on the matter is offered by Bowie (1993a) 11.

⁵⁷ On Aristophanes' interest in highlighting the instability of the cloak's meaning in *Wasps* see Piqueux (2016) 251-52.

resolution of dangerous instability.⁵⁸ In Philocleon's case the costume fails to transform; this undermines the Aeschylean model and enables *Wasps* to question the contribution of tragic theatre to society.⁵⁹ The scrutiny of tragedy's social function found in *Frogs* is anticipated in this scene through the challenge it issues to Aeschylus' exploitation of costume.⁶⁰ By highlighting the mutability of costume, Aristophanes denies it the semiotic permanency upon which the Aeschylean sense of resolution depends and simultaneously asserts comedy's greater 'honesty' in exposing the dramatic illusion.⁶¹

The intertext of the *Oresteia* also has implications for the humour of the scene and the interpretation of the play. This is through the simultaneous allusion to the *Agamemnon* in the cloak scene. This interplay with the *Agamemnon* emerges through Aristophanes' presentation of the costume intervention as a power struggle involving expensive Persian fabric.⁶² The cloth which Clytemnestra casts around Agamemnon

⁵⁸ See Wyles (2011) 95 for a justification of reading costume as a symbol representing theatre. Instability as expressed by the Erinyes (before their assimilation into Athenian society) and present in Athens in the aftermath of the Areopagus reforms. Claims about the *Oresteia*'s political sympathies are notoriously problematic, although it can be argued that the production was broadly beneficial to society through enabling distanced reflection on recent events, see Bowie (1993a) 11-12.

⁵⁹ The critique should be understood within the context of the Aristophanic assertion in *Wasps* that his work is more beneficial to Athens than any other comedy or tragedy (see Wright (2013) 208). It can also be neatly coupled with the scene's criticism of ritual clothing's ability to transform see Compton-Engle (2015) 72, which extends the criticism even further.

⁶⁰ Aristophanes' attitude towards tragedy's function in *Frogs* is ambiguous, see Rosen (2006) 264.

⁶¹ I am very grateful to Natalia Tsoumpra for suggesting this interpretation and for her further point that Aristophanes comments on the unreliability of the costume can be compared to the comment in *Frogs* that appearance is not a safe indication of character), with the implication that if costume cannot be trusted, then safe conclusions based on its (apparent) semiotics become impossible. On Aristophanes' assertion of comedy's 'honesty' in his earlier play *Acharnians* see Foley (1988) 44.

⁶² For the tapestry scene in *Agamemnon* as a dramatized power struggle *par excellence*, see Taplin (1978) 82.

before killing him is established in the ‘carpet scene’ (*Agamemnon* 855-972) as excessively expensive and invested with Persian association.⁶³ Clytemnestra describes

her use of it in Agamemnon’s murder, at 1381-83:

ὥς μήτε φεύγειν μήτ’ ἀμύνεσθαι μόρον
ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,
περιστιγίζω, πλοῦτον εἴματος κακόν·

‘Round him, as if to catch a haul of fish, I cast an impassable net—fatal wealth of robe—so that he should neither escape nor ward off doom.’⁶⁴

The *kaunakēs* is similarly presented as Persian (woven in Ecbatana by ‘barbarians’, *Wasps* 1143, 1145), and impressively expensive (1145-47) – using up the resources of the natural world in the same way as the cloth in *Agamemnon* (1137-47).⁶⁵ Philocleon highlights the danger of the garment by joking about the potentially fatal consequences of putting it on 1133-34, 1156.⁶⁶ Philocleon's fear is perhaps intended to be understood as fueled by his 'paranoid suspicion', but the recognition of the parallels between his cloak and the cloth in *Agamemnon* suggest that his concern is not misplaced.⁶⁷ There is an in-joke to his anxiety, then, for those audience members who spotted the intertext. A further cue to the alignment between the cloak and Agamemnon’s enveloping cloth is given by Bdelycleon’s action as he casts the costume around his father (1154: φέρ’, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ σε περιβαλῶ), just as Clytemnestra (though with a different verb) says she had cast the cloth around Agamemnon. The

⁶³ It seems fair to assume that the cloth spread across Agamemnon’s path is understood to be the same as the cloth used in the murder; Taplin (1977) 315 sees this as ‘possible’ (but then ‘unlikely’, Taplin (1978) 81); Mueller (2016) 60 makes a good case for accepting this. See Hall (1989) 204-8 on Persian associations. On wealth and danger here see Goldhill (2000) 45-6; and Mueller (2016) 52-53.

⁶⁴ Transl. Smyth (1926). Text Raeburn & Thomas (2011).

⁶⁵ See Compton-Engle (2015) 70 on *kaunakēs*. On the representation of natural resources supplying the purple cloth see Mueller (2016) 53-54.

⁶⁶ Piqueux (2016) 252-253.

⁶⁷ On paranoia see Telò (2016) 35. Telò suggests the quips represent the misguided fear of the comic audience in the face of the *Clouds*’ therapeutic intentions. The two readings can co-exist thanks to the acknowledged polysemic quality to Aristophanic comedy.

comic framing of the tragic intertext, however, transforms Clytemnestra's fishing simile into a culinary metaphor (it becomes, through Philocleon's vision, an enclosing oven 1153-56)). This comic focalization asserts this genre's control over the interplay.⁶⁸ Further humour is generated by the incongruous pretension of this comparison between the comic scene and such a powerfully emotive moment from tragedy. This is coupled with the comic relief that in the Aristophanic frame the consequences will not be fatal.⁶⁹ At the same time, the reading of this scene through *Agamemnon* offers a fresh consideration for the debate over the representation of economy and ideology in *Wasps*.⁷⁰ Olson's argument for the play's positive 'democratic' outlook depends on interpreting Bdelycleon's intentions as benign.⁷¹ Yet the alignment of Bdelycleon with the role of Clytemnestra through the allusion to the *Agamemnon* is problematic to this reading. Clytemnestra's urging of Agamemnon to trample across the purple cloth and her subsequent use of this symbol of wealth in his murder frames Bdelycleon's 'sharing of wealth' with a worrying ambiguity.⁷² Compton-Engle has already made a persuasive case for the ways in which the ethnic dimensions of the costume pose a challenge to Olson's view; the cloak's intertextual resonances with the *Oresteia* presents yet another obstacle to it.⁷³

⁶⁸ Through highlighting comedy's distinctive, and in this case insistent, interest in food, on which see the note above; the tragic grandeur of figurative imagery is diminished through its domestication (on this strategy in comic parody see Revermann (2013) 37).

⁶⁹ An equivalent form of 'comic relief' is offered at the opening of the play through the contrast between the sleepless Aeschylean Watchman and the sleeping Bdelycleon see Wyles (forthcoming).

⁷⁰ See Olson (1996) and Biles & Olson (2015) xlv-lxii. Konstan (1985) presents an alternative reading.

⁷¹ See Olson (1996) and Biles & Olson (2015) xlv-lxii.

⁷² On the Aeschylean scene see Mueller (2016) 51-60.

⁷³ Compton-Engle (2015) 70-1.

The *Oresteia* is not the only past performance, or ‘text’, with the potential to create meanings for Philocleon’s cloak. The scene can, of course, also be ‘read’ through Aristophanes’ own theatrical endeavours.⁷⁴ The impact of Aristophanes’ previous plays to the scene’s interpretation should not be overlooked, especially given the earliness of this play in his career that ensured a limited set of performance memories from which to create meaning.⁷⁵ Looking back to the *Acharnians* (performed just three years earlier), the failure of Telephus’ costume to transform Dicaeopolis would seem to support the reading of Philocleon’s cloak as an expression of the relationship between tragedy and comedy.⁷⁶ In both scenes the protagonist acquires a new costume but the comic body still peeks through, asserting the comic genre.⁷⁷ At the same time, this earlier engagement with a tragedian’s work through its costuming could shed light on a further dimension to the commentary on the *Oresteia* in *Wasps*. The costume-borrowing scene in the *Acharnians* draws attention to Euripides’ penchant for dressing his characters in rags and critiques him both for overdoing this theatrical device and for engaging in ‘realism’.⁷⁸ A further possible criticism of Aeschylus’ costuming in *Wasps* emerges from this comparison, as it seems possible that

⁷⁴ ‘intentionally unsuccessful’ see Foley (2000) 305.

⁷⁵ The approach of understanding the manipulation of costume through a consideration of previous performances is rooted in the work of Carlson (2001) and Sofer (2003). For a justification of applying their approach to ancient theatre see Wyles (2007) 7-20 and (2011) 58-60. It should also be noted that the format of the ancient theatre festivals not only offered ideal conditions within which to make these interperformative allusions within the same genre, see Mueller (2016) 3, but also facilitated sophisticated references to previous performances of both comedy and tragedy in comedy. Compton-Engle (2015) 72 considers this scene in relation to other performances but does so from the perspective of the initiatory association of costume change, prompted by the analysis of Bowie (1993b) 78-101, and therefore discusses *Clouds* and *Frogs*. Telò (2016) 18-20 considers *Knights* in relation to this scene in *Wasps* but through a sophisticated argument about tactile imagery (as opposed to inter-performative allusion through staging). Others have privileged the ‘dialogic’ relationship of *Wasps* with *Proagon*; Wright (2013) 212.

⁷⁶ This reading depends on Foley (1988).

⁷⁷ See Foley (2000) 306 on Dicaeopolis; Piqueux (2016) 254-255 on Philocleon.

⁷⁸ See Muecke (1982) on both, with Csapo (2002) on ‘realism’.

Aristophanes contests Aeschylus' right to appropriate costume from 'everyday' life in Athens. It has long been accepted that the Erinyes' new costume in the *Eumenides* took on special meaning through its resonance with the clothing worn by 'metics' in the procession at the Panathenaea.⁷⁹ This may have been perceived by Aristophanes as tragedy over-stepping. This reading is further bolstered by the earlier court scene in *Wasps* which has been recognized to operate metatheatrically as a 'play within a play'.⁸⁰ The setting up of this 'play' is carried out through a deliberately involved and comic process of hunting for comic substitutes from within the house. On the level of theatrical discourse, this could be taken to stand for the way in which comedy operates – it takes everyday objects and places them into the comic frame to generate humour and enable commentary on aspects of society. This eloquent expression of comedy's operation and domain would enable the cloak scene to be read as a criticism of Aeschylus' appropriation of costume from contemporary Athens. It is also appropriate that the chastisement of Aeschylus' costuming strategy should be made through the *kaunakēs*, a contemporary fashion garment that could symbolize comedy's ability (and right?) to put a spotlight on objects from everyday life. Costume here could be taken to stand for the materials of drama more generally, enabling Philocleon's cloak to make a wider claim about the 'correct' domain of each genre.

The perspective of Philocleon's costume change shifts significantly, however, when viewed through the transformation of Demos at the end of *Knights* 1321-31. Two years before *Wasps* (in another comedy targeting Cleon), Aristophanes uses Demos'

⁷⁹ See Headlam (1906).

⁸⁰ On the metatheatrical dimension to the Dog Trial, see Farmer (2016) 134 with n. 45 and Slater (2002) 96 with n. 43.

costume change to represent the 'play's suddenly happy resolution', conveying the positive effects of the Sausage-Seller's victory and, by extension, of Aristophanic comedy.⁸¹ The assumed efficacy of Demos' costume change has a number of implications for the interpretation of this scene in *Wasps*. Firstly, it serves as a reminder to us (as readers familiar with the play) that spectators watching the action could enjoy the tension created over whether Bdelycleon's sartorial intervention would be successful or not. The audience's expectations for the outcome of this costume change would depend on whether they had the performance memory of *Acharnians* or *Knights* in mind. On a superficial level, those thinking of Dicaeopolis could expect failure, those thinking of Demos might anticipate success. For those who were thinking about the positive transformation of Demos, the costume's failure in *Wasps* could be understood to disrupt the positive paradigm offered by *Knights*. This breaking free from the expectation set by a past dramatic model could be argued to have a further level of significance since it aligns with *Wasps*' thematic concern with escape from containment.⁸² At the same time, this scene in *Wasps* could have implications for the interpretation of Aristophanes' earlier work.⁸³ The explicit failure

⁸¹ See Compton-Engle (2015) 48 and Telò (2016) 20. In fact, given Compton-Engle's suggestion (*ibid.*) that both Demos' costume and the Sausage-Seller's new green robe (*Knights* 1406) are full length, it seems possible that there is a more complex interplay with tragedy (with which long robes would be more readily associated, see Wyles (2011) 26; alternatively on the comic stage the long *chiton* could denote female characters, see Compton-Engle (2015) 29, but this association does not seem as pertinent). This would offer yet another level to the reading of this scene in relation to *Wasps*, however limitations of space prevent me from pursuing the idea further here.

⁸² On this theme see Biles & Olson (2015) xxxiv-xxxviii.

⁸³ This may not have been intended by Aristophanes - it seems reasonable to assume a limit to his control over which performance memories audience members used in interpreting the action; this relates to the recognition that audiences may bring 'unexpected associations' (of actors' past roles) to bear when interpreting modern performances, see Carlson (1994) 16. Telò's argument (that Aristophanes uses the scene to invite the audience to reflect on their misguided rejection of *Clouds*) attributes strong authorial intention to the creation of meaning, Telò (2016) 35-36, but this does not exclude the possibility of unintended meanings in the scene.

of the cloak in *Wasps* exposes limitations to costume's transformative power and this might retrospectively reinforce skepticism over *Knights*' 'happy' resolution.⁸⁴ By considering the cloak in relation to Aristophanes' own previous manipulation of costume, it highlights the significance of these past *comic* scenes to the interpretation of the stage action as well as the potential commentary being offered on his work.⁸⁵

Conclusion

Scholarship in recent years has produced increasingly sophisticated interpretations of Aristophanic comedy that assume both the polysemic nature of his work as well as the ability of (at least some of) the audience members to appreciate its complexity.⁸⁶ Philocleon's cloak offers a rich *exemplum* through which costume's rightful place within such analyses can be understood. Its contribution to the humour and theatrical discourse embedded in *Wasps* demonstrates Aristophanes' skill in exploiting costume's potential. It is hoped that the analysis of this *exemplum* offers some methodological food for thought. The appreciation of the *kaunakēs*' full comic contribution to the scene requires us to be willing to think through the implication of a costume's design and its behaviour (in motion) in performance.⁸⁷ The comedy of the

⁸⁴ This reading relies on seeing the cloak as theatre costume in general rather than 'tragic' costume specifically. Farmer (2016) 138 in his analysis of the scene as metatheatre treats the cloak as theatre costume. Slater (2002) 101 views the cloak as having 'obvious theatrical associations' and argues that the change of clothing on stage is 'profoundly comic'. For the ironic elements to *Knights*' ending see Hesk (2000) 255-8.

⁸⁵ Telò (2016) develops a highly-sophisticated reading of Aristophanes' self-definition through reference to past plays, especially *Knights* and *Clouds*, in this scene, but privileges analysis of the text over performance.

⁸⁶ Exemplified by the scholarship exploring the subtext of rivalry in Aristophanes' plays: Sidwell (2009); Biles (2011); Bakola, Prauscello, and Telò (2013); Telò (2016).

⁸⁷ This extends the well-established principle of thinking about the text through performance, on which see Marshall (2014) 142.

cloak's movement is generated from an 'unmarked' joke, making it more difficult to detect, but the prominence of such jokes in performance (taking precedence perhaps over verbal witticisms) makes them essential to an appreciation of Aristophanes' technique.⁸⁸ Secondly, it can be rewarding to set aside the anxiety over the precise nature of the relationship between fifth-century Athenian theatre productions and fourth-century South Italian vase paintings depicting comic performances. While acknowledging that critical issue exists, we can still benefit from the prompts which those vases offer to identifying what might have been funny about costume in an Aristophanic performance. Finally, the 'reading' of costume through other productions, both tragic and comic, is an essential part of understanding the range of meanings they may have generated for the original audience and can yield surprising results for the way in which Aristophanes 're-writes' his own comedy through costume.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Not entirely 'unmarked', as Philocleon's line 1170 gives a clue that something visually amusing is about to happen.

⁸⁹ The realisation that Philocleon's cloak impacts negatively on our understanding of Demos' transformation is particularly noteworthy, for example.