Iambos, Comedy and the Question of Generic Affiliation

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Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres

Edited by Emmanuela Bakola, Lucia Prauscello and Mario Telò
GREEK COMEDY AND THE DISCOURSE OF GENRES

EDITED BY
E. BAKOLA, L. PRAUSCELLO AND M. TELÒ
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inherits to a far greater degree than tragedy or even satyr-play. For this reason comedy can fairly be called a 'genre of genres' and in this respect too it resembles its cultic Dionysian matrix. Old Comedy draws freely upon all musical and speech genres, but Old Comedy mostly draws its form and contents from the cognate Dionysian genres of tragedy, satyr-play, dithyramb, _iambos_ and the sub-literary choral _komoi_ of the _Pompe_. In this sense, Aristotle is both deeply insightful and surely wrong, or at least overstating the case, when he derives comedy specifically from the _phailika_.

CHAPTER 3

Iambos, comedy and the question of generic affiliation

Ralph Rosen

It is a commonplace to note Old Comedy's many explicit interactions with other literary genres. Indeed, parodic, mocking comedy, in particular — which characterizes much of Aristophanes and probably many of his fragmentary or lost contemporaries — derives much of its appeal, if not its very _raison d'être_, from its relationship with other genres. In the case of Old Comedy, parody of tragedy is the most famous instance of its self-conscious dialogue of genres, but there are many others as well — its parody of epic and lyric poetry, for example, and even of contemporary prose genres of history, philosophy, medicine and rhetoric. The relationship that Old Comedy fashions for itself with all such genres is one of alterity, by which I mean that its success depends at the most basic level on the fact that these target genres are _other_ than, different from, comedy, and would under ordinary circumstances be out of place within the comic enterprise. Literary parody within comedy, in short, is a process of 'allusion', construed in the most traditional sense of the word as indicating a conscious attempt by the poet to play to an audience's familiarity with a literary tradition that is not comedy (or at least not Aristophanic comedy), and which would be laughable when incorporated into it.  

2 See Will 2001: 9–10 (and then passim) on linguistic 'register variation' in Aristophanes. Not all register variation in Aristophanes is parody, but most parody involves some sort of register variation to mark it as a language that is different from an expected norm. See Will 2001: 33–69 for an attempt to establish a baseline Aristophanic grammar (and stylistics) which can be helpful in detecting parodic deviations.  

3 Literary parody (as opposed to parody in other artistic modes, such as music, where the term can be used neutrally to describe thematic borrowing), especially in comic genres, tends to be mocking and 'negative', but not necessarily so; it does, however, nearly always strive to elicit some form of laughter. See M. A. Rune 1995: 3–17, for the history of terms for parody, and in particular, the relationship between parody and ridicule: for parody in Aristophanes in particular, see Goldhill 1991: 205–11. On the problem of sorting out the different kinds of allusion in Old Comedy — from benign citation to overt parody — see Nagelkerken's taxonomy of 'Reflexes' (1996: 3–4) that he uses in discussing how poets of Old Comedy interacted with Greek lyric poetry.
This otherness of a parodied text within comedy makes it fairly easy to spot and to understand in context, and it explains why scholars have often analogized the relationship between a comedy and the texts it parodies to that between parasite and host. But Old Comedy also interacts with other genres in yet more complex ways, where there is no question of parody and quite often no apparent self-consciousness about allusion or authorial intentionality. Sometimes there are instances where texts interact with each other synchronically as a function of cultural forces that a poet may or may not pay any attention to, such as the ways in which Athenian tragedy and comedy share the same stage and are influenced by common production and performance protocols. Other times comic texts interact with previous authors diachronically, reflecting a generic heritage so old and complex that no single poet could possibly trace a comprehensive history of origins. Aristophanes himself put his finger on the problem for Old Comedy when he noted at *Poetics* 1448a that the early history of Greek comedy could not really be known because no records were kept before its formal state recognition at the City Dionysia (486 BCE). We still, in fact, share Aristophanes’ frustration and crave information about how these

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1 I am thinking here of the many formal devices and structures shared by Athenian tragedy and comedy—e.g. ironic verse, alternating episodes, and comic passages, and presumably an entire array of stage and temporal practices now largely lost to us. It is likely that in such cases poets were not entirely self-consciously aware of whether they were "interacting" with one genre or another. Taylor (1986) urges the evidence for and against a meaningful generic relationship between Aristic tragedy and comedy, concluding (573) that "the whole plot rely . . . rather than inviolate overlap." This is not to say that there were not many self-conscious "interruptions" from one to the other; as many scholars have discussed (cf. Taylor 1986:165), but in terms of what each genre actually "does", Taylor finds them worlds apart. Critio, Fr. 341, which refers to someone as engaging in "epinikidrianophanis" (Epidamnos-epinikidresuvi), offers a rare moment of self-consciousness about how the two dramatic genres might "meet". But without real context, it is impossible to know what it all amounts to: it might well imply that Creonis thought of Aristophanic comedy as deeply informed by Euripidean tragedy; or it may only suggest that Aristophanic comedy is capable of being an intellectual like Euripides, or not necessarily derivative of him. See Bakst 1934:24-9, with bibliography, which argues that Creon is indeed Aristophantic to Euripides with the word Epidamnos-epinikidresuvi in order to highlight his own poetic relationship with Aeschylus.

2 This area includes the many questions about 'origins' did Old Comedy evolve, e.g. out of forms inherited from other realms of human activity, such as religious ritual, song lost to the consciousness of any individual poet or his audience? Such a claim is often made for passages such as Diceros’ *lyric phylla* as Fr. Aes. 164-79, even if the passage itself is not felt to replicate such a ritual song exactly (see, e.g., Pickard-Cambridge 1926:322-40; Rotherholz 2001:66; Halbwachs 2001:327-32, with further bibliography). n. 140: if re-creates, or perhaps parodies, an aspect of a specific religious festival that we suspect had a long past by the fifth century, it seems to have some bearing on what goes on in Aristic comedy (its archaoanalytic mockery), but did Aristophanes put it all together in his mind when he composed this scene? Cf. also Rutter 1977, for a similar argument suggesting a link between Old Comedy and the ritual *gyptysis. See Kugelmeier’s third category of lyric \"refers\" to Old Comedy (1990:1), which includes passages that are been regarded as \"reminiscences\" (Drb Reifenberg as ein lyrisches Verhild an .. . .), where it is unclear how conscious the author would have been of what we might call an \"allusion\".

3 Rosen 1998.

4 The methodological problems with arguments for generic affiliation based on lexical similarities were well presented by E. Bosio 2003, on which see discussion below. Although I find his scepticism at times excessive, his challenge affords us an opportunity to articulate what, in the first instance, we are seeking when we ask how literary genres interact. Other critiques of my argument for generic affiliation tended to focus undisguisedly on my suggestion that historical figures emerged for mockery by comic poets can in some respects be profitably treated as \"mock characters\" (e.g., Halbwachs 1991:41-51 and Kugelmeier 1996:169-80). I offer some clarification at Rosen 2002:335 n. 19.


for example? Or to put it another way, when Cratinus wrote a play entitled Archilochoi, almost certainly bringing Archilochus on to the stage in some guise, and peppering the play with Archilochean allusions and quotations, was he constructing a parodic relationship—”a relationship of mocking otherness, not affiliation—not Archilochus’ line to Aristophanes’ relationship with Euripides? Or was it an attempt on Cratinus’ part to acknowledge an organic generic relationship between his poetry and Archilochus’ that was more knowing hommage than parody? I argued for this latter position in OCIT, but the case can be made even more forcefully that iambos and Old Comedy were powerfully and uniquely affiliated, I believe, if we follow the post-philosophic approach and consider them—despite their many differences in literary form, performative structures, or even localized social functioning—as first and foremost, genres of satire.

The key issue in any discussion of generic affiliation is the question of authorial self-consciousness: if we say that various genres are ‘affiliated’ or ‘connected’, or whatever metaphor we choose, does it matter that the poets whom we think were influenced by others were aware of the processes by which they were influenced? Is this kind of self-consciousness an essential criterion for even speaking of ‘influence’ to begin with? And is ‘influence’ even the appropriate word to use in cases where there seems to be no awareness on the author’s part of how his work interacts with anyone else’s, even when we seem to be able to see a clear case of interaction? These are questions that genre theorists in other literary fields have wrestled with for some time, and classificatory too, have not been insensitive to the complexity of the problems, but for a variety of reasons comic genres have presented particular challenges to thinking outside of familiar philological parameters.

In the specific case of iambos and Old Comedy, this reluctance to theorize about genre has created some confusion about what we are looking for when we come to the question of how the two relate to one another.

Much of the confusion has arisen because scholars have often conflated what are really four distinct questions:

1. How, historically, did a particular genre come into being and develop?
2. How did a given genre represent itself, its origin, its history and its ‘essence’, and why did it do so in that way?
3. What did the audience think of the genre of Old Comedy?
4. How have critics (and this can include authors themselves, contemplating the provenance of literary genres) understood a given genre’s origin, history and ‘essence’, and why did they do so in that way, especially if their claims turn out to be historically inaccurate?

Sometimes scholars will assume that the one will necessarily follow from the other but, in fact, as I would argue here, actual historical dependence between, or affiliation of, genres need hardly imply self-consciousness of such a relationship, nor need we always assume that what an author tells us about generic history is historically ‘accurate’.

The argument of OCIT illustrates well the need to clarify which questions we are seeking to answer, and the evidence that can be brought to bear on them. Everyone would agree that Old Comedy and iambos share some literary features: both can employ invective, obscenity, episodic narrative structures, and so forth. I wanted to argue that these shared features suggested that the later genre, Athenian Old Comedy, in some sense descended from the earlier one, and that the comic poets were both aware of the generic affiliation they had with iambographers and self-consciously indebted to those earlier poets for many of the stylistic features for which they were famous in their own time, especially obscenity and political

10 For my use of the term ‘satire’, see Rosen 2007: 7-14, esp. 37-38.
11 See e.g. Farrell 2003, Rosen 2007: 14-17, and now Rosen 2010 (esp. 7-24), who offer a lucid discussion, with bibliography, of the major theoretical challenges of genre criticism as practiced both in antiquity and by theorist of our own time.
12 Among other things, comedy, and in particular satirical strands of comic literature, tend to construct for themselves a historically specific reality that exists primarily in the here and now, enrolling its audiences into thinking that there must be some relation between their lived reality and reality of the comic performance. Matters become even more complicated when authors speak in their own voice in their works, especially when they mock other people who would be known to the audience and make claims for themselves that have the veneer of a verifiable truth. One can find even the most sophisticated critics, for example, being drawn into a satirist’s insinuation (a conventional trope in itself) that his work must be taken at face value and as representative of a historical reality.

9 Rosen 2010 addresses some of these questions as well, pasieu, and explicitly at 3-16, although in her study of the genre of iambos she is most concerned with my question 4 below, i.e. she is less interested in an answer to the question of what iambos is, an answer that would take the form of a definition. ... (But rather) the history of the conceptualization of iambos as a literary genre’ (44). She focuses on what she calls the ‘received iambos’, which focuses on authors who were ‘received into’ the tradition by ancient authors and scholars themselves (cf. 34-6, 51-7).
10 Few people today conceptualize genres as natural categories in the way we think of objects in the world (e.g. birds, cars, water), and most would agree to the three descriptions of genres as ‘category concepts’, 'mental representations of abstract entities' and 'cultural products’ suggested by Rosen 2010. Rosen's synthesis of current approaches drawn from cognitive science is illuminating (chunking, 'embedding', 'scripting', 10-33), and helpful for explaining why it is often so difficult — for original audiences as well as for us who study them — to pin down the generic identity of a literary text. I do think, however, that the generic identity of iambos in antiquity (indeed, even the possibility for ancient audiences to define it) was more stable than Rosen 2010 and E. Bowie 2002 would allow. Bowie’s (57) whimsical characterization of iambos as an ‘a la carte menu’, for example, seems overstated. See further discussion below.
mockery. Let us say, however, that the philology, and even the testimonia, are not strong enough to sustain the position that Attic comedy 'descended' from the *iambo* or that Athenian comic poets knowingly modeled their plays on iambic poets. 16 What would this actually mean for the question of generic affiliation? How self-aware of their literary forebears must poets be before we can legitimately speak in terms of generic 'descent', 'affiliation' or 'influence'? Other criteria have been invoked to downplay or even deny a meaningful affiliation between *iambo* and comedy: 'social conditions', length of work, composition of the audience, modes of performance — each of these categories looks quite different for *iambo* and Old Comedy. Another way of putting this might be to say that although Archilochus composed a humorous, obscene *pioger* against Lycambes in the seventh century b.c., and Aristophanes composed a humorous, obscene *pioger* against Cleon in the fifth, the date and conditions of performance, audience composition and reception were so different that any similarities between them were more likely coincidental than indicative of any sort of lineal relationship.

The major premise behind this statement is that because both *iambo* and Old Comedy can be shown to involve many other things besides abuse and political mockery, these elements themselves cannot be regarded as definitional of either genre. As a basic principle, this seems unobjectionable enough; just because we can find similar phenomena in two genres does not necessarily mean that they are related in anything more than a coincidental way. As Farrell has pointed out, 18 Pindar's *Odes* may have been commissioned to *praise* victors, but they could on occasion include blame and criticism as well; the mere appearance of 'blame' in his *Odes* does not, however, suddenly turn Pindar into a 'blame poet', and he even famously goes out of his way to distance himself from such an association, at *Pythians* 2.52–7, where he repudiates the iambic poet Archilochus for being *pioger*. With Pindar, there is never any question of what his

16 As L. Bowie 2002, who concludes that we should not think of Attic comedy as 'descended' from, or even 'strongly influenced' by *iambo*. See also Will 2002: 7–10. The real issue, it seems, is the use of 'descent', which again returns us to the question of authorial self-consciousness: is a modern pop song 'descended from' ancient examples of similar usage? Is *Death of a Salesman* 'descended from' Greek tragedy? A case could be made for either position in both examples, depending on whether one uses the word 'descent' to imply that authors used to be aware of their literary antecedents. Bovini 2000: 86–8 distinguishes between genres that develop 'out of' other genres, and those that are 'similar to but not deriving from' other genres. This distinction highlights well the problems inherent in the terms we use to discuss influences on, and relationships between, genres, since the actual difference between the two options is not always easy to pinpoint. (See further discussion below, n. 40.)


*Odes* are supposed to 'do' — Pindar in this context composed praise poetry, no matter what other literary elements he deployed, some of which, as we have seen with *iambo*, may even be generically at odds with the goals of epinician. So, in the case of *iambo* and Old Comedy, the real question is: how important is abuse and comic mockery to each, and what is it actually doing in each one? 17 And if we can determine that the 'work' being done by such elements in each genre is functionally similar, would this similarity effectively constitute generic affiliation?

This is a far more profitable direction for us to take in considering *iambo* and comedy, I believe, than mere philology, since literary works by different authors can certainly function in similar ways, as similar 'speech acts' with similar claims to efficacy — even if the words and forms they use are dissimilar to each other's. Horace offers a useful case in point: he did not have philology, or even history, on his mind when he noted at the opening of *Satires* 1.4 that Lucilius satire derived from (pender) the poets of Old Comedy. 18 This is one of the most famous pronouncements of generic affiliation in all of classical literature, especially since it addresses the bifurcation I have discussed earlier between generic self-consciousness on the one hand (Horace seems to want us to believe that all Roman satirists would have been conscious of a literary, or at least discursive, debt to Old Comedy and could draw on the antecedent genre for allusive play) and, on the other, the notion of an *organic* generic affiliation (Old Comedy and Roman satire were related to one another simply by virtue of doing similar things, whether or not the poets realized it).

What exactly has Horace sensed here in Old Comedy that seemed relevant to Roman satire? He says clearly enough that it was the *libertas* of Old Comedy, its freedom to attack prominent wrongdoers, that he admires, even if (as he claims) his own speech has to be more constrained. There is an interesting, playful bit of generic gamemanship at work here; for by denying that he is able to *do* in his satires what Old Comedy could (notably . . .), Horace both distances, apologetically, the nature of his own work from Old Comedy, and at the same time brings it into closer contact by implying that in a perfect world where speech was unconstrained (as he believed it was in fifth-century Athens) his satires would be just like Old

17 This is the central question that Bowie's remark (2002: 77) calls to mind: 'If my argument [for a multiplicity of "identifying features" of *iambo*] were to be correct, their relevance, . . . would be to diminish the importance within *iambo* of that element which has most often been seen as linking it closely with comedy, abuse' (my emphasis).

18 As Freedberg 2001: 19 succinctly put it: 'The lines are fraught with misinformation that caricature not only the poets of Greek Old Comedy, but Lucilius as well.' See Rosen 2002: 6–40 for discussion and further bibliography.
Comedy. If Horace had never written these lines, or if they were lost to us, how willing would we be to think of Roman satire and Old Comedy as affiliated genres? A strict historicist would probably conclude that any resemblance between Roman satire and Old Comedy was coincidental or, one might say, "independently." Certainly no one, ancient or modern, would claim that the relationship between Roman satire and Old Comedy was anything like that between Roman comic drama and Greek New Comedy, where it can be easily shown both that the relationship was historical and that the Roman comic poets were well aware of that fact. Horace's statement in Satires I.4 about satire's provenance in Old Comedy is by all measures eccentric, in fact, at least when considered as a piece of literary history. But what might we imagine prompted it? What kind of relationship between the two genres did Horace perceive—despite whatever a historian might think—that could be both "valid" and yet unhistorical at the same time?

These are questions that can be applied equally to the problem of how Old Comedy was related to iambos, where the historicity of a generic relationship—which is to say, clear evidence that the former descended organically and formally from the latter—cannot be well established. We are left, instead, with impressions from the poets of Old Comedy, as I discussed in OCTT, that remind us of Horace on satire: they sensed that what they were doing with their comedies was somehow "like" an antecedent genre, even if they would have been unable to make a historically legitimate argument for lineage and descent. Their clear interest in iambos, however, like Horace's interest in Old Comedy, ought to be sufficient to prompt us, in turn, at the very least to consider what inspired this interest in the first place.

To answer this question, it is helpful for us to think in terms of a genre's "dynamics" rather than any static qualities of form or language. What distinguishes one genre from another, to rephrase my earlier question, becomes more a matter of what they do than of what they are.9 This approach allows us to reframe our search for a genre's defining features by asking what it is about a given literary work that no other genre would be able to replicate in quite the same way, and with the same effect. In the case of iambos, Old Comedy and even Roman satire, I have argued elsewhere that the concept of "satire" is a reasonably good start, for "satire" is a broad term that is not defined by specific literary elements—metres, or structures or performance protocols—but rather by its dynamics, the way it sets out to construct a particular relationship between an author and an audience over against some other person or abstract thing. Satirical authors may draw on a common arsenal of tropes or devices (obscenity, low diction, paroyme and personal mockery, just to name a few), but none of these itself defines satire, and most of them can be found in any number of other genres. Greek orators, lyric poets and even tragedians mock individuals, use obscenity or engage in parody, and in such moments we may even say that these authors are being "satirical."94 But to use that adjective is to imply that there is something we consider "true satire," different from the examples that we label "satirical."95 What distinguishes genres of satire from genres that may merely incorporate satire, is that the work of the former—the ergon or telos of satire, to borrow terms that Aristotle uses for the function and aim of tragedy96—is understood by audiences, authors and critics to be laughter.97 This is laughter of a rather specific kind, of course, but it always lurks behind the mockery and ridicule found in this kind of literary work, and there usually is no further telos, despite an author's occasional (and equally humorous) claims to the contrary. Aschroeth may pepper a forensic or persuasive speech, for example, and elicit laughter from its audience at that moment, but laughter is hardly that work's telos; it functions more as rhetorical spice—strategically deploying humour in a work that is not otherwise generically characterized as comic.98 Even the

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93 See Workman 2008, on the wide range of classical Greek authors who deploy these many abusive tropes. These tropes allow us to consider many of these authors "satirical," but not necessarily "satirists.
95 On Aristotle's use of the terms ergon ("function") and telos ("aim") for tragedy in Poetics, see Halliwell 2003: 204–5; and Woodrufl 2009. In the end, Aristotle is not particularly explicit in his use of these terms, and Halliwell's summary (2008: 240) exposes Aristotle's thinking here as almost circular: "...the end or function of tragedy is not presented by Aristotle as a matter of some single, discrete factor. It involves, rather, the complex, harmonious fulfillment of the "nature" of the genre, and that is something that embraces all the major principles set out in the Poetics—principles of structure and unity, of agency and character, of the arousal of the genre's defining emotions." Does this amount to saying that the nature of tragedy is to do it fulfill its nature? The function of satire is, by contrast, much easier to articulate than that of tragedy, since it involves a rather specific recipe of shock or complaint plus humour. Aristotle himself seemed to realize. See further discussion below.
96 On the laughter associated with mockery, ridicule, derision, insult—all features of what we call "satire" in Greek culture, see Halliwell 2008: 24–25.
97 See Workman 2008: 133–34, where she argues that "in fourth-century prose, comedy...was becoming a resource for the kind of outrageous character assassination that entertains the audience and furthered argument" (132).
frequent didactic claims one associates with satirical authors, disingenuous or not, are subservient to the work's goal of humouring an audience.66

In considering the relationship between *iambic* and comedy, therefore, we can more easily lay aside the many formal or contextual differences between the two that scholars have legitimately pointed out and instead look at the *work* each is trying to accomplish. What we find, I think, are strikingly parallel dynamics in play – an author singles out another person for ridicule, usually ingnignant over that person's behaviour or some other abstract issue of the day in which that person is implicated; he speaks to, or in front of, any audience of people who are supposed to be sympathetic listeners; and in the course of his attacks, he makes an audience laugh. It is easy to anticipate objections that such a formulation is simplistic and incomplete – surely not every iambic or comic poet at every moment in a given work is engaged in this very enterprise; and there are, of course, many other aspects of their works that seem to have nothing to do with invective or mockery.67 But if we start with the (almost tautological) fact that both *iambos* and Old Comedy are comic genres, and consider what the preponderant nature of that comedy is – namely, what kind of humour these genres most rely on to distinguish themselves from other comic forms – it is clear that this would be the comedy of personal mockery. It is worth noting, moreover, that *iambos* and Old Comedy are the only literary genres (certainly the only poetic genres) of Greek antiquity about which this can be said.68

66 Satirists consistently make didactic claims for their ridicule and invigilation, but such claims tend to be complicated, if not undermined, by their heavy use of (generically indicated) humour and irony. See Rosens (2012a).

67 This notion is what seems to have persuaded E. Bowie 2001, 2001 that *iambos* has been wrongly conceptualized as, at root, a genre of mockery and blame: 'Iambos was a form of poetry in which a number of identifying features regularly appeared' (2001: 57), and mockery was simply one of those features. 'No one of these features,' he continues, 'needed to be present for a poem to be recognized as (in) *iambos*.' Here we confront again the vexatious question of what we think we are describing – a historical phenomenon that would have been recognizable to contemporary audiences, or a conceptual construct that only crystallized as a genre over time (Rotondo's much subtler 'received iambos', see above n. 13). The problem is knowing when to consider that a genre has 'come into being' in the first place. If there really were archaic performances of *iambos* that could be completely devoid of anything we might consider, broadly construed, satirical (which I very much doubt, but here our evidence is too incomplete to judge for sure either way), we can see justified in referring to such performances as 'iambos' to begin with, especially in light of the fact that later antiquity almost universally came to regard blame and mockery as 'identifying features' of *iambos* and would not readily refer to something as 'iambic' that did not include mockery? See Rotondo 2001, 195–45, a chapter with the revealing title, 'Innovative as the Dominant Feature of *Iambos*'.

Rotondo 2001: 96–7, 7. In her analysis of Aristotelon's use of the same terms *pugno* and *iambos*, says our Aristotelon's varying stance on the matter clearly but, like Bowie, she focuses on the issue of individual *iambos* that may not actually contain abuse; the different forms of abuse figure only in part of the works by poets of the 'received iambos', while they are found in other genres of poetry as well (197). See above, p. 89, on the difference between satire at a genre and genres that merely incorporate satirical elements but do something else, generically speaking. To put this another way, if we find a poet with no abuse by a poet who otherwise has a predilection for abuse, does that mean that the poet cannot be considered, in terms of generic congruence, a poet of abuse? It seems more profitable to identify an author's genre as a function of his entire known oeuvre, and of what we can know about what this oeuvre is supposed – by author and audiences alike – to be doing. No one would ever say, for example, that Euripides is not a tragedian because his plays sometimes consist of scenes that play like love lyric, pastoral or comedy. Rotondo 2001: 345 it is sight to say that 'invective is not a literary genre', but 'invective' is not synonymous with 'satire', which, even if we are unwilling to regard it as a bona fide genre as such, is certainly a literary mode that can define certain authors and the genres they work in. In this is surely what *Pindar* 5.1.1–7, is, in mind in his complaint about Archilochus as *poetos* (i.e. a 'blamer'), but in the context of Archilochus' comic aims, not far from our term 'satirist'), whether or not we should assume that Pindar has Archilochus' *iambos* specifically in mind here (cf. Rotondo 2001: 197). Pindar's insight into Archilochus is not that everything Archilochus composed was blame poetry, but that so much of it was. 'Blackening' could be found in his work that he can legitimately be characterized with an adjective that reflects this (poetos). See also Nage 1972: 42–6: Rossen 2007: 71, 250. That term, in other words, would still have meaning even in the context of a non-inventive, non-satirical form. Of course, in the end, one has to concede that not enough Archilochus poetry survives to make any very certain judgement about the variations in generic character across his different works; which is why the testimony of a witness relatively close in time to Archilochus, such as Pindar, is all the more revealing.

68 See above, nos. 12, 13.

69 Rossen 2001: 48, whose term denial that Aristotle could have had any notion of 'deuces' in mind when he noted similarities between iambos and comedy seems overconfident, based as it is on an argument in *Ethics* that Aristotle did not (think Old Comedy was descended from *iambos*) is further demonstrated by his total silence on iambic *iambos*... when he alludes to... the origins...
question is just how Aristotle conceived of their relationship. The case I would like to make on this point is this: even though Aristotle imagines a more or less conventional diachronic history of tragedy at the beginning of Poetics, he is not really concerned with trajectories of 'influence' or authorial self-consciousness. His notions of literary evolution derive rather from a phenomenological analysis and taxonomizing of literary forms and dynamics, and from an attempt to extrapolate from this commonalities among different works. This is why Bowie imagines a false problem when he voices scepticism that Aristotle saw Old Comedy as a 'direct descendent' of iambos, since Aristotle does not seem especially concerned to make an argument for direct descent here.

The relevant passage from Poetics (1448b24-1449a1) is worth considering here with these issues in mind:

διεξόπησθε δὲ κατὰ τὰ ὁμοϊα ήθη ἡ ποιήσις: οἱ μὲν γὰρ συμμετέρει τὰς καλὰς ἐμμοῦντο πράξεις καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, οἱ δὲ οὗτοι ἐνδιατηρεῖ τὰς τῶν φύσεως, πρὸκειται πάντως, ὡσπερ ἐγξερχόμενοι καὶ ἐγκόσμους, τῶν μὲν οὖν πρὸ Ὀμήρου σύστικοι ἔχουσι εἰπέν τοιουτοὺς ποιήσεις, εἰκὸς δὲ εἶναι πολλοὺς, ἀπὸ δὲ Ὀμήρου δρελόκοιτοι ἰστιν, οὐν λέοντος καὶ Μαρτίνης καὶ τὰ τοιούτα. ἐν οἷς κατὰ τὸ δρόμον καὶ τὸ λαβαδίν ἥδη μέτρον—διὸ καὶ λαμβάνον καλλίτας νῦν, ὡς ἐν τῷ μέτρῳ τούτῳ λάμβανεν ἅλλης καὶ ἐγκόσμου τῶν ποιημάτων αἱ μὲν ἁρκοῦκας οἱ δὲ ἐλάμβανον ποιήται, ὡσπερ δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ στιχοδαχτυλίδες σηματά ποίησις Ὀμήρου ἡ (μόνος γὰρ οὖν ὃτι οὐ ἄλλοι καὶ μιμητές δραματικά ἐπιτείνησαν), οὕτω καὶ τῇ τῆς κοιμάλαις σχῆμα πρῶτος ὑπεθέντοις, οὐσίαν ἐν τῇ γένους δραματικάς ἔποςεν: ὁ γὰρ Μαρτίνης ἠράκοιν ἔχει, ὡσπερ τιλας καὶ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια πρὸς τὰς τραγῳδίας, οὕτω καὶ οὕτως πρὸς τῆς κοιμάλαις, παραφανσίας δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας καὶ κοιμάλαις οἱ πρὸς ᾧ πολλοὶ τῆς ποιήσεως δρόμους κατὰ τὴν σκηνὴν φύσιν οἱ μὲν ὡς ὧν τῶν λαμβάνεται καλλόστιτοι εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ἀνή αἰτῶ τῶν ἑπάνω τραγῳδιδιδασκαλίαν, διὸ τὸ μέτρον καὶ ἵπτισμεν τὰ σχῆμα εἶναι τοῦτα διάλειον.

Poetry branched into two, according to its creators' characters: the more serious produced mimeta of noble actions and the actions of noble people, while the more vulgar depicted the actions of the base, in the first place by composing invectives (just as others produced hymns and encomia). Now, we cannot name such an invective by any poet earlier than Homer, though probably many poets produced them; but we can do so from Homer onwards, namely the latter's Marginari and the like. In these poets, it was apparent which brought the iambic metre too into use — precisely why it is called the 'iambic' now, because it was in this metre that they lampooned one another. Of the older poets some became composers of epic hexameters, others of iambic lampoons. Just as Homer was the supreme poet of elevated subjects (for he was preeminent not only in quality but also in composing dramatic mimeta), so too he was the first to delineate the forms of comedy, by dramatizing not invective but the laughable: thus Marginari stands in the same relation to comedies as do the Iliad and the Odyssey to tragedies. And when tragedy and comedy had been glimpsed (i.e. in Homer), those whose own nature gave them an imperus towards either type of poetry abandoned their own metre to become the comic poets, or epic to become tragedians, because these newer forms were grander and more esteemed than the earlier.

In discussing this passage, Bowie concludes that Aristotle 'writes as if [iambos and comedy] had related features' rather than that the one was 'descended from or strongly influenced by the other' (my emphasis). Even if Aristotle were interested in making this specific point, which is hardly clear from the text, Bowie's scepticism raises an interesting methodological question — if one acknowledges that two genres have 'related features', as Bowie does, what does it take to transform these features into sufficient evidence for generic affiliation? Philosophers might recognize here a variation of the sortes-problem (how many individual grains of wheat does it take to make a 'heap'?), and the stakes are far from trivial. For establishing affiliation between literary genres brings us back to our original concern for discovering what each genre is actually trying to do. Put more concretely: if we think we understand what Hipponax is doing when he mocks Bupalus, and we think that, when Aristophanes mocks his targets, we can detect in him similar goals, formal structures, diction, and so on, a case for affiliation, if not descent, seems assured. Some might object, as Will and Bowie have done, that historical contingencies colour the nature of each poet's mockery too much to argue for anything but the most casual or coincidental affiliation. Why, for example, should we assume that a poet mocking a target in sixth-century BC Clazomenae should be after the same effect as a poet mocking a target in the fifth, when political structures and social relationships were different? Because, I think we can say, each poet would have the same answer to the following question: what are you really trying to do when you make fun of your targets — not at the localized, specific level, but at the most conceptual, poetic one? To this

of Aris comedy in phallic choruses performances. Again, it would have been very easy to say that pre-Crane comedy was a direct descendent of iambos... In fact, Aristotle does not have to mention iambos at 1448b24, because he had already dealt with it in the preceding section, where he had made it clear that iambic writers were precisely the ones who became writers of comedy (paul bowie 1998: 87): οἱ μὲν δὲν τῶν λαμβανομένων κοιμάλαις εἶναι (so some became poets of comedy instead of iambic verse).

33. See above, n. 30.
34. See above, n. 30.
36. See above, n. 15.
question, each would doubtless answer that he is ultimately interested in making his audience laugh, and the mode he has decided to adopt is one of satire and mockery; each would claim he has privileged a satirical mode because something about his targets annoys him, and the indignation that results allows him to fulfill his comic strategy.  

Exactly how each puts this together in a given poem is highly idiosyncratic, of course, but the same satirical scaffolding can be seen sturdily in place in each case, in examples from antiquity to the present.  

Aristotle himself also urges us not to fixate on the contingencies of individual authors and works, but rather to think in terms of literary telos, dynamics and a largely unconscious evolutionary process. The opening line of the passage quoted above is a key statement: διοικούσθαι δὲ κατὰ τὰ οὖντες ἡθον ἢ ποιήσις. "Poetry", he says, "splits apart according to poets' oikēs ἡθον", their 'individual characters'. By suggesting that poets are drawn to certain types of poetry according to their respective temperaments (οὐκ ἡθον), Aristotle attempts to isolate fixed, 'natural' categories that can unify a multiplicity of poetic forms, regardless of how these forms might relate to one another diachronically or as a function of authorial intention. Aristotle's phrasing of this process at 1449a is revealing:

παραφανεώσης δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας καὶ κομικῆς οὐ ἐκείνης τῆς ποίησις ὑμιλώντες κατὰ τὰ οὖντες φάσιν οὐ μὲν ἀντὶ τῶν μετὰ κομικῆς παραφανεών ἔγεντον, οὐ δὲ ἄντι τῶν ἐπὶ τραγῳδοδημοσκόποις, διὸ τὸ μέτωπα καὶ ἐντέρως τὸ σχῆμα ἐνόμισεν ταῦτα ἱκετέων.

And when tragedy and comedy had been glimpsed [in Homer], those whose own natures gave them an impetus towards either type of poetry abandoned andambs to become the comic poets, or epic to become tragedians, because these newer forms were grander and more esteemed than the earlier.  

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31 See Rouse 2007: 32–42, for a fuller exposition of the formal, and psychological, structure of satire.

32 See Rouse and Marks 1999, and Rouse and Baines 2002 for comparative studies of satirical poetics beyond classical authors. For Aristotle, the scaffolding seems to be what lies behind his use of the word (for the first time in recent Greek literature) ὑμιλῆς at 1448b3, now well discussed at Rostein 2000: 100–4, who sees up the meaning of the verb as to do what is typical of imabo as it was conceived in the fourth century bc, namely, as the enunciating, humorous, sometimes scandalous, comic, satirical, and ad hominem ridicule. Rostein would say that the idea of imabo as 'dominantly abusive' (102) was a conception that was developing in the fourth century, and then applied 'backwards to a pre-Homeric age'. Why she resists so categorically along with Rowe, the idea that early imabo might also have been 'dominantly abusive' (or at least, to use a phrase with broader connotations, 'dominantly satirical') in its own day eludes me, especially given the paucity of actual fragments from the period that would allow us to make definitive judgments either way.

33 There has been some dispute as to whether oikēs ἡθον refers here to poets or poetry, but see Lucas 1968: 75 ad loc.

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When poets began to see, through their experience with Homer, what tragedy and comedy were all about, they casted to one or the other (ὁμοίωσεν) in accordance with their φασίς. In the lines immediately preceding these Aristotle had already established that comedy, as he conceptualized it, was not identical to imabo, but he still could say that epic and imabic poets of an earlier age (καὶ ἔγεντον τῶν πολλάκις οὐ μὲν ἄριστον ὕμιλαν παραφανεων) could map on, by analogy, to the tragedy and comedy of his own day. The kind of person whose φασίς would have drawn him to imabo, in other words, would have had the same character as the person who in classical Athens would have been drawn to comedy.

Aristotle is grasping here for that certain something in both imabo and comedy that would appeal to a person with such a φασίς, their 'natural bent', irrespective of any arguments about how these genres might be interrelated from a diachronic perspective. In fact, it is striking that Aristotle makes a point of saying a few sections later (1449b) that there is no real memory of what came before comedy. The history of comedy's formal aspects -- for example its masks, prologues, number of actors -- was unknown because there were no records and no explicit cultural memory, at least none that he had recourse to (τις ἐξ ἀπόφθεγμα ἄριστον ἢ προλογίου ἢ πλῆθος ὑποκρίσεων καὶ διά τοιαῦτα, γνώμων, 1449b3). Even so, however, Aristotele has no trouble in positing a clear generic link between imabo and comedy based on his argument that each genre attracted practitioners whose temperaments were themselves linked by their predilection for satiric invective, whether or not they thought very much about how other genres deployed similar literary strategies.  

In short, for Aristotle, the many types of poetry that exist can be categorized according to the kinds of things that each purports to do or what others (audiences, critics) claim that they do. This is an inevitably imprecise procedure, and it is never quite clear what Aristotle regards as
the actual criteria for establishing generic categories. But when he says that certain personality types 'rush' (ὄφυμος·) to compose in one genre, these poets are rushing towards something, and that something is both real and specific in his mind. Iambos, for example, is for Aristotle a distinct subspecies of comedy, which is itself a subcategory of what he calls the non-serious (αὐτοσκώλος). It is, moreover, a form of comic poetry distinguished from others by its predilection for pagos – invective and mockery; it likes to make one set of people laugh by exposing others to mockery. Aristotle is not concerned if individual examples of iambos can be found that might not feature a pagos; it is enough for him to know that this is the type of poem where a pagos could be tight at home and, equally important, that its author is the type of person who could be characterized as pagos. When we arrive at Old Comedy, it is obvious, and often noted, that not every episode of every Aristophanic play is satirical or invective. But if we were to ask Aristotle what sort of person a poet of Old Comedy would be, there can be little doubt that he would say it was someone who loved a good pagos himself – someone who by nature (i.e. the keeping with his physics) revelled in being funny through personal mockery and who deployed the many literary tropes associated with such an enterprise. Such tropes themselves were not necessarily stable and could vary in detail from poet to poet, but on this point too Aristotle would doubtless have found unifying generic categories for them, if only by characterizing them all as low (πράσινος) and non-serious (cf. Poet, 1448b25-8, quoted above).

Aristotle’s basic position on the relationship between iambos and Old Comedy, therefore, is not, in the end, especially complicated; he did think they were related, in ways that I have discussed, and he did imagine some sort of historical relationship between them, although he had to remain agnostic about the details.40 He does not himself theorize a concept of generic affiliation, but it is clear that he is willing, unlike many scholars, to lay aside the many contingencies that individual works exhibit within the contexts of their production in favour of thinking in terms of a work’s ergon, and that this kind of thinking encourages a consideration of how different genres interact with one another. Aristotle’s insight about iambos was merely a first step in the generic analysis of iambos, but its significance lay in the way it articulated a literary dynamic – what we would call satire or mockery – that could serve as a meaningful criterion for generic classification without relying on specific authorial practices or self-consciousness. The question of a deliberate, authorially self-conscious, historically verifiable affiliation between iambos and Old Comedy is impossible to answer with much certainty in the current state of our evidence; but denying that there was one or remaining agnostic on the issue does not mean that the two could not be affiliated according to a different set of criteria that have more to do with how humans interact with each other in the world than how aware they always are of what they are actually doing.

40. Rosellini’s distinction (1990: 86–8) between Aristotle’s ‘theoretical’ and ‘empirical’ approaches to the history of poetry makes good sense up to a point, but I suspect the line between each approach were considerably more blurred for Aristotele: ‘... In the empirical approach drama and iambic songs are “historical” (“où is which”) instruments of tragedy and comedy ... in the theoretical approach, iambos appear as the conceptual simile but not deriving from consequent of pagos, which I argue is Aristotelian construct, and the conceptual instrument of comedy. It is not clear to me why the two approaches need be mutually exclusive, either for Aristotle or for ourselves. If Aristotle thought that iambic comedy were historically and most directly “out of” comic songs, and comic songs would have flourished the kinds of pagos the iambos, why would he have had any trouble in thinking that comic songs themselves had a historical – not only a conceptual – relationship with iambos, that they were “out of” iambos (for comedy and iambic songs see Chirico in this volume). In Aristotle’s speculative literary history, after all, all comic forms ultimately derived from the split between the poets of the “serious” and the “vulgar” non-serious (cf. ὁμιλητικοὶ αὐτοσκολοί τῆς καλῆς Ἀριστοτέλους πρᾶξις καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, 1448b10-11). It is true that he had no real evidence on which to base this statement, but he seems to have imagined that all those people with “poetic” poets, driven to compose in comic forms that involved what we would call “vulgar” people who had really existed. See Rosellin 1990, for the diversity of comic forms in Greek poetry that seem to have been around in the sixth century bc, as potential antecedents to elements found in fifth-century Attic comedy.
a way of reading that renounced the premise of polis-based civic utility in favour of a programme of scholarly inquiry which would neutralize comedy politically and subordinate it to the courtly project of ordering the literary universe under a divine monarch, the Pheidias tragédians made what would turn out to be a decisive contribution to the generational struggle of poetry and philosophy, comedy and tragedy, and finally Athens and Alexandria for ownership of the discourses of criticism: asserting an anti-Pepi(wait) model of how comedy should be read which deprecated anecdote, prosopography, and rhetorical and formalist theory in favour of a new kind of philologically informed close reading of the texts, and canonizing the comedians of tragedy's own golden age as the masters of the genre, in defiance of contemporary taste and practice. The absence of practising comedians from the early Museum may itself have been an essentially political fact; at any rate it left the field free for tragedians to claim critical ownership and canonization rights over comedy, after a century and a half of one-sided dialogue in which comedy had asserted its own unchallengable entitlement to discursive mastery of other genres and tragedy in particular. It seems clear enough that what we thought we knew about Lycophron is as wrong as what we once thought we knew about Euphronius, and that the real story of the founding fathers of scholarship on comedy is still waiting to be told. But their ultimate triumph in the contest to determine which comedies would be read and how was not merely a decisive episode in the history of literary scholarship and critical practice: it was also tragedy's final revenge for the Phege.

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