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Divine interventions and human agents in Menander

ἅπαντα σιγῶν ὁ θεὸς ἐξεργάζεται
(Men. fr. 462 K-T)

The presentation of the dramatic situation as the product of the initiative of a divine prologue speaker, and its outcome as the inevitable fulfilment of a plan conceived by him, is a stock feature of Menandrian comedy[1]. This feature, utilised in varying degrees in the Plautine *Rudens* and *Aulularia* (adapted from Diphilos and conceivably from Menander respectively) may have emanated from the world of Tragedy, Euripides' *Hippolytos*, *Bacchai* and *Ion* being cases in point[2]. Working within the traditions of New Comedy, Menander applies the mythological motif to social and domestic concerns, for it is within the framework of the family and of contemporary social conventions that the divine speaker is seeking to achieve his aims. This process, later to be paralleled in the above-mentioned Plautine adaptations, particularly the *Aulularia*, could have been a contemporary modification, possibly Menandrian, of an earlier pattern, portraying god-man relationships in the spirit of New Comedy. Thus it is possible that the motif in question was much less common in Old and Middle Comedy, and did not come into prominence until the poetic conventions of the later period, particularly those of Menandrian comedy, led to its stock appearance in New Comedy.

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[1] On the question of the relation between the divine prologue speaker and the human plot in Menander see esp. W. Ludwig, *Die plautinische «Cistellaria» und das Verhältnis von Gott und Handlung bei Menander*, Fondation Hardt, *Entretiens XVI: Ménandre* (Genève, 1970), 45-96; N. Holzberg, *Menander: Untersuchungen zur dramatischen Technik* (Nürnberg, 1974), 105ff. For the *Dyskolos* see below, n. 22.

[2] The analogy between Aphrodite's and Dionysos' role in Euripides' *Hippolytos* and *Bacchai* respectively and that of Pan in Menander's *Dyskolos* has been overemphasised by P.J. Photiades, *Greece & Rome* 5 (1958), 108ff. See below, n. 34. For the *Ion* see Ludwig, art. cit., 78; below, p. 90 with n. 33.

The influence of the divine speaker on the characters and their actions was, most probably, Menander's attempt to turn his plots into something more complex, deep and subtle than a mere dramatization of everyday reality, thus revealing a higher artistic control over traditional expectations. When Menander portrays his characters as working under divine guidance, fulfilling a scheme originally conceived by the divine prologue, attributing to themselves a measure of success or failure in the accomplishment of that scheme, he is in effect juxtaposing *two* perspectives: that of natural realism in which the dramatic characters act and behave in accordance with contemporary social conventions, and that of quasi-mythological dimensions, in which divine intimations are superimposed onto the generally realistic course of events. Such a juxtaposition could not fail to appeal to his highly sophisticated audience, brought up in an atmosphere of growing scepticism towards traditional religious values and beliefs, yet nevertheless constantly searching for substitute concepts and ideas[3]. Moreover, Menander must have drawn a further advantage from the interweaving of elements drawn from the divine sphere into the intimate domestic atmosphere of his plays, for the resultant disparity created comic and ironic effects, such as the occasional magnification of his characters and their experiences. The introduction of the divine scheme also provided Menander with a logical link between the divine speaker and the plot. In other words, in turning the divine speaker into a factor in the play's action, Menander was not only achieving the particular dramatic and comic effects he was seeking, but also rendering the plot as a whole more coherent from the point of view of both form and matter.

Let us now turn our attention to those of Menander's plays whose divine prologue has survived the centuries, whether wholly or in part, namely the *Aspis*, the *Perikeiromene* and the *Dyskolos*, in order to examine the employment of the mythological pattern. As we shall see, each play exemplifies a different aspect of divine influence on the

[3] For the religious and intellectual background of Menander's audience see W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (3rd edn., rev. by the author and G.T. Griffith; London, 1952), 325ff.; G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (London, 1935), 123ff.; Z. Stewart in *La società ellenistica: economia, diritto, religione (storia e civiltà dei greci* 8, ed. R. Bianchi Bandinelli (Milano, 1977), 503ff.; H. Lloyd-Jones, *SIFC* 77 (1984), 65f.

human plot, thus further underlining Menander's versatility as a playwright.

We begin with the *Aspis*[4]. The background to the plot is basically outlined by the goddess *Tyche*, Fortune, in a delayed prologue which has survived almost in its entirety. Smikrines' and Chairestratos' elder brother has died, leaving a son named Kleostratos and a daughter. Kleostratos has set out to seek his fortune in Asia as a mercenary, having entrusted his sister to the guardianship of his uncle Chairestratos, who, unlike his elder brother Smikrines, is distinguished for his rectitude and good nature. When Chairestratos realises that Kleostratos' stay in Asia is dragging on, he decides to marry the latter's sister to his step-son, Chaireas, himself providing the dowry. The date of the wedding is fixed for the day on which the plot begins to unfold, and, as the play starts, preparations for the occasion are at their height.

The appearance of the slave Daos, Kleostratos' pedagogue and personal attendant (Act. I, sc. 1), upsets the marriage plans. He enters bearing his master's shield, followed by a large retinue of slaves, maidservants and pack-animals, loaded with booty. He reports to Smikrines his young master's death in battle, exhibiting the shield as evidence. Old Smikrines, who is greedy and ill-natured, realises immediately that Kleostratos' death has put his sister in the position of ἐπίκληρος[5], «heiress» to his considerable property. He is thus likely to make use of his legal right to marry her as next of kin, a point which is developed at some length by the divine speaker, thus focusing the audience's attention on the play's main centre of interest.

However, the goddess *Tyche* makes it plain that Smikrines will be inexorably frustrated in his attempt to marry his niece: she reveals to the audience that Kleostratos is still alive and that the body of another soldier with whom he had exchanged shields had been mistakenly identified as his own. In fact, although at present in captivity, he will soon return safely. And *Tyche* goes on to specify the irony of the situation into which Smikrines has manoeuvred himself unawares (143-146):

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[4] A useful discussion of *Tyche*'s role in the *Aspis* is to be found in R.J. Konet, *CB* 52 (1976), 90-92.

[5] On which see D. Schaps, *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh, 1979), 25ff.

μάτην δὲ πράγμαθ' αὑτῶι καὶ πόνους
πολλοὺς παρασχὼν γνωριμώτερόν τε τοῖς
πᾶσιν ποήσας αὑτὸν οἷός ἐστ' ἀνὴρ
ἐπάνεισιν ἐπὶ τἀρχαῖα.

Now, had the *Aspis* been a simple variation of New Comedy's stock portrayal of domestic reality, Smikrines' frustration would have remained an exclusively intimate, exclusively humanly-motivated experience, but Menander chooses to elaborate the theme by making *Tyche* refer to herself in terms explicitly indicating her deep involvement in and absolute control over the dramatic situation (147-148):

τίς εἰμι, πάντων κυρία
τούτων βραβεῦσαι καὶ διοικῆσαι; Τύχη.

While such a representation of a divine prologue's relationship to the plot has no parallel in the surviving remains of Greek New Comedy or in its Latin adaptations, it nevertheless conforms most readily with the Hellenistic conception of *Tyche* as a divine force dominating human affairs[6]. To quote but one typical example, Demetrios of Phaleron's saying in his treatise *On Fortune*, written c. 317 B.C. (F. Gr. H. IIb 228.39 = Wehrli 81): «If you were to take not an indefinite time, nor many generations, but just the fifty years before this, you could see in them [sc. in the Macedonians and the Persians] the violence of Fortune. Fifty years ago do you suppose that either the Macedonians or the King of Macedon, or the Persians or the King of Persia, if some God had foretold them what was to come, would ever have believed that by the present time the Persians, who were then masters of almost all the inhabited world, would have ceased to be even a geographical name, while the Macedonians, who were then not even a name, would be rulers of all? Yet this Fortune, who bears no relation to our method of life, but transforms everything in the way we do not expect and displays her power by surprises, is at the present moment showing all the world that, when she puts the Macedonians

[6] See Tarn, *op. cit.*, 340; Murray, *op. cit.*, 131-134; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* II (Berlin, 1932) 298ff; M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* II (rev. München, 1961), 200ff.; *idem*, *Greek Piety* (Engl. trans. H.G. Rose; Oxford, 1948), 86f.; Roscher, *Lex. Myth.* V, s.v. *Tyche*, 1319ff.

into the rich inheritance of the Persians, she has only lent them these good things until she changes her mind about them.»[7]

Indeed, Menander's audience, who were accustomed to conceive of *Tyche*'s control over human affairs in absolute terms, undoubtedly thought her representation here of the relationship between herself and the plot of the *Aspis* to be a natural reflection of their own outlook, putting the comic characters and their experiences into a comprehensible perspective for them. In other words, in thus outlining the extent to which the plot of the *Aspis* as a whole is dominated by its divine prologue speaker, namely *Tyche*, Menander was not only increasing the comic potential of his play, but also rendering the comic situation more credible to his audience, urging them to regard Smikrines' frustration — the plot's main objective and centre of interest — in relation to their own daily experiences.

By sharing her plans with the audience, *Tyche* puts them in a position where they are able to judge the stage characters' reaction to events in an objective manner. The gap between the limited knowledge of the *dramatis personae* and the broader awareness of the audience consequently engenders a high degree of dramatic irony which is maintained throughout the play. The audience's superior knowledge enables them to see the meeting between Smikrines and Daos at the beginning of the play in a new thematic light: that of divine-human relationships and the gap between them. One has only to remember Smikrines' initial reaction to Daos' report about Kleostratos' death «τῆς ἀνελπίστου τύχης» (18) in order to appreciate fully the absurd position into which the old scoundrel has manoeuvred himself.

This, indeed, is how *Tyche*'s plan functions from the point of her utterance of it at 143ff. Immediately after the prologue, Smikrines reappears on the stage. His monologue makes it clear to the audience that *Tyche*'s influence is inexorably at work, and that its destined victim, namely Smikrines, is proceeding according to expectation on the way to his destruction (158-161):

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[7] Quoted by Polybius, XXIX 21 with reference to the defeat of Perseus, king of Macedon, by the Romans at Pydna in 168 B.C. Engl. trans. Murray, *op. cit.*, 133, n. 2. For further references to *Tyche* in Menander see e.g. frr. 295, 348, 417, 463, 464, 468, 486, 630, 632, 637, 788K-T.

τοὺς δὲ γινομένους γάμους
τούτους προειπεῖν βούλομ' αὐτοῖς μὴ ποεῖν.
ἴσως μὲν ἄτοπον καὶ λέγειν· οὐκ ἐν γάμοις
ἐστὶν γὰρ ἥκοντος τοιούτου νῦν λόγου.

This impression is strengthened when Smikrines proclaims to Daos his intention to marry his niece, but Daos refuses to support him in this initiative. Hurt and offended by Daos' evasive attitude, he asks the latter: «δοκῶ δέ σοι τι πρὸς θεῶν ἁμαρτάνειν;» (205). Daos' reply, «Φρύξ εἰμι· πολλὰ τῶν παρ' ὑμῖν φαίνεται / καλῶν ἐμοὶ πάνδεινα καὶ τοὐναντίον / τούτων» (206-208) may be taken to express criticism of the Athenian law on ἐπίκληροι[8], but, given the present context, there is a specific aspect to Smikrines' behaviour which lends an ironic colour to the discussion as a whole, namely, the fact that Smikrines, in his attempt to exercise his *legal right* to marry the girl, is in effect *wrong* from the point of view of the gods, represented here by *Tyche*.

Daos' emotional address to *Tyche* upon Smikrines' leaving the stage emphasises the irony in the situation of the characters in the play, who are involuntarily carrying out the plan of the divine prologue (213-215):

ὦ Τύχη,
οἵωι μ' ἀφ' οἵου δεσπότου παρεγγυᾶν
μέλλεις. τί σ' ἠδίκηκα τηλικοῦτ' ἐγώ;

Even more significant is his assertion at the end of the first Act that «τὸ τῆς τύχης / ἄδηλον» (248-249) which reaffirms the gap between the limited knowledge of the stage characters and the broader awareness of the audience, a gap which is to become a major source of comedy.

At the beginning of the second Act, Smikrines reiterates, this time to his brother Chairestratos, his intention to marry his niece. Chairestratos attempts to dissuade him, but to no avail (253ff.). The argument between the two sheds light on the power of the νόμος within the framework of which Smikrines acts, and puts into its proper

[8] The plot of the *Aspis* as a whole has been taken to express Menander's hostility to the institution of the epiklerate: D.M. MacDowell, *Greece & Rome* 29 (1982), 51; cf. E. Karabelias, *Rev. hist. du droit français et étranger* 48 (1970) 384ff.; E.G. Turner, *CE* 54 (1979), 120 (=*Proc. of the VII Congr. of the Intern. Federation of the Soc. of Class. Studies* I (Budapest, 1979), 254); but see P.G. McC. Brown, *CQ* 33 (1983) 412ff.; R. Lane Fox in *Crux*, ed. P.A. Cartledge & F.D. Harvey (Exeter, 1985), 229f. Daos' ethnic observation is a commonplace of Greek thought: Gomme & Sandbach ad 206; S.M. Goldberg, *The Making of Menander's Comedy* (London, 1980), 35.

perspective Chairestratos' limited ability to influence Smikrines. But at the same time there is in this argument a preview of the way in which *Tyche* influences the course of the action in the play, by temporarily subverting the social order through manipulation of the *dramatis personae* themselves. Indeed, here we see that *Tyche* who, to repeat Demetrios of Phaleron's above-quoted saying, «bears no relation to our method of life, but transforms everything in the way we do not expect and displays her power by surprises», and it is her power that Menander wishes to emphasise. This emphasis, gained by the exploitation of a concept completely opposed to *Tyche* in its nature, namely νόμος, must have appealed to the Athenian audience, lending an intellectual dimension to the plot as a whole. The power of νόμος is reiterated emphatically at the end of Chaireas', the initial would-be bridegroom's speech (297-298)[9]:

ἕτερον κύριον δ' αὐτῆς ποεῖ
ὁ νόμος ὁ τοὐμὸν οὐδαμοῦ κρίνων ἔτι.

Chaireas and Chairestratos are already in profound despair when the idea occurs to Daos to exploit Chairestratos' melancholy for an intrigue against Smikrines. Chairestratos should pretend to be dead, and his own daughter would thus also pass for an heiress, yet with a property four times larger than that of Kleostratos' sister. This would undoubtedly prove too great a temptation for the avaricious Smikrines, who would certainly prefer the new heiress to the previous one. Thus the way to Chaireas' union with his beloved would be cleared.

Daos' intrigue is, in fact, a variation of that chain of events, the product of *Tyche*'s planning, the initial imposition of which on Smikrines we have already seen at the play's inception. In both cases, we are dealing with a supposedly deceased relative (Kleostratos/Chairestratos), a presumed heiress (Kleostratos' sister/Chairestratos' daughter), and with the deeply embedded greed in Smikrines' character exploited (by *Tyche*/the *dramatis personae* seemingly without *Tyche*) to achieve the desired ends. While in the first case there is no question of private initiative by the characters involved,

[9] For the contrast between Love and Law, expressed in Chaireas' speech, see D.M. MacDowell, art. cit., 42ff.

this is far from being so in the second case. Here, the wishes of the protagonists coincide with those of *Tyche*, when they proceed to carry out unawares the final and most decisive stage in the performance of *Tyche*'s overall plan. The analogy between the situation arising from Kleostratos' presumed death and that arising from Chairestratos' feigned decease and its implications for Smikrines highlights the close connection between the divine and human plans. So does Daos' amused answer to Chairestratos' question «ἐγὼ δὲ τί ποῶ;» (380): «ταῦτα ⟨τὰ⟩ βεβουλευμένα. / ἀπόθνησκ' ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ» (380-381)[10].

Daos' plan is approved and immediately put into effect. Smikrines is informed by Daos that Chairestratos has suddenly been taken ill and is in a critical condition. With Daos' repeated reference to the element of chance which rules human affairs[11], a new dimension is added to the situation: the human protagonist here represents the feigned events as being caused by chance, while participating unwittingly in the plans of a divine entity of which chance, from the human point of view, is the main characteristic. The dramatic irony is therefore at its height.

A friend of Chaireas appears disguised as a doctor, and confirms to Smikrines that Chairestratos is about to die. At this point 205 verses are missing, and for the rest of the play we have barely fragmentary evidence (almost nothing remains of Acts IV and V), so we cannot examine the human-divine relationship in the play beyond this point.

It is plausible to assume that Smikrines was tempted to believe in Chairestratos' death and acted as expected. At any rate, near the end of the play (Act IV?) Kleostratos returns home and is warmly welcomed by his slave Daos. In the fifth Act a double marriage apparently took place — that of Chaireas with Kleostratos' sister, and that of Kleostratos with Chairestratos' daughter. It is tempting to believe that the end of the play contained a «punishment» scene in which Smikrines was pestered by Daos and the cook after the manner

[10] See also Chaireas' statement in 370-373 which is reminiscent of *Tyche*'s depiction (143-146) of Smikrines' future fate quoted above.

[11] See the tragic quotations in 411, 416-417; and Daos' own comments on the situation 400-403, 408-409.

of Knemon's treatment by Getas and Sikon at the end of the *Dyskolos*[12].

While in the *Aspis* the goddess *Tyche* exploits the protagonist's, namely Smikrines', natural tendencies — greed, wickedness and selfishness — in order to fulfil her plan, in the *Perikeiromene* the divine prologue speaker, *Agnoia*, Ignorance, achieves her aim by introducing into the protagonist's, namely Polemon's, behaviour an element which is in sharp contrast to his normal disposition. The fact that we are dealing here with a *negative* pattern of behaviour explicitly exploited by the goddess, in order to achieve an aim which is *positive* in essence, lends the play a special character and sets it in a different category from both the *Aspis* and the *Dyskolos* from the point of view of human-divine relationships. But before proceeding to dwell on the dramatic and thematic significance of this intervention of *Agnoia* which preceded the opening of the *Perikeiromene*, let us outline the background to the play, as presented to us in the almost entirely extant divine prologue and deduced by us from later scenes.

Some eighteen years before the dramatic opening of the play, a Corinthian (?) merchant, Pataikos, shocked by his wife's death and by the sinking of his ship in the Aegean sea, had exposed his new-born children, his son Moschion and his daughter Glykera. The children were saved by an old woman, who kept Glykera for herself and handed Moschion for adoption (?)[13] to a wealthy woman named Myrrhine. Subsequently, when Corinth was afflicted by war and troubled times, the old woman gave Glykera to a mercenary of Corinthian descent named Polemon, and, before her death, revealed to Glykera the truth about her origin and her brother's identity, depositing with her the swaddling clothes of both foundlings. Glykera, unwilling to damage Moschion's social status and future career, refrained from publicising their kinship, and even when she and Polemon moved next door to Myrrhine, she maintained her silence. Moschion, a loose and unruly young man, soon conceived a passion for his pretty neighbour. One evening, as she was standing in the doorway giving orders to her maidservant, he fell upon her, smothering her with hugs and kisses. Knowing that this was her brother, Glykera showed no resistance, and

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[12] H. Lloyd-Jones, *GRBS* 12 (1971), 189; T.B.L. Webster, *An Introduction to Menander* (Manchester, 1974), 126f.

[13] Gomme & Sandbach, 502.

when he took leave of her and promised to see her again she burst out crying for not being permitted to see him as much as she pleased. Her conduct aroused Polemon's jealousy. Whether he himself had witnessed what had happened, as is implied by lines 157-158, or whether he was informed of events by his slave Sosias, as maintained by some scholars[14], he reacted with a violent rage — ὀργή — which was out of keeping with his character (162ff.). He summoned Glykera, humiliated her by cutting her hair, and left home. When the play opens he is staying somewhere in town (at an inn or in a friend's house), together with Sosias his slave, getting drunk in company with his friends.

We know nothing of the part of the play which preceded *Agnoia*'s prologue, apart from the fact that Polemon and Glykera took part in it (127-130, 158). It has been surmised that the play opened with Polemon's dawn return from some battle, and his meeting with Sosias who informed him of what had happened the previous day between Glykera and Moschion, whereupon he reacted as related by *Agnoia*[15]. Another hypothesis is that it was Polemon who appeared first with a monologue in which he reported the events of the previous evening and gave vent to his outraged emotions[16]. Upon his exit in Sosias' company, Glykera emerged from within the house bewailing her violent treatment by Polemon and announcing her intention to seek refuge with Myrrhine. This is indeed precisely what she sets about doing later on in the first Act, immediately after the prologue. Another possible reconstruction extends the exposition to include other protagonists, notably Moschion and Pataikos, who subsequently appears as one of Polemon's drinking mates, and may be the friend with whom he stays[17].

Whatever the precise nature of the exposition, it was mainly concerned with Polemon's outburst of temper. Indeed, it is Polemon's very action in cutting Glykera's hair (which may well have taken place

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[14] Gomme & Sandbach, 467f.; T.B.L. Webster, *Studies in Menander* (2nd ed. Manchester, 1960), 5; *idem*, *Introd.* 169.

[15] See e.g. Gomme & Sandbach, 468; Webster, *SM*, *ibid.*; *idem*, *Introd.*, *ibid.*

[16] A. Körte, *Menandri quae supersunt* I (3rd ed. rev. A. Thierfelder, Leipzig, 1955) XXIXf.

[17] Chr. Jensen, *Menandri reliquiae in papyris et membranis servatae* (Berlin, 1929) XXXIf.; Gomme & Sandbach, 469. For further reconstructions see bibliography in Gomme & Sandbach, *ibid.*

on the stage)[18] on which we should concentrate. Engineered by *Agnoia* in order to reunite Pataikos' family, it demonstrates the ambivalent nature of the divine influence in the play. As *Agnoia* herself claims (162-170):

> πάντα δ' ἐξεκάετο
> ταῦθ' ἕνεκα τοῦ μέλλοντος, εἰς ὀργήν θ' ἵνα
> οὗτος ἀφίκητ' — ἐγὼ γὰρ ἦγον οὐ φύσει
> τοιοῦτον ὄντα τοῦτον, ἀρχὴν δ' ἵνα λάβηι
> μηνύσεως τὰ λοιπά — τούς θ' αὑτῶν ποτε
> εὕροιεν· ὥστ' εἰ τοῦτ' ἐδυσχέρανέ τις
> ἀτιμίαν τ' ἐνόμισε, μεταθέσθω πάλιν.
> διὰ γὰρ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ κακὸν εἰς ἀγαθὸν ῥέπει
> γινόμενον.

Agnoia's reference to the indignant reaction of the audience (possibly to a scene that had just taken place before their very eyes) would have had its full dramatic effect only in the context of the protagonist's deviation from a long-accepted code of social behaviour. By making *Agnoia* draw attention to this deviation Menander is here exhorting the audience to liberate themselves from the shackles of stock reactions and stock characterisation and forcing them to ponder the unusual nature of the divinely-motivated human drama which will be unfolded before them.

Agnoia's explanation of the nature and function of Polemon's act widens the gap between the audience's awareness and that of the *dramatis personae*. The audience's fuller knowledge of events enables them to distinguish between the negative quality of the act and its positive consequences. Thus the characters in the play adhere to the conventional concept of Polemon's act, while the audience are capable of seeing it in a new and wider perspective, that of human-divine relations and the gap between appearance and reality.

Following *Agnoia*'s speech, the audience await with interest the positive consequences which are supposed to follow from Polemon's

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[18] This is implied by *Agnoia*'s reference to the repugnant response of the audience (quoted below) as well as by the participial title of the play — *Perikeiromene* — «She who has her hair cut»: Webster, *SM*, 5f.; Gomme & Sandbach, 468. Such participial titles may allude to a particularly effective dramatic scene — in our case most probably part of the exposition — as in Menander's *Epitrepontes* (Act II) and *Synaristosai* (Plautus' *Cistellaria*, Act I, sc. 1); Diphilos' *Kleroumenoi* (Plautus' *Casina*, Act II, sc. 6) and *Synapothneskontes* (Terence's *Adelphoe*, Act II, sc. 1; see Prol. 6-11). See however Gomme & Sandbach, *ibid.*

negative act. The manner in which the initial κακόν is turned into ἀγαθόν, to use *Agnoia*'s own words (169), further demonstrates Menander's artistic ability in depicting the relation between the divine and the human plot in his plays.

Immediately after the prologue, Sosias, Polemon's slave, makes his appearance on the pretext of having been sent to fetch his master's civilian cloak, but his true purpose is to keep an eye on what is going on in Polemon's house. There is a reference at the very beginning of the monologue to Polemon's violent behaviour (173-174):

> ὁ σοβαρὸς ἡμῖν ἀρτίως καὶ πολεμικός,
> ὁ τὰς γυναῖκας οὐκ ἐῶν ἔχειν τρίχας...

Doris, Glykera's maid-servant, who is at that moment on her way to Myrrhine's neighbouring house in order to ask her to give temporary shelter to her mistress, cannot refrain from expressing her negative view about her mistress's lover (185-188):

> δυστυχής,
> ἥτις στρατιώτην ἔλαβεν ἄνδρα. παράνομοι
> ἅπαντες, οὐδὲν πιστόν. ὦ κεκτημένη,
> ὡς ἄδικα πάσχεις.

These two initial references to Polemon's act form part of a whole range of direct and indirect literary devices by means of which Menander draws attention to the implications of this act for both Polemon himself and the rest of the *dramatis personae*, thus underscoring the dramatic and thematic value of the relationship between the divine prologue speaker and the plot. Let us review these devices briefly in order to illustrate an important feature of Menander's dramatic technique in the *Perikeiromene*.

At the end of Act I, Myrrhine's slave Daos makes it plain that his mistress has decided to grant temporary shelter to Glykera (262ff.). Since this arrangement is already a *fait accompli* at the beginning of the second Act, it may reasonably be surmised that Glykera moved to stay with Myrrhine immediately upon the latter's agreement, i.e. within the gap of about 70 verses following Doris' monologue (191ff.)[19]. Thus it is possible for Menander to open the next Act with

[19] See Gomme & Sandbach, 479; Webster, *SM*, 8. Since Sosias is still ignorant of these facts when he reappears in 354ff., he must have left Polemon's house *before* he could learn about them: Gomme & Sandbach, ad 188-190.

a dialogue between Daos and Moschion in which the latter is misled into believing that Glykera's stay with Myrrhine was arranged by Daos himself to accommodate his master's desire. Moschion's passion for Glykera, reflected so vividly in his contradictory reactions to Daos' proposal to arrange a love affair between his master and Polemon's ex-mistress, serves to offset Polemon's state of depression as revealed by his slave Sosias, who reappears immediately after Daos and Moschion have re-entered Myrrhine's house, bearing Polemon's military cloak and sword (354ff.).

Again, Sosias' present task, to return these objects to Polemon's house, is but a camouflage for his real duty — to ascertain the state of affairs in his master's house — but, in contrast with his attitude during his first mission, one is struck by the strong note of pity in his discussion of his master's condition (358-360):

> ... εἰ μή γε παντάπασιν αὐτὸν ἠλέουν.
> κακοδαίμον' οὕτω δεσπότην οὐδ' ἐνύπνιον
> ἰδὼν γὰρ οἶδ'. ὦ τῆς πικρᾶς ἐπιδημίας.

Should we see in this expression of sympathy an indication of the decreasing significance of the theme of Polemon's violent ὀργή in the play? The sequel of the plot, as reflected in the remains of the play, precludes any such suggestion. Shocked to discover that his mistress has moved to her neighbour's house, Sosias threatens to put Myrrhine's house under blockade. Doris tries to convince him that Glykera's stay with Myrrhine has nothing to do with Moschion, and only her fear of Polemon — yet another reminder of his act (400ff.) — has driven her to seek refuge there, but to no avail. In the gap that follows (60 lines, approximately), Sosias apparently informs Polemon of Glykera's flight. Hearing his report, Polemon puts Myrrhine's house under siege with the aid of some of his friends, probably soldiers, his slave Sosias and a flute-girl named Habrotonon. The following portion of the text resumes the plot in the middle of an argument between Polemon and Pataikos, his old friend. Pataikos clearly objects to the blockade. Line 467 implies that at some point during the missing section Pataikos has been to Myrrhine's house, apparently to mend the quarrel between his friend and Glykera. He has been prevented from carrying out his undertaking by the commencement of the siege, and he leaves Myrrhine's house to beg Polemon to lift it[20].

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[20] Gomme & Sandbach, ad 407-466; Webster, *SM*, 10; *Introd.* 170.

His initiative arouses *Sosias*' fury. He accuses Pataikos of having been bribed to betray Polemon's «army» to the «enemy», i.e. Myrrhine's household (467-468), and, turning to Polemon, he declares (478-479):

> κακῶς διοικεῖς. τὸν πόλεμον διαλύσεται,
> ἐξὸν λαβεῖν κατὰ κράτος.

Sosias' ὀργή is a comic reflection of Polemon's initial state of mind, and contrasts very strikingly with Polemon's ultimately acceding, however reluctantly, to Pataikos' request.

While the setting of the blockade by Polemon was but another expression of the continuing influence on Polemon of the divinely initiated ὀργή, the argument which follows (486-503) introduces the human reasons, logical and legal, for its lifting. Pataikos points out that Polemon's desire to treat Glykera as his wife has no legal foundation, and that she is perfectly free to leave him whenever she chooses (489ff.). He does not hesitate to relate Polemon's present violent behaviour to his past violence (492ff.), thus focusing Polemon's attention on the nature of his relationship with Glykera in general. He reminds him that the course of βία he is choosing to follow will have judicial consequences, and stresses the damage which may befall Polemon if he continues to act in this manner (500ff.). The only way open to Polemon to recover Glykera is persuasion (498f.).

Slowly and reluctantly, Polemon allows himself to be convinced. He beseeches Pataikos to act as a go-between and to talk to Glykera on his behalf (502ff.). Pataikos agrees, and thereby another possible act of ὀργή is circumvented, while the ὀργή itself makes way for an act of persuasion. Menander's treatment of Polemon's ὀργή fits in completely with the general truth expressed by one of his characters in an unknown play (fr. 518K-T):

> οὐκ ἔστιν ὀργῆς, ὡς ἔοικε, φάρμακον
> ἄλλ' ἢ λόγος σπουδαῖος ἀνθρώπου φίλου.

It may be an exaggeration to claim that Pataikos' intervention here and the thwarting of another act of violence on Polemon's part are directly initiated by *Agnoia*'s influence, but undoubtedly we have here a turning-point in the play in which the initial κακόν is rendered ἀγαθόν. It is the very course of violence which Polemon intends to follow that causes Pataikos to intervene and try to divert Polemon to another, more positive, type of action. Again, it is this intervention of Pataikos that enables him to rediscover his daughter during their

conversation at the opening of the fourth Act, of which we possess a considerable part. Moreover, in this present Act, the audience are presented with firm proof that ὀργή is *not* an integral part of Polemon's character, as evidenced in particular in his enthusiastic support for the peaceful course of action proposed by Pataikos (511-513).

In the fourth Act, where father and daughter recognise one another, the positive consequences of Polemon's initial negative act are all the more obvious. Glykera, hurt and offended by the stain on her honour caused by Polemon's extreme action against her, proudly refuses to forgive Polemon (708ff.). She *insists* upon proving her free descent to Pataikos (742ff.). At her order, Doris brings out the box which contains Glykera's swaddling clothes (755ff.). Pataikos, who apparently had already glanced at the box while inspecting Glykera's wardrobe at Polemon's request during the previous Act (516ff.), now recognises the figures embroidered on them as his wife's handiwork (758ff.). After a short investigation, Pataikos identifies Glykera as his lost daughter (823). It turns out that his son's tokens are no longer in Glykera's possession, yet they have somehow come into the hands of Moschion, who has been eavesdropping on their conversation right from its early stages (815ff.). Now, as he stealthily listens to Glykera's reply to her father concerning the tokens, he identifies them as his own. He emerges from hiding, reveals himself to his sister and father, and the family is reunited[21].

It was clearly the brutality of Polemon's act, as a result of which Glykera's honour was stained, that made the latter disclose her secret box to Pataikos, thus bringing about the *Anagnorisis* between her and her father. Thus the process by which the initial κακόν has resulted in ἀγαθόν is completed, and *Agnoia*'s aim has been achieved.

Following the *Anagnorisis* in the fourth Act, the protagonists move from a state of *Agnoia* — ignorance — to one of knowledge.

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[21] Moschion's monologue 526ff. is interrupted in a long gap — about 160 verses — which covers the end of Act III and the beginning of Act IV. When he reappears after the gap, it turns out that he has already got wind of his kinship with Glykera. We shall possibly never know how this happened. Was it Myrrhine, who disclosed the secret to her adoptive (?) son in an attempt to prevent his entanglement in an incestuous love affair with his own sister (Gomme & Sandbach, 511-513)? Or was it perhaps Daos, who learned the truth by eavesdropping upon a conversation between Myrrhine and Glykera, referred to in 791-793 (Webster, *SM*, 13; *idem*, *Introd.* 170)?

Therefore there is no more room in the fifth Act, of which only a small section has come down to us, for further elaboration of the theme of Polemon's ὀργή. We learn that Polemon has been informed, either by Sosias or by Doris, of Glykera's kinship with Moschion (985ff.). Doris is sent by Polemon to Glykera in a further attempt at mediation. The latter has meanwhile been persuaded, probably by Pataikos, to make up her quarrel with her lover (1006ff.). When Doris returns with the good news, Polemon hurries home to make an offering to the gods. To Pataikos and Glykera, whom he later meets as they emerge from Myrrhine's house, he describes it as a thankgiving sacrifice for Glykera's good fortune which has helped her to find her lost family (1010ff.). Pataikos betrothes Glykera to Polemon.

In fact, from the point of view of the formal plot, it would have sufficed to have Polemon's promise that he would never repeat his behaviour (1018ff.), and to have concluded the play at this point. But Menander, who is seeking a two-dimensional representation of his characters, chooses to put into Pataikos' (?) mouth a statement which strongly reminds the audience of *Agnoia*'s remarks at the end of her speech (1021-1022; cf. 164-166 quoted above):

> νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν γέγονεν ἀρχὴ [πραγμάτων
> ἀγαθῶν τὸ σὸν πάροινον.

Disregarding the irony of Pataikos' situation in expressing unawares the ideas of the goddess, we have here for the first time the coalescence of the human and divine points of view. The dramatic circle opened with *Agnoia*'s revelation is closed here, emphasizing the ambivalent function of the ὀργή element in the plot. Clearly, *Agnoia*'s plans have been carried out according to expectation and in the manner in which she intended.

The two plays we have been discussing represent, each in its own way, a pattern of human-divine plot relationship which does not entail the intervention of the divine prologue speaker in the later dramatic developments. The divine prologue contents himself with setting in motion a chain of events which finally leads to the specific situation he had aimed at. His human agents react according to his expectations, and nowhere do they endanger the fulfilment of his plan. In this respect, these plays may be considered quite ordinary from the point of view of plot development, although the elaboration by Menander of the divine and human relationships in them indicates, as we have already seen, an artistic and skilfully imaginative

approach. The *Dyskolos* represents a different type of divine-plot relationship, in which the divine prologue's intervention is required during the course of the play in order to prevent the plot diverging from the course of events he desires[22].

The play opens with a prologue put into the mouth of the god Pan, who expounds the background to the plot, set in the Deme of Phyle. Sostratos, a young and wealthy townsman, comes to the neighbourhood to hunt, and *under Pan's influence* falls in love with the daughter of the peasant Knemon. Pan's purpose in this unusual match is to reward the chaste and gentle daughter for her respectful attitude towards him and towards his companions, the Nymphs, an attitude which stands in sharp contrast to her father's indifference towards them (36-44):

τὰς δὲ συντρόφους ἐμοὶ
Νύμφας κολακεύουσ' ἐπιμελῶς τιμῶσά τε
πέπεικεν αὐτῆς ἐπιμέλειαν σχεῖν τινα
ἡμᾶς· νεανίσκον τε καὶ μάλ' εὐπόρου
πατρὸς γεωργοῦντος ταλάντων κτήματα
ἐνταῦθα πολλῶν, ἀστικὸν τῇι διατριβῇι,
ἥκο]ντ' ἐπὶ θήραν μετὰ κυνηγέτου τινὸς
]υ κατὰ τύχην παραβαλόντ' εἰς τὸν τόπον
]. ἔχειν πῶς ἐνθεαστικῶς ποῶ.

Knemon is a misanthrope, totally given to hard labour and to endless quarrels with his neighbours. His irascibility has ruined his marriage: his wife has left him and moved over to live with Gorgias, her son from an earlier marriage, who earns his living by tilling his small lot, inherited from his father, with the help of his slave, Daos.

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[22] Opinions on Pan's role as speaker of the Prologue in the *Dyskolos* have oscillated between two extremes: Photiades' (art. cit.) religious-moralistic approach and W. Kraus' (*Menanders Dyskolos* (Wien, 1960), 18; *idem*, *Gnomon* 40 (1968), 338) negation of Pan's own statements in 36ff. See e.g. G.T.W. Hooker, *Greece & Rome* 5 (1958), 107; E.G. Turner, *Bull. J. Rylands Lib.* 42 (1959), 254f.; R. Cantarella, *Rend. Ist. Lombardo* 93 (1959), 91ff.; A. Theuerkauf, *Menanders Dyskolos als Bühnenspiel und Dichtung* (Göttingen, 1960) 18, 68-70; M. Treu, *Menander: Dyskolos* (München, 1960), 105f.; A. Pastorino, «Aspetti religiosi del 'Dyscolos' di Menandro» in *Menandrea: miscellanea philologica* (Genova, 1960), 79ff.; J. Martin, *Ménandre: L'Atrabilaire* (1st ed. Paris, 1961), 179-182; *idem* (2nd ed. 1972), 193-196; J.M. Jacques, *Ménandre: Le Dyscolos* (Coll. Budé, 2nd ed., Paris, 1976), XX, XXVIIf., 44, n. 1; A balanced view is expressed by E.W. Handley, *The Dyskolos of Menander* (London, 1965) ad 37ff.; A. Schäfer, *Menanders Dyskolos: Untersuchungen zur dramatischen Technik* (*Beiträge zur klass. Philol.* 14; Meisenheim, 1965), 31ff., 68 ff.; Gomme & Sandbach, 134; Ludwig, art. cit., 84 ff.; Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 105-107. See also below, n. 34; pp. 84 ff.

The daughter lives with Knemon, together with an old maid-servant, Simiche.

The first Act opens when Sostratos makes his appearance accompanied by Chaireas, the parasite. The two discuss Sostratos' sudden falling in love with an unknown girl (50-54). Menander's object in introducing this discussion at the outset of his plot is twofold:

a) it enlivens the background details of the divine plan as a preparation for the human drama which is about to ensue from it;

b) it focuses the audience's attention on this plan and on the initial step which the divine prologue speaker has taken towards its realisation. The way Menander has chosen to carry out his object is remarkable in its conciseness and entirely different from the elaborate dramatic means which we have seen him using to achieve similar effects in the *Aspis* and in the *Perikeiromene*. The difference in technique may be linked to the difference in the position of the divine prologue; for while in the *Aspis* and in the *Perikeiromene* the delayed position of the prologue enables the dramatisation and elaboration to the utmost degree of those expository details which are worthy in Menander's mind of special emphasis, in the *Dyskolos* the position of the prologue at the very beginning of the play has rendered superfluous and even undesirable, both from the structural and from the purely dramatic point of view, any attempt to over-dramatise.

From the subsequent discussion between Sostratos and Chaireas, it emerges that the emotion that Pan has implanted in Sostratos is one which excites impatience and unnecessary overactivity[23], a psychological condition which has already found its expression in two of Sostratos' actions preceding his entrance onto the stage, namely his summoning of Chaireas even before the consequences of Pyrrhias' (his slave's) mission to the girl's father are known[24], and the

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[23] On Sostratos as an overactive and impatient lover, see N. Zagagi, *ZPE* 36 (1979), 39ff.

[24] We have no parallel in New Comedy for such an overactivity on the lover's part: a lover impatient and worried at the beginning of the play would normally summon *either* a friend *or* a slave (the opening scene of the Plautine *Curculio*, referred to by Schäfer, *op. cit.*, 45, is irrelevant to the situation in the *Dyskolos*, Pali-

very use of a family slave as a go-between when the issue is marriage with a free-born girl (55ff.). The latter act, as Sostratos himself is forced to admit, is out of keeping with the accepted social norms (75-77):

> ἥμαρτον· οὐ γὰρ οἰκέτῃ
> ἥρμοττ' ἴσως τὸ τοιοῦτ⟨ό γ'⟩. ἀλλ' οὐ ῥάιδιον
> ἐρῶντα συνιδεῖν ἐστι τί ποτε συμφέρει.

The protagonists assume that Sostratos' overactiveness is attributable to *Eros*, and it has no significance for them apart from its immediate emotional implications; but the audience, being aware of the real source of Sostratos' emotions, are able to perceive here a tangible example of Pan — here functioning as Eros — influencing Sostratos. The audience, unlike the *dramatis personae*, are able to distinguish between Sostratos as a lover and Sostratos as Pan's agent, whereby the way is paved for their objective appreciation of the hero's actions, both on the human level, and, what is more relevant to our discussion, within the framework of the divine prologue speaker's general plan. As we shall presently see, this objective appreciation is the key to understanding the continuity of Pan's involvement in the plot.

By the end of the conversation between these two characters, the difficulties involved in the accomplishment of Pan's plan emerge in sharp detail.

Pyrrhias rushes onto the stage shouting. From his confused report, it turns out that he has totally failed in his task, for Knemon had chased him away from his land before he had managed to deliver his message, hurling clods of earth at him (81ff.). Chaireas is frightened, and hurriedly takes off making various excuses (125ff.). Knemon's own ill-tempered entry dismays even Sostratos, and excludes any possibility of a dialogue between the two (153ff.). After Knemon's departure, Sostratos decides to turn for help to Getas, his father's slave. But an abrupt encounter with Knemon's daughter, on her way to draw water from the spring in the nearby Nymphs' cave, somewhat delays his exit (189ff.). Despite himself, Daos becomes an eye-witness to this meeting, and he hurries off to report what he has seen to his master, Gorgias (218ff.).

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nurus' role nowhere being defined in terms of active participation in Phaedromus' love affair). Theuerkauf, *op. cit.*, 51f.

The succession of events in Act I makes it plain that Knemon is quite unapproachable, and therefore any attempt to influence him directly should be avoided. First Pyrrhias, then Chaireas and finally Sostratos prove themselves incapable of handling the misanthrope; but precisely at the moment when the fulfilment of Pan's plan seems to be in danger, Sostratos shows himself to be truly «ἐνθεαστικῶς ἔχειν», «divinely inspired», to use Pan's own words in the prologue (44): not only does he refuse to give up hope of marrying his beloved, but he also decides to consult Getas immediately, claiming that (186-188)

> τὸ μὲν χρόνον γὰρ ἐμποεῖν τῶι πράγματι
> ἀποδοκιμάζω. πόλλ' ἐν ἡμέραι μίαι
> γένοιτ' ἄν.

Sostratos' decision stands in sharp contrast to Chaireas' earlier advice, approved by Pyrrhias, to defer things for a more auspicious occasion (126ff.), or at least till the morrow (131ff.). Indeed, Sostratos has revealed his dominant characteristic already in Act I: the recurrent obstacles increase the lover's passion instead of cooling it (cf. 383). Overactive, impatient, incredibly optimistic (cf. 570ff.), Sostratos *might* give the impression of being the ideal means of achieving Pan's aim. And yet, on examining his movements in the first Act, it becomes increasingly apparent that, far from being conducive to the fulfilment of Pan's plan, the line of action chosen by Sostratos could in effect seriously undermine it. His first step — sending Pyrrhias as a go-between to the girl's father — has proved to be a mistake, as a result of which two possible allies, Pyrrhias and Chaireas, have deserted the battle. Sostratos himself was little more than a coward when face to face with Knemon, his would-be father-in-law. He is now thinking of promoting an intrigue against Knemon, presumably to be contrived by Getas; but both Pan and the audience can see that such an intrigue is likely to fail, since the whole succession of events in Act I has shown that this kind of approach can have no effect on Knemon.

It thus appears that Pan will have to introduce yet another method in order to resolve the complications of the plot. The nature of this method is made known to the audience only towards the end of the second Act, whilst it is not until Knemon's fall into the well in his yard at the beginning of the fourth Act and his subsequent rescue by Sostratos and Gorgias that the implications of its use for the dramatic

action are fully established. But before proceeding to discuss this method, and modern views on it, let us glance briefly at the succession of events in the three Acts in question.

The second Act opens with the entry of Daos and Gorgias, discussing the meeting just described. Gorgias has hardly finished rebuking Daos for failing to interfere while his step-sister's honour was hanging in the balance, when Daos notices the approaching Sostratos (255ff.). From his monologue it appears that his search for Getas has come to nothing, for his mother has sent the latter to hire a cook for the sacrificial meal in honour of one of the gods (259ff.). As a last resort, he decides to turn to Knemon personally (266ff.). His meeting with Gorgias prevents him from carrying out his plan. Gorgias explains to Sostratos, who has convinced him of the purity of his intentions towards his sister, that Knemon's character renders marriage with his daughter virtually impossible (323ff.). Sostratos, however, does not lose heart, and even manages to prevail upon Gorgias to come to his aid. Daos suggests to Sostratos that he put on a common peasant's jerkin and share their work with them, for thus he may perhaps meet Knemon and even make a favourable impression upon him (364ff.). All three return to Gorgias' farm, Sostratos disguised as a peasant, a mattock in his hand and a jerkin on his shoulders.

Getas and Sikon, the cook, now make their appearance on their way to prepare the sacrificial meal. Their dialogue reveals the reason for the meal: Sostratos' mother has dreamed *that Pan has tied her son's feet, presented him with a peasant's jerkin, and sent him off to work a nearby field* (409-417).

At the beginning of the third Act, Knemon is about to set out for his daily work. Hearing the tumult of the guests at the sacrificial meal, he shuts himself up at home (454ff.). Sostratos' envisaged meeting with him is thereby rendered impossible. In the following scenes Knemon is made the object of repeated harassment by Getas and Sikon, each attempting in vain to borrow a cauldron from him (456ff.).

Sostratos now makes his appearance on his way back from his work in the field (522ff.). Having narrated his failure to meet Knemon, he encounters Getas, who informs him of the sacrificial meal (554ff.). Sostratos immediately conceives the idea of inviting Gorgias to the solemn event in order to further the business of his marriage (560ff.). He has hardly left the stage upon this errand, when

Simiche rushes in with woeful screams (574ff.). It turns out that in her attempt to retrieve a bucket she has dropped into the well, she has also dropped a mattock which she was trying to use to reach the bucket. Knemon, in his rage, threatens her, and descends into the well, refusing to use a rope offered him by Getas (588ff.). Sostratos returns, accompanied by Gorgias, both ignorant of what has transpired (611ff.).

The fourth Act opens with Simiche bemoaning Knemon's fall into the well. Sikon, whom she is addressing, responds with total indifference (620ff.). In her despair, the old woman calls out Gorgias' name (634). He runs onto the stage, with Sostratos in tow, and they co-operate in the rescue of Knemon, subsequently described in a monologue by Sostratos (666ff.). Knemon is now wheeled onto the stage by his daughter and Gorgias (690ff.). He orders Gorgias to call his wife, and, on her arrival, commences a monologue explaining his conduct and general outlook (710ff.). He ultimately admits to having been mistaken, and adopts Gorgias as his son, appointing him guardian over both his property and his daughter. Gorgias immediately proposes Sostratos as a bridegroom for Knemon's daughter, and obtains his consent (748ff.).

Three main objections have been raised against the theory of Pan's intervention in the course of events just described[25]:

a) No miraculous event is evident in the play: the dramatic developments are the natural result of human motivation, whereas Knemon's fall into the well may be regarded as a pure case of τύχη - chance.

The fallibility of an argument such as this has been amply demonstrated by W. Ludwig, whose comments on this subject, although referring to another play, are worth quoting in full: «The implied assumption that 'naturally' and 'divinely' motivated actions are mutually exclusive seems to me to be a fundamental error. The fact that everything takes its natural course, that action develops through individual decisions and through the unexpected concurrence of independent events, is often taken as proof of the god's non-intervention in the play. Apparently 'supernatural' miracles are asked for. Can only a god who breaks though natural processes claim to be

[25] See n. 22 *passim*. The modern views to be discussed below show the influence of Fr. Leo's treatment of the New Comedy prologues as a purely expository device: *Plautinische Forschungen* (2nd ed., Berlin, 1912), 188ff.

acknowledged as such? An opinion of this kind completely misunderstands the perceptions popular among Menander's contemporaries. The 'divine' revealed itself in and through events, not against and in contradiction to them» (art. cit. 79 (my translation)).

b) In his prologue, Pan had said nothing about punishing Knemon, nor had he set out to explain the nature of the play's *Peripeteia*, of which this punishment forms part. Hence the *Peripeteia*, ranging from Sostratos' mother's dream to Knemon's fall into the well, can hardly be credited to Pan.

Nothing compels us to believe that Knemon's fall into the well was intended as a *punishment* by Pan. Rather, it is a means to an end, enabling Pan to achieve his aim, namely, the rewarding of Knemon's daughter for her piety by marrying her off to a rich young man, an aim impossible to attain were it not for the well incident[26]. Indeed, if this were to be regarded as Knemon's punishment, this could only be in the realms of «poetic justice», which goes far beyond Pan's own interest as presented by him in the prologue. Moreover, nowhere in the surviving New Comedy prologues does the divine speaker reveal the different stages of the *Peripeteia*, or announce his future influence on events in detail. The information he presents to the audience is limited to the facts preceding the dramatic action — usually unknown to the characters on stage — and to a soothing assurance of a happy ending under his guidance[27]. Having revealed his final aim and initiated its realisation, he vaguely outlines the future line of action and lets matters take their natural course.

c) Sostratos' intrigue is comic, even farcical, so that we should not take any of the references to Pan's influence in the play seriously.

Such an objection would seem to ignore the fact that, being a comedy, the *Dyskolos* can only be expected to treat its characters and

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[26] Sikon the cook erroneously attributes to Pan the desire for revenge against Knemon, to whom he is completely indifferent: 639-645. See below, p. 86 with n. 28; also 875-878.

[27] See e.g. Men. *Asp.*, 97 ff. (admittedly *Tyche* predicts a bit more concerning Smikrines' reaction to events and subsequent frustration, 138ff.); *Perik.* 121ff., 162ff; *Sik.* 2ff.; Plaut. *Aul.* 6 ff., 25 ff.; *Cist.* 154ff. (Ludwig, art. cit., 68f. postulates the substitution by Plautus of *Auxilium*'s military statement at 197ff. for the traditional promise of a happy ending; cf. Leo, *Pl.F²*, 213); Eur. *Ion*, 67ff. For the Menandrian prologues see in general D. del Corno, *Acme* 23 (1970), 99-108; S. Dworacki, *Eos* 61 (1973), 33-47; Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 16ff. The exploitation by New Comedy playwrights of overdetailed divine prologues is criticized in Austin, *CGFP*, fr. 252.

their experiences in a manner appropriate to the nature and purpose of the poetic genre to which it belongs. Indeed, once we accept Pan's role in the play as a *dramatic necessity*, we are no longer bothered by the comic character of his influence in the play, as reflected in Sostratos' intrigue; for Pan, like all the humans on the stage, is subject to the rules of comedy. Hence his smiling figure in the prologue[28]; hence the comic manner in which he achieves his aim, making the tender Sostratos take up a mattock on the one hand and Knemon the misanthrope fall into the well on the other; and hence the dramatic irony effected by the delayed report of Sostratos' mother's dream. One should also remember the fact that Pan is not one of the great Olympians, but a minor god who fits easily into the world of comedy or that of Satyric drama.

Bearing these criticisms in mind, let us now focus our attention on the consequences for the dramatic action of Sostratos' mother's dream, particularly where Sostratos' attempts to meet Knemon are concerned, in order to examine the nature of Pan's influence on the play's action. It is important to establish from the start that the dream has been sent by Pan. Indeed, dreams being a common method of divine communication with human beings in Greek literary tradition and belief, one is justified in attributing this dream to Pan, although it is not specifically stated in the play that he was responsible for it. It is therefore clear from the above synopsis that Pan, by sending that dream to Sostratos' mother, has in effect frustrated Sostratos in his attempts to communicate with Knemon, thus preventing his own human agent from carrying out his mission in his own way. It is as a result of this dream that Getas, the would-be executant of Sostratos' first intrigue, is sent to hire a cook to prepare the sacrificial meal in Pan's honour. He is thus removed from the scene at the very moment when he is most needed. Similarly, Knemon, in his attempt to avoid meeting with the sacrificial party, decides to stay at home, thus precluding Sostratos' planned meeting with him in the fields. In other words, the god deliberately keeps Sostratos apart from Knemon, rendering yet another line of action necessary, and allowing the above-mentioned dream to have its effect on the misanthrope.

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[28] See 10-13: Knemon's indifference to Pan is lightheartedly acknowledged by the latter. Contrast Aphrodite's and Dionysos' persistent rage at human neglect of them in Euripides' *Hippolytos* and *Bacchai* respectively.

Knemon's fall into the well, a result of his staying at home, is evidently consequent on that dream, and represents, from the point of view of pure drama, its most important effect. What on the surface appears to be a parody of intrigue[29] is, in fact, a carefully premeditated plan on the part of the divine speaker. The unique charm of the *Dyskolos* lies in its reflecting *two* different streams of thought and action, the divine and the human, both centring on Knemon's static figure — an apparently objective obstacle to the promised marriage, yet a source of interest for a character-study for Menander. As a result of Knemon's isolation from Sostratos, an essential condition for both the credibility of his misanthropic character and the realisation of Pan's plan, the play appears to have what A. Schäfer rightly termed a «Doppelhandlung»[30], but despite his severe judgement of its structure, the plot of the *Dyskolos* as a whole, from the point of view of the *divine* drama, seems to follow a unified pattern: Sostratos' meeting with Gorgias as a preparation for the eventual solution to the complications of the plot, and Knemon's fall into the well in consequence of Pan's intervention (each being determined by the sacrifice which follows the dream), are two different aspects of a single dramatic event, namely the dream sent to Sostratos' mother. Similarly, the divine intervention which separates Sostratos' line of action from that of Knemon in Act II reunites them in Act IV through that very sacrifice[31]. This underlying concept of dramatic unity gains its strongest emphasis in the final Act where *all* the characters end up in Pan's shrine.

In the exposition, the objective obstacle to achieving Pan's aim is defined and any doubt concerning human ability to handle it is removed. Pan has to divert his impatient agent from the wrong course of action — intrigue — to a better one. Thus Sostratos, originally a principal agent of Pan, becomes secondary. The gap between appearance and reality generates a high degree of dramatic irony which culminates in Sostratos' representation of the accomplishment of the marriage plan in one day in terms of a single-handed achievement (860-865).

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[29] Schäfer, *op. cit.*, 83ff.

[30] *Op. cit.*, 75ff.; Zagagi, art. cit.

[31] Schäfer, *op. cit.* 85ff.

Unaware of his reduced position, Sostratos retains the same characteristic — driving impatience — during most of the play. From the point where the dream is first mentioned by Getas, the audience become aware of a fascinating interaction between Pan and his impatient agent. For the divinely-inspired Sostratos strives incessantly to meet Knemon, whilst Pan wisely frustrates this plan each time through the agency of the dream and the sacrificial meal consequent upon it. However, the moment Sostratos meets Gorgias, his impatience is gradually transformed into a constructive factor: instead of Chaireas, the πρακτικός, «man of action» (56), Sostratos believes he has found Gorgias, the χρήσιμος «useful man», «a source of durable profit» (320). Therefore he is not persuaded by Gorgias to give up any hope of marrying the latter's step-sister, but declares unequivocally (345-347):

ἀπειρότερον γοῦν διαλέγει
περὶ ταῦτ'· ἀποστῆναι κελεύεις μ'. οὐκέτι
τοῦτ' ἐσ]τὶν ἐπ' ἐμοί, τῶι θεῶι δέ.

The god under whose dominance Sostratos represents himself as being is Eros, but the audience, aware of the real source for Sostratos' emotions, know that this god is in fact Pan. By putting into Sostratos' mouth this ambivalent statement, Menander is reminding the audience that Sostratos is actually *Pan's agent* and his persistence in following his desire, far from being an ordinary emotional experience, is in fact a stage in the realisation of Pan's will. This persistence is demonstrated once more in the play, quite strikingly, when Sostratos, having failed to meet Knemon in the fields, returns to the scene, still impatient to achieve his aim, but this time without a definite plan (543-545).

On encountering Getas, whom he was so keen to consult at the end of the first Act, Sostratos not only avoids any suggestion of contriving intrigues with him, but maintains a complete silence on the subject of his having falling in love. Instead, he conceives the idea of inviting Gorgias to the sacrificial meal, the details of which he has just heard from Getas. Menander lends significance to this critical point in the play by making Sostratos himself drag Pan into the picture with the following comment (570-573)[32]:

[32] A similar technique is employed by Menander in 311-313.

καλῶς
ἔσται, Γέτα, τὸ τήμερον — μαντεύσομαι
τοῦτ' αὐτός, ὦ Πάν· ἀλλὰ μὴν προσεύχομαι
ἀεὶ παριών σοι — καὶ φιλανθρωπεύσομαι.

Later in the play, at the end of Act III, we find Sostratos impatiently pushing the reluctant Gorgias forward (611ff.). Sostratos has gone to fetch him and they are thus enabled to arrive in time to rescue Knemon at the beginning of the next Act. That during the rescue operation Sostratos becomes secondary to Gorgias (670ff.) is revealing. It demonstrates the extent to which Menander was conscious of the need to retain the credibility of both the divine and the human aspects of the plot. As J.C. Kamerbeek puts it: «A romantic poet would have assigned the handsome role of saviour to the young lover; but it is not thus that Menander understands his art and life: by giving this part to Gorgias, he has Knemon saved by the only person who could reap the latter's gratitude, the only person who was entirely disinterested, the one who also, for his noble character and courage, merits this handsome role» (*Mnem.* 12 (1959), 126 (my translation)).

It is interesting to note to what extent Pan, whilst seeming to undermine his agent's mission in engineering his failure to communicate with Knemon, is nevertheless actually consolidating his schemes, having woven a careful plan which in the end turns to Sostratos' advantage. Thus his digging the field, as a result of which his face has become sunburnt (535), contributes as much to his favourable impression on Knemon as does his share in the rescue (752-755). Moreover, both the digging and the rescue episodes serve to build up the fruitful relationship between Sostratos and Gorgias, preparing Gorgias for the role of mediator between Sostratos' line of action and that of Knemon.

The moment Pan's aim has been achieved, the lover ceases feeling that he is divinely inspired and becomes somewhat rational and sober, even finding himself able to exhibit a certain amount of patience. The transformation of Sostratos, the irrational, impatient lover, into a young man once more aware of social conventions and knowing precisely «τί ποτε συμφέρει», «what may be of benefit» (cf. 76-77) is clearly outlined by Menander at the end of the fourth Act when Kallippides, Sostratos' father, arrives on the scene. Seeing that the latter is dying of hunger, Sostratos advises Gorgias to postpone talk of the marriage with him until after the sacrificial meal, claiming that «πρῶτον ἀριστησάτω· / πραότερος ἔσται» (778f.). At this point

Sostratos' short alliance with Pan has clearly come to an end, and the rest of the play is demonstrably dominated by human considerations alone.

Similar patterns of divine-human plot relationship — divine intervention in the later dramatic developments to prevent the plot diverging from the initial plan — are to be found in Euripides' *Ion*, the Plautine *Aulularia* (possibly an adaptation from Menander) and conceivably also in the *Cistellaria* (adapted by Plautus from Menander's *Synaristosai*)[33]. The analogy between these plays and the *Dyskolos* helps to underline an important aspect of Menander's dramatic technique, also pointing to its conceivably Euripidean origin.

We have noted that the divine element in Menander's plays, quite apart from its contribution to the exposition, has an important thematic and dramatic function. This function varies from play to play, but the underlying dramaturgical concept remains the same: the attempt to vary the ordinary everyday story by introducing «something else» outside the normal framework of human events. This «something» is a divine dimension, which may stand in harmony or in disharmony with the world of the protagonists, but is always apprehended as being linked to a deeper and more comprehensive point of view. Within this framework the private incident receives its proper place in relation to this other dimension. The critical and objective awareness of this dual dimension required from Menander's audience led them to perceive in the everyday experiences unfolding on the stage a world view far more rich and significant than in conventional plays which lack this additional dimension. Above all, this awareness enables us to redeem the plot and the protagonists from that one-dimensionality which ordinarily characterises many plays dealing with everyday life. Indeed, it is the gap between appearance and reality which Menander is seeking to emphasise in his plays by means of their divine prologues, thus prompting his audience to free themselves from conventional situations and characters imposed upon them by the genre concerned.

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[33] W. Ludwig, *Philologus* 105 (1961), 44-71, esp. 53ff., 247ff.; art. cit. 66ff., 71ff. In discussing divine intervention in the *Dyskolos* Ludwig (art. cit. 84ff.) failed to recognize the pattern under consideration.

It must be stressed that Menander is *not* a religious playwright, nor would any of his divine-prologued comedies which have survived the centuries wholly or in part have lent itself to the exclusively moralistic, exclusively religious interpretation that some scholars have attempted to impose on them[34], although a special emphasis on divine-human relationships, based in varying degrees on moral considerations, must necessarily be taken into account when analysing them.

What is notable about Menander's treatment of his dual pattern is the powerful illusion of reality maintained on both the human and the divine level, clearly one of the poet's main objectives: no miraculous event, no unnatural phenomenon, can be claimed to occur in the Menandrian plays we have discussed. Rather, the divine action is presented therein in terms as compatible as possible with ordinary human experience. Thus, in the *Dyskolos*, it is through making Sostratos fall in love with Knemon's daughter, combined with his mother's dream, that Pan seeks to achieve his aim. Similarly, in the *Aspis* Kleostratos' mistaken identity and Smikrines' inborn greed are exploited by *Tyche* in order to inflict punishment on the old man; and in the *Perikeiromene* Polemon is driven by *Agnoia* to commit a violent act of jealousy against his mistress Glykera, thus setting in motion a chain of events which finally leads to the latter's rediscovery of her lost father and the reunion of her family. Indeed, it is precisely this tendency towards a purely realistic, purely intimate representation of divine workings, so widely different from Aristophanes' almost surrealistic approach to the matter[35], which is most revealing of Menander's artistic preferences as a playwright[36].

Netta ZAGAGI

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[34] The *Dyskolos* criticism in particular has been marked by the religious-moralistic approach: see e.g. Photiades, art. cit.; Hooker, art. cit.; Martin, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*; L.A. Post, *TAPhA* 91 (1960), 152-161; F. Stoessl, *Gymn.* 67 (1960), 204-209; O. Vicenzi, *Gymn.* 69 (1962), 421ff.; E. Keuls, *TAPhA* 100 (1969), 209-220. Cf. Pastorino's criticism of Photiades' approach, art. cit., 79-82, 94ff.; Ludwig's, art. cit., 88ff.

[35] As well as from that of Diphilos as reflected in the Plautine *Rudens*. Note the artificial manner in which the divine prologue speaker's, the star Arcturus', aim is achieved in this play (67-69): «ego quoniam video virginem asportarier, / tetuli et ei auxilium et lenoni exitium simul: / increpui hibernum et fluctus movi maritumos.»

[36] I owe warm thanks to Prof. H. Lloyd-Jones, Mr. P.G. McC Brown and Dr. M. Eliav-Feldon, my collegue at Tel-Aviv University, for reading the text and for many useful suggestions.