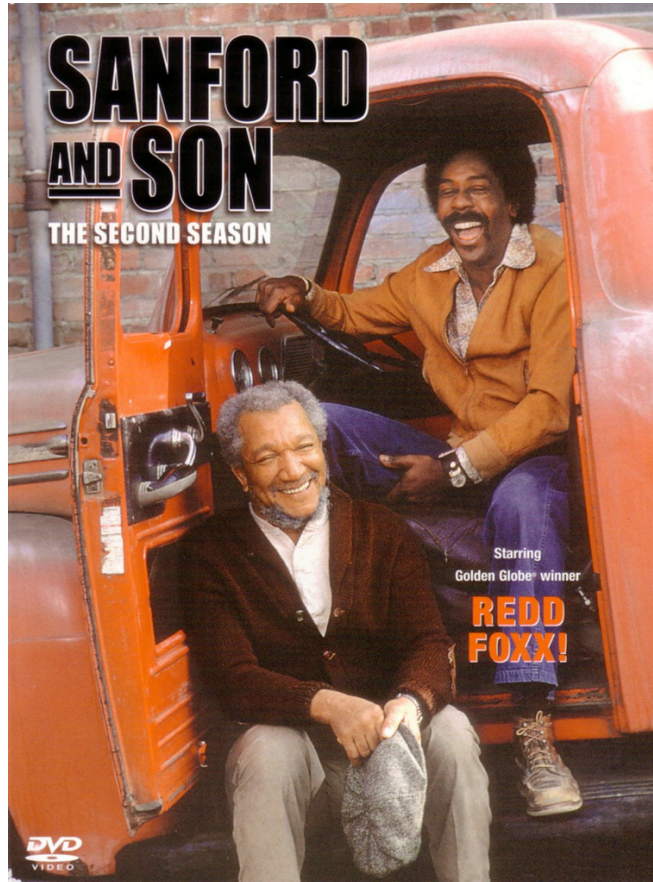


Fathers and Sons in Terence

(Mostly in the *Adelphoe*)



General Info

- This topic appears in five of the six plays by Terence: *Andria*, *Heauton Timorumenos*, *Hecrya*, *Phromio*. The *Eunuch* is the exception.
- “The attitudes and obligations between fathers and sons are discussed and illustrated by scenes in each of the plays.” (Fantham 970)

So, the *Adelphoe*?

- There are two sets of fathers and sons in the *Adelphoe*: Micio and Aeschinus; Demea Ctesipho.
- Demea and Ctesipho are country-bumpkins.
- Micio and Aeschinus are city-folk

So, the *Adelphoe*?

- Much of the play deals with Demea's and Micio's opposing philosophies.
- Demea is the typical *paterfamilias*
- He believes that his son “shows proper respect for frugal and sober living.” (*Adelphoe* 95)
- He is shocked by Micio's condoning of Aeschinus' behavior
- Claims that, “It's more like I'd have sniffed it out six months in advance of its starting!” (*Adelphoe* 397-98)

So, The *Adelphoe*?

- Micio on the other hand has the opposite philosophy of Demea
- “And if you just acted like a human being, You’d let him do them now when he has the excuse of youth, Rather than encouraging him to do them later when it’s inappropriate— You know, after he’s happily tossed your sorry corpse out of the house!” (*Adelphoe* 107-110)
- “Micio’s condoning of Aeschinus’ behavior here is not (as modern audiences may assume) entirely out of step with Roman moral tradition.” (Christenson 205)

Opposing Philosophies

- Much of the criticism focuses on the successes of the philosophies of each father (Greenberg)
- Who wins at the end of the play?
- How do we determine who has won?
- No one has truly won, but rather there are varying degrees of success between the two pairs

Micio

- Tries to be his son's friend rather than a disciplinarian
- One strong instance shows that this technique also has failings (Greenberg 224)
- Aeschinus does not tell Micio of his love affair

Demea

- It seems clear that Demea's philosophy may be the less successful of the two. I don't buy that.
- Ctesipho has two people actively helping him undermine Demea.

What About the Ending?

- Demea adopts Micio's philosophy at the end of the play.
- Does this mean that Micio won? No.
- The adoption is merely showing the limits of Micio's philosophy.

Contextualize This, You Blue

- According to Emiel Eyben, “Thus, for example, the *paterfamilias* had the right to expose his child, to scourge him, to sell him, to pawn him, to imprison him, and, *in extremis*, even to kill him (the famous *ius vitae necisque*).” (Eyben 115)
- This portrait was largely a theoretical and anachronistic one by the the beginning of the empire
- The more humane society became, the more paternal power was eroded. (Eyben 115)

Contextualize This, You Blue

- Examples of severe parenting:
- Brutus who stands by while sons are executed.
- Manlius Torquatus has son executed for engaging the enemy against his orders.
- Public opinion was often against such fathers (Eyben 122)

Contextualize This, You Blue

- Cicero quote: “The inexperience of youth requires the practical wisdom of age to strengthen and direct it.” (*De Officiis* 1.122)
- Pliny the Younger quote: Remember that he is a boy and you have been a boy yourself, and use your rights as a father without forgetting that you are only human and so is your son. (*Epistulae* 9.12)

Contextualize This, You Blue

- As excessively strict fathers were detested so too were overly indulgent fathers.
- Seneca the Elder: “This brashness of my son is partly my fault: he was too indulgently brought up; he thinks he may do anything;” (*Controuersiae* 2.3.3)
- Whereas in the early days it was the children who trembled...when confronted by their father, many sons behaved as they pleased (Eyben 130)

Wrapping It Up

- Fathers and sons is a big topic in Terence
- Explores the differing philosophies of parenting
- No real successes in the *Adelphoe*
- There was real tension between the two different philosophies.

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