These criticisms do not detract from the value of this study. Gödde compellingly shows that euphēmia always had the potential to suppress recognition of reality as well as present the good. Her book is a major investigation of intellectual conceptions and literary treatment of ‘good speech’ over time. It should be read by all those interested in these issues.

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The title of David Leitao’s book on the ‘myth’ of ‘the pregnant male’, as well as its cover, should be inviting to anybody interested in Greek myth, at least in understanding the curious habit of the Athenians to represent their patron goddess at the moment of her miraculous birth. In addition, the ‘metaphor’ in the title refers to a host of texts not normally subsumed under the category of ‘mythical tales’. What the reader is offered is a broad range of close readings of philosophical and dramatic texts, both well-known and more obscure passages. In addition to analysing some tragic and comic dramas the author focuses on texts that will interest specialists of the pre-Socratics as well as Plato and the Sophists. He arrives at conclusions on the specific use of the metaphor of ‘the pregnant male’ and related images as they are adopted by various authors, sometimes varying within the corpus of one and the same author.

The volume is structured in an introduction and additional six chapters, each chapter presenting itself as a self-contained study. There is no concluding chapter, but we are given 2 appendices, as well as an index.

In the Introduction Leitao presents his suspicion that the impregnation metaphor in Diotima’s discourse in the Symposium did not emerge ex nihilo as Plato’s original idea, but was part of a widespread network of metaphors drawn from the semantic field of parturition, including the role of midwife (in the following referred to as ‘the pregnant male’ metaphor). According to Leitao this metaphor has served as «a means to think through and talk about a number of issues and controversies, among them the origin of the embryo’s soul, the role of providence in the world, the nature and origin of thought and creativity, legitimacy of birth and civic status, ownership of intellectual property, and the nature of teaching» (3). Leitao traces the scientific discourse on this metaphor within the fields of social anthropology and psychology. While psychoanalytic research assumes male pregnancy fantasies as expressions of «womb envy» (7), the ethnographic record has identified customs such as the couvade staging fathers ‘giving birth’ (6). Leitao notices that instead of intra-psychic conflicts ‘the pregnant male’ metaphor rather appears to be a conceptualization of kinship and citizenship during the classical period (10). In Artemidorus’ dream exegesis a dream staging a man who is giving birth predicts success in business or marriage (11). Agreeing with methods developed by Nicole Loraux and Page Dubois who follow the metaphor in concrete textual expressions rather than ontogenetic or phylogenetic
Chapter 2 is concerned with the development of the «one-seed theory» of reproduction which the author ascribes to Anaxagoras and his successors. In this theory the moment of giving birth is ‘backdated’ to the moment of the father’s ejaculation (18). The «one-seed theory» is inserted in its historical and cultural context and traced in its influence on early tragedy. Leitao identifies an earlier «two-substance theory», a folk belief to which «all Greeks during all periods subscribed» (21), and whose elements can be found in epic and tragic texts, as well as a later «two-seed theory» initiated by Democritus and developed by the Hippocrates (19f). The archaic folk belief focused on the male contribution in conception, and assumed the myeloencephalogenetic origin of the semen (21, 23).

Anaxagoras, according to Leitao, developed his theory in response to a rather abstract philosophical question, offering a solution to the problem of Parmenides’ theory according to which generation was logically impossible (32). Anaxagoras’ abstract ‘seed’ had the potential for any given bit of matter… to be transformed into every other form of matter» (31). The transformation of both male seed as well as nutrients into parts of a human being, is due to the fact that both seed and food contain tiny quantities of all those parts (33). Anaxagoras furthermore assumed a kind of heat or ‘aither’ buried in male seed, and this (possibly) was the origin of life and ‘ensoulment’ in the embryo (a theory parallel to Aristotle’s theory of pneuma, 33f). His embryology was embedded in a new cosmology, in which a hierarchic transmutation of elements occurred, from heat (‘aer’) to water to earth (38–40). The generative power of ‘aer’ and the nutritive principle of the earth are the origin of all humans, animals and plants, a gendered theory in which ‘aer’ is associated with the father and the earth with the mother (40f). Finally, Anaxagoras assumed the transcendent power of Nous imparting motion to the primordial mass, which contains the ‘seeds’ of all kinds, it is conceived of as male power acting on female matter (41f). Poetic versions of Anaxagoras’ theory are found in tragedy (44). Leitao is eager to emphasize that this theory is not to be confused with archaic cosmogonies in which Heaven and Earth produce the gods: In these myths there are no hints at these powers generating plants, animals or humans (45). Such ideas, according to the author, are influenced by myths and rituals introduced from Egypt and the Near East (46). Similar notions are to be found in Orphic and related theogonies (46f). Anaxagorean monistic theory, however, seems to have included dualistic features: Being monistic in its emphasis on the father’s role in the generation of new life, it appears dualistic in the way the sex of his offspring is determined (50f). Ch. 2 ends with a classification of tragic passages that manifest instances of all three embryo-
logical positions, the folk traditional, the Anaxagorean «one-seed» and the Democritean «two-seed theory» (52ff).

Chapter 3 analyses Dionysus’ birth from his father’s thigh. The tale is found in a number of textual and iconographic sources, the earliest going back to the second quarter of the 5th century (59), and according to Leitao it is «a genuinely new myth» (65). Several times he underscores his view that this tale has nothing to do with debates on gender roles, but is rather concerned with theological questions and sociopolitical concerns (58): The theological problem that arises from the fact that Dionysus, a god, was born from a mortal mother was solved by adding a second birth, now from a god (67). The theme is addressed in particular by Herodotus, who presents the theory that Dionysus was a mortal born in Boeotian Thebes but was given the name of an Egyptian god who was born long before in Egyptian Thebes (73ff). Leitao identifies a similar problem in Euripides’ Bacchae, and, since the ‘thigh birth’ does not appear before 470, he relates it to Pericles’ citizenship laws arguing that the god’s civic status at Thebes is an important theme in the drama (91).

Chapter 4 explores the transition «from myth to metaphor» in the age of the Sophists. The myth of ‘the pregnant male’ now not only figures in narratives about divine or philosophical cosmogonies but in dramatic and sophist discourse. This metaphor is never found before 420, according to Leitao, who observes a «veritable explosion» in texts in which a man ‘gives birth’ to laws, poems or arguments (100ff), in most of the cases the verb τίκτω is used. The author has collected 7 passages from tragedy and comedy, two of them from Aristophanes’ Clouds (101ff). Leitao however argues that the ‘male giving birth’ metaphor in this comedy does not preserve an image used by the historical Socrates, but was applied by the Sophists (104). The metaphor is traced back to an Egyptian idea of a divine being who creates by thought (105ff), an idea that has it ramifications in a number of philosophers, in the Derveni papyrus, as well as to the myth of the birth of Athena (108). Several dramatic passages present ‘the male giving birth’ as an image of poetic creativity, with the connotation of: «a poet claiming a poetic creation as his own by presenting himself as its birth-giving mother» (126f). This interpretation interestingly refers to the anthropological category of the couvade, the behavior of a father who ritually goes to bed (like his wife), ‘giving birth’ in order to support his claim to paternity (88, 165ff). The metaphor, Leitao argues, was characteristic of the Sophists, in particular of Prodikos (129ff), while the metaphor of sowing is found as well in arguments of the period (134).

Chapter 5 deals with Aristophanes’ Assemblywomen focusing on the scene in which Blepyrus is in trouble with his ‘stool baby’ (148). While Leitao acknowledges the topsy-turvy character of the Blepyrus-scene he suggests that the function of the image is rather to introduce the hero «as a representative of the diseased body politics» (158). Finally the chapter is concerned with other ‘pregnant male’ fantasies, among which tragic texts in which the birth of Athena is evoked, a myth that is central to Leitao’s inquiry.

Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted to Plato. In Ch. 6 we are introduced to ‘the pregnant philosopher’ in the Symposium, in particular Diotoma’s vision of intel-

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lectual 'pregnancy' (183ff). While the dialogue develops various versions of 'the pregnant male' in the encomia on Eros, in Diotima's discourse the metaphor shifts between male and female roles. In one phase the metaphor is given eschatological meaning, expressing 'the wish for immortality', in this passage placing the father on a level equal to that of the mother (185). Finally however Diotima presents a powerfully female image of parturition presenting the philosopher giving birth to true virtue (201). Interestingly Leitao suggests that this metaphor for philosophical creativity may have prompted Plato to introduce a woman (183).

According to the author Plato designed this image in order «to counter the claims made by Sophists to teach virtue and wisdom» (226).

The final Chapter (7) is concerned with Plato's *Theaetetus* and the way the pregnancy metaphor is expanded with the figure of the intellectual midwife (227). This brings a refinement of the role of the philosopher, who not only assists in bringing forth a new idea but takes on the role of determining its viability after birth (229). Presenting Socrates as the midwife Plato endows 'her' with a number of characteristics, with the result that he evokes a view of the midwife moulded in the image of Socrates (234). The shift in emphasis from 'the pregnant male' metaphor to the midwife is, in Leitao's opinion, conditioned by the new interest in the truth-value of ideas, allowing Plato to argue against the neosophistic claim that all beliefs are equally true (246). This chapter discusses the relationship between the fictional and the historical Socrates, the latter, according to the author, being 'unable to transcend the sensory world' (258). He thinks it likely «that Plato is contrasting the metaphysician that he, by this time, had become, with the historical Socrates, interested primarily in practical ethics» (267). Reverting to the Socrates of the *Clouds* Leitao concludes his inquiry with doubting that the historical philosopher was the author of the 'birth-of-thought' metaphor alluded to in the comedy (270).

In Appendix 1 Leitao addresses the question whether «any thinker before Democritus argues for the existence of female 'seed'», finding that the evidence is weak (279). In the Appendix 2 he analyses the semantic content of the verb τίκτω concluding that in the Classical period it refers nearly exclusively to the female role, in a few cases (women and) men may be the subject but in the more general meaning of 'producing' (283).

The book's wide range of examples is both its strength as its weakness. It offers numerous subtle interpretations of relevant passages. It is looking at the image of 'the pregnant male' from a distant angle arguing that, while talking about gender, it did not constitute part of a debate on the merits of males and females respectively.

The author may sometimes have wished to embrace too much. The examples in Ch. 4 of males appearing in drama who are the subject of the verb τίκτω, he identifies as cases of males figuring in the female physiological role. While in Appendix 2 Leitao concludes that the verb does not refer to the male reproductive role in the classical period, he offers examples of the verb with a (mother and) father as its subject which he interprets as referring more generally to 'producing' offspring (283). We may wonder why these dramatic passages (except...
those in the *Clouds*), if they cannot refer to the father’s physiological role, could not also be seen as expressing a general notion of ‘production’.

Sometimes Leitao seems somewhat overconfident, e.g. stating that, while in archaic folk belief the ‘seed metaphor’ was employed for the male reproductive contribution, this ‘seed metaphor does not necessarily imply a devaluation of the female contribution’, and ‘in none of the examples...is the female assimilated to a field or furrow’ (22). The scarcity of examples may be an accident, for later on the author informs us that ‘plowing was a metaphor for marital sexuality from the later archaic period onwards’ (136), and there should be little doubt that in this formula the (implied) female is assimilated to a field.

When Leitao suggests that the debate between Apollo and the Furies in the *Eumenides* «is not primarily a cosmic contest between the male (represented by Apollo) and the female (represented by the Furies), but rather a debate on the relative strength of agnate and cognate ties» (56), he focuses on a brief passage instead of viewing the trilogy in its totality, and so overlooks the broad ‘myth of matriarchy’ inversion signaled by Froma Zeitlin.¹ Preferring the idea that Blepyrus in *Assemblywomen* is «a representative of the body politic» to viewing him as an agent in the topsy-turvy world of the comedy, he seems again to overlook the overall workings of the drama, a comic ‘women on top’ inversion, in which women conquer male bastions while men are degraded to female ways. While a number of characters (most of them off-stage) in Euripides’ *Bacchae* attack the bastard son of Semele on his civic status, this can hardly be said to be the main focus of the drama (96f). The principal reproach directed at the stranger is his maniac effect on women. Apart from the fact that tragedy is generally vague in indicating social statuses,² the main workings of the *Bacchae* turn around the king’s attack on the holy rites of the Lydian and Theban women creating what I would call the ‘tragic’ inversion of the *Bacchae*.³

Reviewing the protagonists of philosophical discourse as well as dramatic poetry David Leitao offers a rich panorama of the ‘the pregnant male’ image. He succeeds in demonstrating that there was a wide range of scenarios within the semantic field of ‘pregnancy’ staging a male subject. In classifying them in instances of «myth» or «metaphor», he follows this double track through a wide temporal and geographical area. The criteria however for assigning a passage to one category or the other remain somewhat opaque. Those interested in myth will wonder which criteria are applied. According to everyday notions of ‘myth’ based on personification, we may include the named Zeus, Dionysos, and Athena. What about Heaven and Earth? Should they be identified as physical entities, heaven and earth, or mythical personalities: Gaia and Uranus?

Leitao is aware of this problem (43f), but he seems to reflect less on the problem of terminology when applying another criterion, that of ‘folk belief’ vs. ‘folk science’ vs. ‘theory’, the latter being ascribed to an author. However, in a recent article Renate Schlesier points to the fact that all ancient ‘traditional tales’ are recorded by named authors and have been modified in some way by their literary mouthpiece. Should we apply this criterion of anonymous tales vs. identifiable authors, all Leitao’s examples should be lifted out of the category of ‘myth’ (except iconographic items). On the other hand, the ‘named’ theories seem sometimes to move in a diffuse landscape of multiple versions and Egyptian or Near Eastern influences. How much of the Pythagorean table of oppositions (among which gender opposition) is the product of these intellectuals and how much does it derive from widespread folk dichotomies, like yin and yang? It is perhaps not easy to establish a neat distinction between ‘myth’ and ‘metaphor’ parallel to ‘folk’ and ‘philosopher or poet’.

We can also chose to follow John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro who prefer the term ‘myth’ over ‘metaphor’ to designate shared ‘figures of thought’. These figures are «used by an entire civilization, repeated, modified, and resurrected over time, without becoming fixed or dead». At their roots the authors identify not a story but a «concatenation of categories, linking thanks to which it becomes possible, within a given culture, to engender mythical stories, images and rituals». Thus the concatenation of the category of (weaving a) ‘fabric’ with that of ‘city’ may generate mythical narrative, iconographic expressions or ritual practice, some abstract notion like «the union of opposites» hiding beneath the concrete «interlacing of the warp and the woof».

I would suggest this underlying notion to be affectively charged with (shared!) positive sentiments, e.g. ‘cohesion’. The way ‘the pregnant male’ figure pervades Greek thought may as well be classified as a shared concatenation of the category of ‘pregnancy’ with the categories of ‘citizenship’ or ‘authorship’, generating tales or theories, that are, I suggest, positively charged with sentiments of ‘creativity’ and ‘authenticity’. The theorists being part of the community sharing this, we may call, ‘cultural metaphor’ revived, modified, or abolished its use. They appropriated the role of the female for a male intellectual, and while not engaging in an explicit debate on the merits of male vs. female in reproduction or social life, as Leitao systematically emphasizes, these ‘figures of thought’ (and sentiment!) implicitly broadcasted a ‘myth’ of the superior intellectual creativity of males.

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4 Loc. cit.